INSTITUTE FOR SECURITY STUDIES

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
IYUNIVESITHI YASEKAPA • UNIVERSITEIT VAN KAAPSTAD

South African
CRIME QUARTERLY
No. 71 | 2022

‘Bad, sad and angry’

Responses of the SAPS leadership to the dangers of policing

Gráinne Perkins[1]

perkinsgrain@seattleu.edu

https://doi.org/10.17159/2413-3108/2022/vn71a12857

Danger is an integral part of the fabric of South African society. Yearly statistics regularly underscore the extent of danger experienced through reported acts of violence. As generally office bound executives, senior police officers rarely encounter this violence to the same extent as frontline officers.[2] *These police leaders are ultimately responsible for the strategies and operations employed to prevent police exposure to such dangers. Little research, however, has examined how the senior personnel react and respond to such danger. In this discussion, perceptions of senior South African Police Service (SAPS) officials to the dangers of police work are laid bare. How danger is conceptualised at such senior levels has relevance in initial examinations of why the SAPS may police in the manner in which they do.*

Methodology

The murder rate in South Africa is consistently amongst the highest in the world.[3] Although murder rates are high in South Africa, they have been declining over the last decade[4] and so too has the number of police deaths.[5] In the Western Cape Province, however, on-duty police deaths showed a slight upward trend between 2002 and 2014. On a national scale and in the Western Cape, off-duty murders have actually accounted for more murders than on-duty. Across South Africa, the SAPS identify

specific policing areas as 'hot spots' where more than one police member has been killed. Between 2014 and 2016, six police stations in the Western Cape Province were identified as being hot spots. As such, one of these hot spot stations in Cape Town was deemed as a suitable location to examine police murders. The research for this paper formed part of a larger ethnographic research project that examined police murders in the Western Cape during the period 2002–2014.[6] In 2020, the SAPS produced a Police Safety Strategy Plan which aimed to accelerate efforts to address the attacks and unnatural deaths of police officers.[7]

In July 2011, police leadership convened a summit to examine the extent of attacks on and killings of SAPS members. Although the Minister of the Police referred to the killing of officers as a 'national crisis'[8] there was no reference to this epidemic in the SAPS Strategic Plan of 2010–2014.[9] Stemming from this police summit, a ten-point plan was announced to help eradicate the killings and attacks on officers. In a more recent examination of SAPS murders, Mkhize and Madumi suggested that the SAPS ten-point plan, which stemmed from the Multi-Disciplinary Enquiry Committee (MDC) findings, has been ineffective in reducing police murders.[10] During this period, media reports, however, stated that the plan contained a mixture of management-style phrases, symbolic gestures and some practical suggestions to boost police morale, but little in actual changes.[11] This research however begat a more recent Safety Strategy Plan (2019) that focuses on understanding the issues to reduce the daily risks faced by officers in the line of duty.

In 2015, the frequency at which SAPS officers were being murdered dominated news headlines. Indeed, the then South African president told the police: 'We urge you to defend yourselves with everything at your disposal if you are attacked, within the confines of the law.'[12] Resultantly, the SAPS leadership had a vested interest in examining the issues surrounding police murders and invited the researcher to participate in the Western Cape Provincial Crime Combatting Forum. In South Africa, Crime-Combating Forums (CCFs) have been established at national, provincial, cluster and police station level to manage and monitor crime-combating actions at the respective identified levels.[13] Attendance at the meeting was done in conjunction with over 900 hours of ethnographic work being undertaken by the author, as well as the examination of all murder dockets of all police officers who were killed in the Western Cape between 2002 and 2014.[14] What was unique about this meeting, was the fact that it represented the largest gathering of senior leaders, i.e. station commanders, from across the Western Cape Province. At this meeting, 141 out of the then 150 Station Commanders from the different police stations in the Western Cape Province were present.

Personal details and length of service of the SAPS questionnaire respondents are presented above in Table 1. The sample drew from diverse ethnic backgrounds (using home language as a proxy): 32 respondents were Xhosa speaking, 4 Northern Sotho, 73 Afrikaans, 4 Zulu, 22 English, and 2 South Sotho.[15]

Research Instrument: The Questionnaire

Prior to this meeting, a questionnaire, composed of Likert style and open-ended questions, was developed, which incorporated key variables from previous quantitative examinations of attacks on police and police murders. A literature review of police murders, both internationally and in South Africa, was accessed to help frame the questionnaire. The spread of the rank of the officers present ranged from the most senior in police leadership, being Major General (n= 4) to constable (n=5).[16] A total of 141 members were present at the meeting and returns on 138

Table 1: The breakdown of officer rank relative to numbers of years of service

Rank (listed in descending seniority)	Years of service						
	10 years & <unknown	11–15	16–20	21–24	25–30	31–35	36–40
Major General			1	1	3	4	
Brigadier	1			1	12	5	4
Colonel		2		3	20	11	4
Lt Colonel			1	3	6	4	2
Major							
Captain			3	4	24	3	1
Warrant Officer				2	6		
Sergeant		2					
Constable	5						
Total (138)	**6**	**4**	**5**	**14**	**71**	**27**	**11**

questionnaires (97.9% response rate) were obtained. A total of five police constables were invited to the meeting to ensure that concerns regarding other police matters could be heard from a non-leadership perspective.

Limitations

When individuals share an emotional experience, they may be influenced through emotional contagion.[17] There are three ways to 'catch' another's emotions. First, through conscious cognitive processes, individuals can empathise with a display of emotion. Second, through conditioned or unconditioned responses, people may feel and display emotion based on prior experiences. Finally, individuals may mimic the emotion displayed by another.[18] As such the impact of completing a questionnaire amongst one's peers should be factored into the interpretation of any findings.

One of the questionnaire shortcomings was the failure to use the idea of 'attempts' at capturing incidents. This became obvious in the data analysis were officers would mark 'no' as a response but subsequently add 'but many attempts'. It is often the attempts that denote potential danger as opposed to the occurrences and capturing this information would have been beneficial in interpretation of the findings.

The concept of 'voluntary' completion of a form in a police setting is always questionable. Respondents were asked to complete the form before lunch and as such, could be viewed as a required task. Similarly the idea of the questionnaire being confidential is questionable. Even with aggregating statistics, the unique identifiers where respondents related to unique experiences, such as the pregnant officer being shot, makes them readily identifiable. Although every effort was made to redact identifiable information, some identifiers will be unavoidable.

These findings are not necessarily generalisable for all SAPS leaders across South African provinces. Cockcroft[19] argues that police leadership is central to the strategic

direction given to frontline officers. As such, understanding how senior officers respond to danger directly impacts the safety policies they then develop for frontline officers. As such, it would be beneficial for a similar study to be conducted across the provinces to understand the interpretation of danger by the SAPS amongst its senior personnel.

Findings

Police safety: 'Things are getting worse by the day'

The first two questions aimed to get an overall sense of security, individual safety and morale amongst senior personnel and SAPS members. The first question asked: 'How would you describe morale within the South African Police Service today?'

A strikingly low percentage of the respondents (10.8%, n=15) felt that morale among the police is good, and that the job is 'interesting and very important.' Eighty-six percent of the police who took the survey felt that morale was problematic: 40.5% (n=56) and described it as 'not so good', while 46% (n=64) described it as 'really low'.[20]

Figure 1: How is morale in the SAPS today?

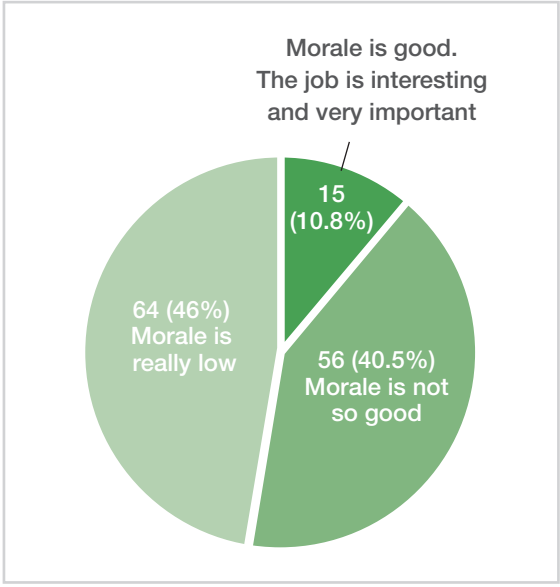
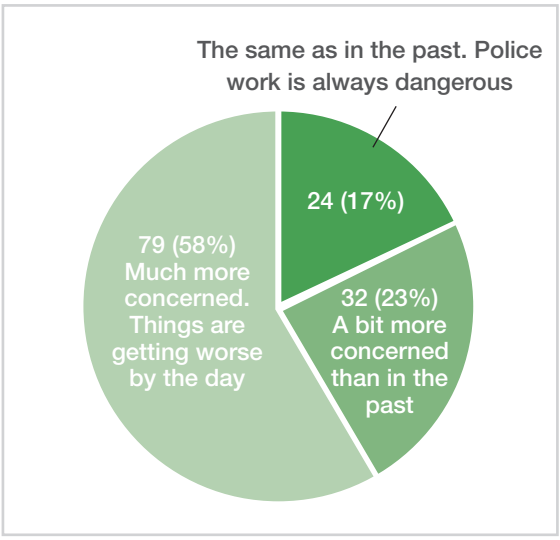


Figure 2: How concerned are police with their safety?[21]



The second question focused on past and current concerns about safety to ascertain how these attitudes have changed over time. Fifty-eight percent of the respondents (n=79) agreed with the statement that police are now 'much more concerned with their safety. Things are getting worse by the day.' Twenty-three percent (n=32) were 'a bit more concerned than in the past', while 17 percent (n=24) rated their levels of concern for their safety as 'the same as in the past [because] police work is always dangerous.'

Understanding serious injuries

To contrast officers' safety perceptions against experiences of injuries while on duty we asked respondents whether they had suffered serious injuries while on duty in the last five years. If they had been injured, we asked them to describe the injuries and the incident that led to the injuries.

Ninety two percent of respondents (n=127) did not experience any injuries while on duty. Only five percent (n=7), indicated that they had suffered an injury. Of these 7 cases, four related to a physical injury, namely a deep cut to the

head, a knee injury, a broken finger, and one responded noted that he experienced pain, but didn't describe the injury. All four officers had been injured while attempting to arrest suspects. Two respondents indicated that they suffer from PTSD because of their experiences. One respondent noted that a petrol bomb was thrown at his house, but he did not suffer any injury. Another respondent noted that he had sustained a back injury during operational duties but did not provide further details.

Four respondents provided more general information, falling outside of the five-year window. A major general with thirty-three years' service stated that he had never been injured but "there had been many attempts". Similarly, a Colonel with 35 years' service stated that although he had never been injured, many of his members were attacked in shebeens and in other incidents, for example, when vehicles were stoned. Another Colonel, with 26 years' service, highlighted an incident from 15 years ago where she had been shot at while driving a police van and she was pregnant at the time.

Colleagues killed

Respondents were then asked whether they had colleagues who had been killed on or off during in the past five years. Figure 3 shows that 38 percent of respondents (n=52[22]) knew of a colleague who had been killed in the last five years. The most notable cause of death among these was by gunshot (n=42) sustained while the officers were on duty or during investigations. Three of the deaths were described as "accidental," which in SAPS parlance generally refers to 'friendly fire' (where an officer is shot by a colleague) or where an officer may have accidentally shot themselves through the mishandling of firearms.[23]

Seven respondents knew officers who were stabbed while on duty. It is interesting to note that none of the respondents reported cases where off-duty officers were stabbed. On duty road traffic collisions accounted for six cases with one further off-duty road traffic collision where the circumstances were unspecified.

Figure 3: Cause of death among colleagues (on and off duty)

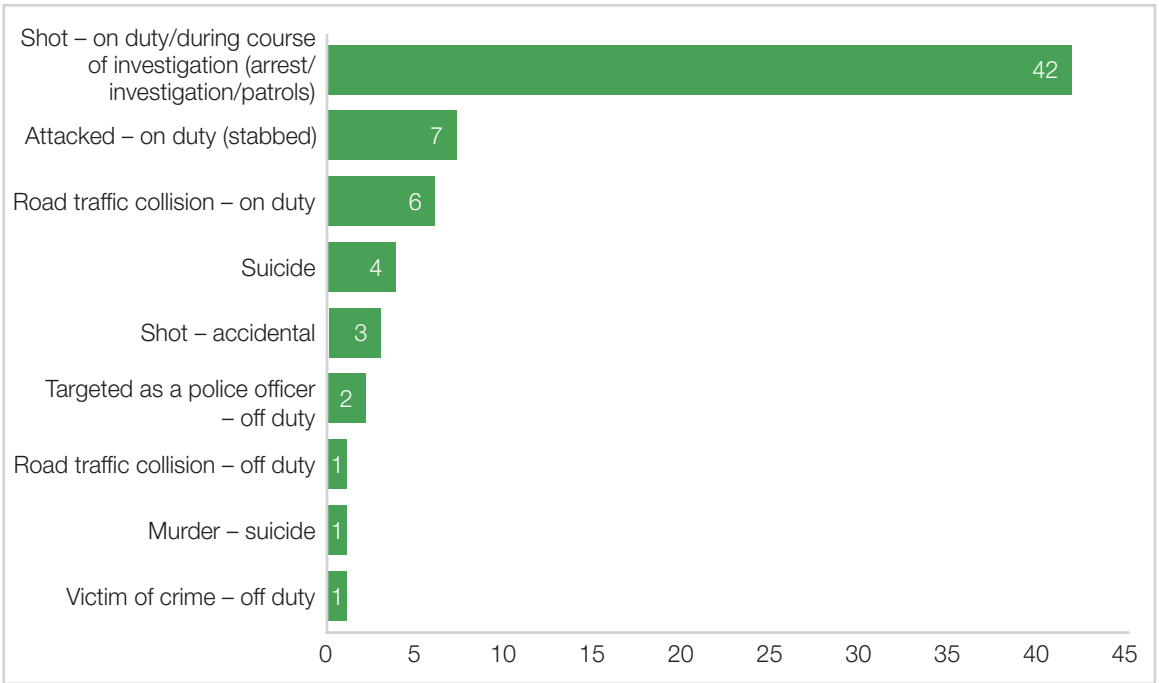
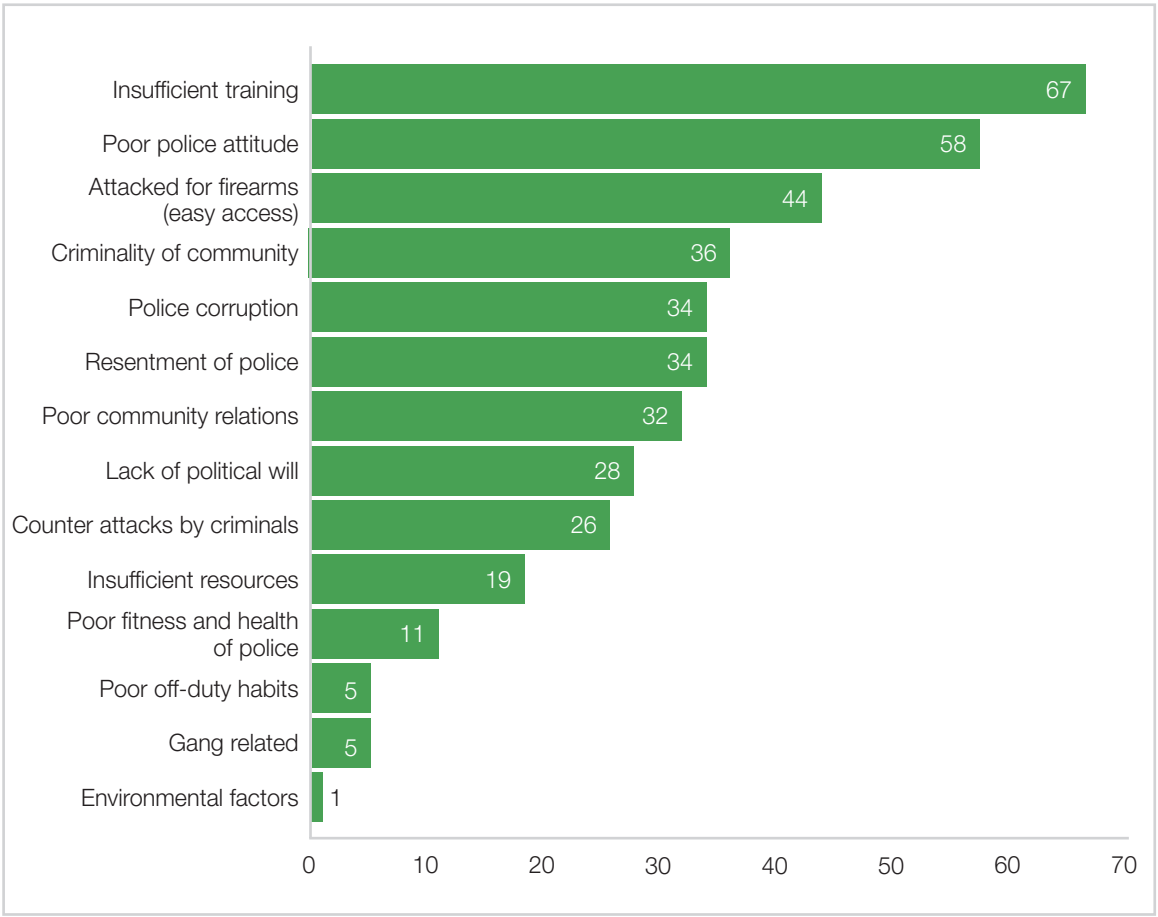


Figure 4: Reasons for attacks on officers



Police suicide[24] remains an ongoing concern for SAPS members and leadership alike. Respondents noted four cases of suicide and one case of murder-suicide which an officer murdered their significant other prior to committing suicide.

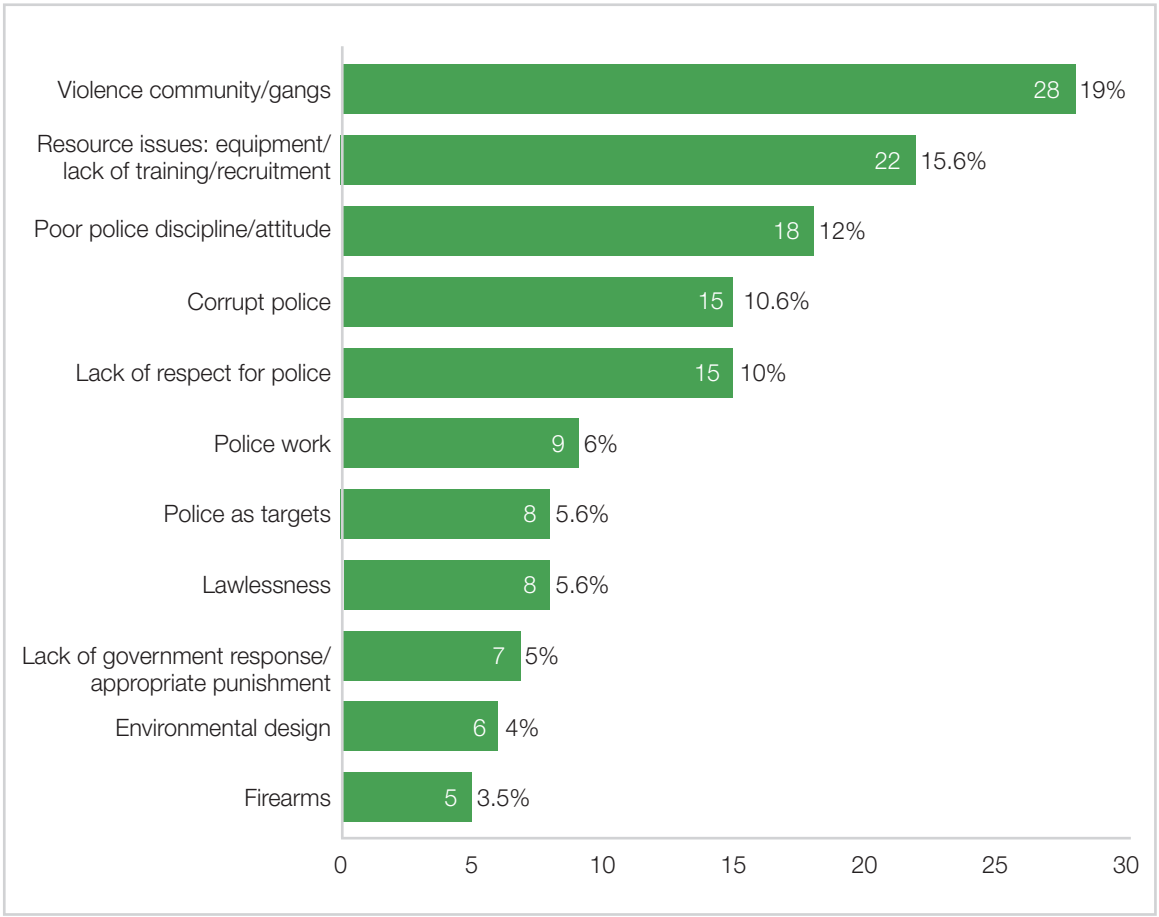
Three off-duty deaths were reported: two officers were described as having been targeted because they were SAPS members and one was described as 'a victim of crime'.

Determining danger

To measure how they identified danger, respondents were asked to indicate three reasons why police officers are attacked. Fourteen themes emerged among the reasons they provided, which were grouped thematically (see Figure 4), and covering issues like resources and equipment, training and preparation, organised crime, community issues, criminal justice system problems, corruption and complacency and political reasons.[25]

Looking at these responses thematically, 27 percent (n=133) attributed attacks on the police to the criminality of communities and organised crime/gangs. Explanations that fell under this broad theme included the fact that criminals target the police to steal their firearms and the fact that career criminals frequently do not fear the law. Respondents also noted that the pulse of many communities changing with respect to policing, arguing for example that there was "a breakdown of social order" and "a social decay of the community's values".

Figure 5: Biggest dangers confronting the police[26]



A sizeable number of respondents (13 percent, n=62) blamed the fact that officers are being attacked on the fact the criminal justice system is "ineffective". One respondent noted that "the criminal justice system is totally broken down" while others lamented that "punishments are light" and "there is no deterrence." Respondents felt that other sectors of the criminal justice system were to blame noting that "arrest made by a police official sent to court, case not prosecuted, less sentences" and that "criminals are granted bail … they don't fear the law and they come out to hunt for us."

Respondents also stated that training-related issues were a concern in respect of attacks on them. One respondent noted that "police lack adequate equipment [such as] guns, uniforms, bullet proof vests." The quality of bullet proof vests was also raised, arguing that they were "too heavy" to be operationally functional. Respondents felt that there was an over-emphasis in allocating resources to special units while other police departments were neglected.

Figure 5 shows that the issues that respondents raised as the reasons for attacks on the police largely mirrored the biggest dangers they identified as confronting the police today.

Leadership speaks

Recognising and identifying how police leaders perceive danger is a first step to understanding how and why they make the decisions that they do in respect of policing actions. I discuss the key themes that were raised below.

Operational readiness: an individual problem

Operational readiness speaks to the ability of the officer to self-mobilise in dangerous circumstances, and covers both equipment and firearm serviceability and the officer's efforts to maintain them. Officers' individual ability and focus were identified as key issues. Respondents argued that officers were not operationally ready when at work. And yet, during fieldwork for the larger research project, I noticed that posters were placed throughout police stations by police managers as a visual reminder to frontline officers. These posters read: 'Ensure that you are operationally ready' – with a survival checklist emboldened in red writing splashed across the poster.

Operational readiness also incorporates the idea that officers should undergo continuous professional development and should seek to improve their operational and tactical skills.[27] Respondents also noted that many officers were originally trained as soldiers, and transitioned later to become police officers: 'There are soldiers who crossed to police service, they ignore police training yet this is a different environment'. Some respondents felt that these former soldiers underestimated or ignored police training, even though the operational environment was clearly different. They noted that the militaristic nature often associated with policing, and particularly in the South African context, does not necessarily translate into operational readiness. Respondents therefore appeared to interpret operational readiness in a much broader operational sense.

Health and mental fitness

Many respondents spoke of issues surrounding the fitness and overall well-being of police, noting that officers failed to keep themselves fit in order to carry out their duties. This fitness narrative however, extended beyond the well-worn rhetoric of the SAPS members being overweight.[28] Respondents also spoke to the fact that many officers are not mentally fit as a result of overwork and not having appropriate periods of rest to recover. In this sense, the lack of officers available for duty was noted as a problem that feeds the problematic realities of operational readiness. Reduced staffing directly impacts operations in this regard.

The lack of suitable and usable equipment was also considered as a factor in attacks upon police. Indeed, the provision of Bullet Resistant Vests (BRVs) can be seen as a formal response by the police organisation to danger. During fieldwork, uniform officers and detectives alike often did not wear the BRV or partially wore it – in other words, with one protective plate instead of the required two.[29] This spoke to both the limited functionality and (dis)comfort levels involved in wearing their BRV. In the survey senior managers agreed with frontline officers, noting that the vests were 'too heavy' and too cumbersome to wear.

These responses must be considered with the finding that SAPS members are often perceived as being indifferent to their own safety when working and, as a result, are not alert to the potential dangers around them. Four respondents noted the issue of the members using their mobile while on duty. One respondent explained: 'Members are very relaxed, sometimes you will find the passenger in the van busy with cell phone instead of checking their surroundings'.

Indeed, the issue of preoccupation with mobile phones was something which the author noted as an ongoing issue of concern during ethnographic fieldwork. This issue was not isolated to a specific group of officers and phone distraction was noted on a regular basis working across three different operational units (Visible Policing, Detectives and the Tactical Response Team). In one case, a SAPS front seat passenger was observed playing the

mobile phone game 'Candy Crush' for a full 20 minutes, while driving through the township with one of the highest rates of civilian and police murders in South Africa. The fact that only four respondents identified mobile phone distractions as a concern, particularly when compared to the author's commonplace experience in the field with frontline police officers, raises important questions about the visibility that leaders have with their respective teams.

Taking home firearms

The use of firearms by the SAPS has featured prominently in debates, both past and present, particularly about the use of lethal force by police.[30] There is a complex, if not paradoxical, relationship between the SAPS and firearms. For the senior police personnel, firearms were both a source of safety and of danger. One respondent recognised the tension between the issue of bringing firearms home, noting, 'This can be argued from both sides. Yes – for their protection and safety. No – depending on the character, personality, circumstances can be used as a weapon against family and/or themselves (suicide)'.

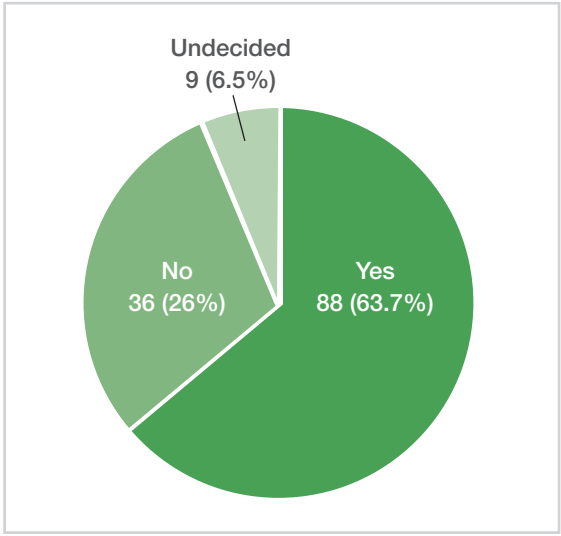
Dockets analysed for the larger project covered the 12 years between 2002 and 2014, and showed that only 20% of all police murders in the Western Cape were committed for the purpose of obtaining the officer's firearm. Even though the officer's firearm may have been taken during many of the other 80% of incidents, the weapon does not seem to have been the primary motivation for the killing. Despite these statistics, Figure 6 shows that 63.7% of senior personnel believed that officers should take their firearms home when off duty. The reasons given spanned from self-defence and the idea that they are police officers at all times, to reasons that it was not.

The views of senior personnel differed significantly from front line officers who believed that they were targeted for their firearms. But, as one respondent explained, 'Most members are attacked to get hold of their firearms. Members visit shebeens with their firearms and get drunk and robbed'. This narrative differs from that of frontline officers who failed to identify where these attacks actually occurred as readily. While most junior officers believe that they are being killed for their firearms at these locations, the reality may be somewhat different. With over 25 000 illegal *shebeens* in the Cape Town area,[32] it is more likely the type of premises and intoxicated behaviours that take place there cause these robberies, rather than the mere fact of having a firearm.

Respondents that believed that police should not take their firearms home pointed to officers' lack of operational readiness and negligence. One respondent explained: 'police are not under siege; whilst off duty they tend to lose the firearms as a result of negligence'.

The reality of having to deal with domestic violence cases was also a matter of concern for many regarding firearms. One respondent noted, 'I have had too many experiences where the opportunity is suddenly at hand to solve an internal challenge. Directly involved

Figure 6: Should police take their firearms home with them?[31]



in experiences in 4 suicides (3 with service pistols).' Since 2015, little appears to have changed. In 2017/18, 11 SAPS officers were killed as a result of domestic violence, seven of them by fellow SAPS officers.[33] Respondent's recognised the risk of officers having firearms, where increases in domestic violence involving officers and the potential of murder/suicide

Corruption and complacency

Fifty-seven percent (57%) of respondents commented on the presence of corruption as a contributing factor to the danger experienced within the SAPS. Corruption occurs amongst the ranks and danger is then seen as something which does not just manifest as an external threat but often stems from within the organisation itself. Responses were unanimous in the perception that, 'the enemy is amidst us, some members are corrupt, so they organise there [criminals] attacks against own colleagues to be successful in drug activities', 'the police themselves, they [are] involve[d] in criminal activities'. Indeed, one respondent simply stated, 'the SAPS are corrupt'. Throughout the world, corruption is understood as an organisationally pervasive and historically persistent part of police organisations.[34] Through this lens, a perception of corrupt officers has now become a perceived state of existence in the SAPS.

During the funeral for a murdered officer, who had been robbed and stabbed on his way to work,[35] the head of the Hawks, a senior officer and the deceased officer's boss, stated 'we will continue rooting out corrupt officials and name and shame them'. However, the deceased was not known to be involved in any corrupt activities. By confessing to the existence of corruption in the police there is an acknowledgement that this issue may be partly responsible for officers being killed in the first place. Such narratives also succeed in indicating that danger is something that lurks inside the organisation itself,[36] and is almost omnipresent, regardless of an officer's rank. It is important to note that beliefs about corruption also feed into poor morale in the SAPS, and become mutually reinforcing.

Political reasons

Explaining why police are being attacked and/or murdered, one respondent noted, 'politicians have created that environment by blaming police for any action they take'. This blame appears to be driven by suggestions of political rhetoric. As one respondent noted: 'Politics is setting the tone towards the police officers. Top management is attacked verbally at Parliament'. One of the ongoing issues in the appointment of senior officers within the SAPS is that much of the top leadership in the SAPS is in disarray because of political appointments at the expense of competent career police officials.[37] The lack of an independent selection panel for senior police appointments adds a credibility concern to those personnel who then become appointed. Questions of transparency in the hiring process will remain without independent selection panels.

Emotional responses

Emotions are a background to cognition and behaviour. Drodge and Murphy highlight how the role of emotions in leadership, when they were discussed at all, tended to be viewed either negatively as irrational dimensions of mind interfering with the rational business of leading or as a discrete psychological category subsumed within emotional intelligence.[38] This stance is now considered somewhat of a police stereotype of what a leader is meant to do, in other words, set emotions aside and calmly calculate the most appropriate decision.

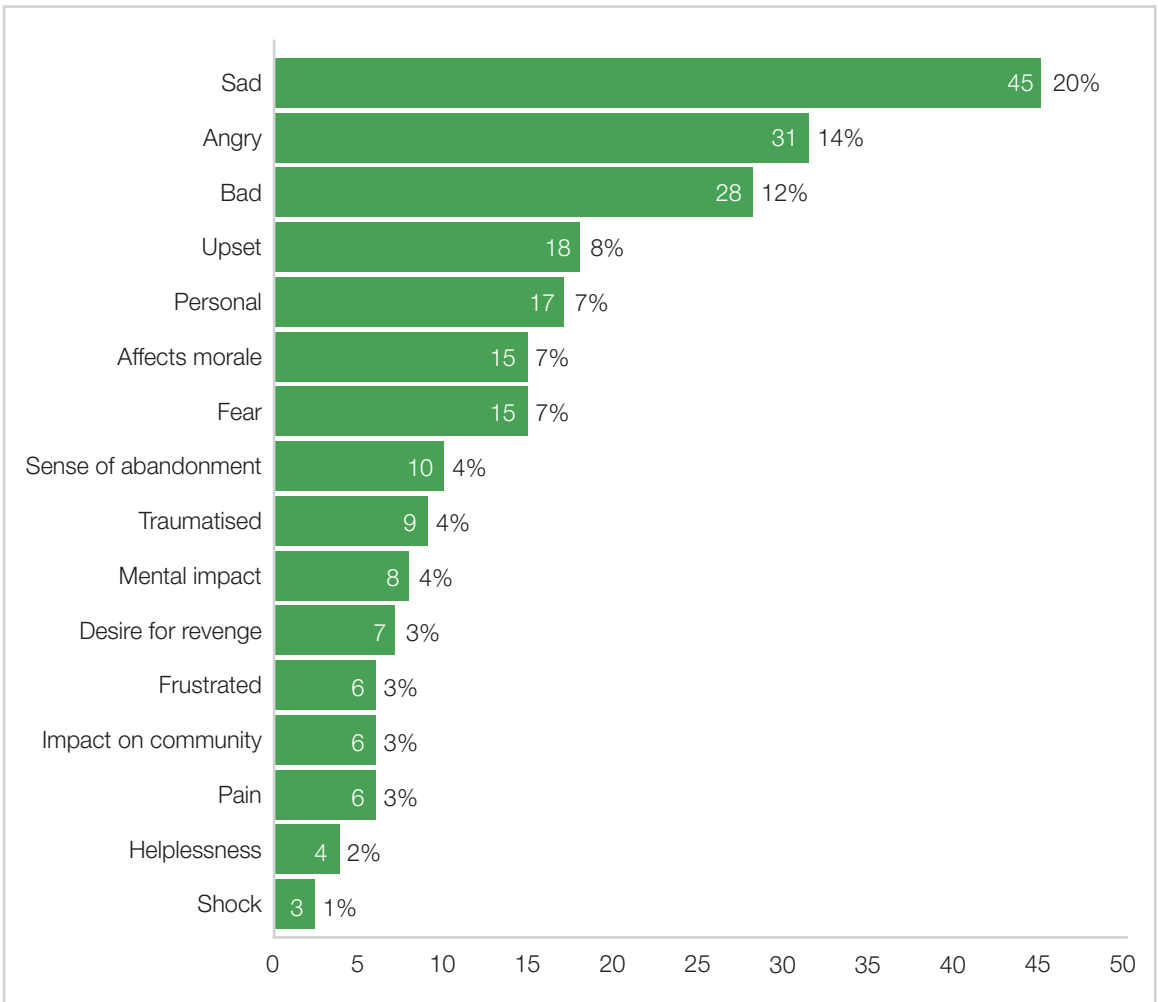
Respondents were asked how they felt when a member of the police is attacked or

murdered (see Figure 7 below). This question was posed because rarely, if ever, are senior members asked to speak about how they feel. More often than not the murder of police officers is discussed as a quantifiable thing where the emotional impact of the officer is left unexamined. In response, one officer responded in a single sentence: 'Bad, sad and angry'. This response captures all of the officers' views, although they replied with varying levels of emotion. Another noted that they felt 'gutted' and added that 'It feels like a member of my family was shot.'

Many responses also spoke to a sense of abandonment by both the state and communities they serve. Responses looked at the impact of these attacks from more than just the organisational perspective. One respondent noted, 'there is a community impact – community is robbed of a member keeping them safe' and another noted, 'I am concerned because it looks like everything is going chaotic and is lawlessness is taking place'. The sense of state abandonment could be read between the lines of these responses.

Understanding the depth of emotional response of the SAPS leadership is important to be able to determine the emotional labour, which is often portrayed through the stereotype as described above. In this survey, the responses

Figure 7: Feelings when a member of the police is attacked or murdered[39]



highlighted how SAPS' leaders related to these incidents where officers experienced danger. As noted by one, 'I feel very bad because I am their commander. They are my sons and daughters'. The feeling of losing a relative was a common thread. One respondent noted, 'it's like a loss of a family member- like one of my own murdered. Gutted'. Emotional labour is understood as the effort required to create emotions for organisational goals. These responses, however, are not categorised as staged or feigned. If anything, they reflect how personally the police deal with such attacks.

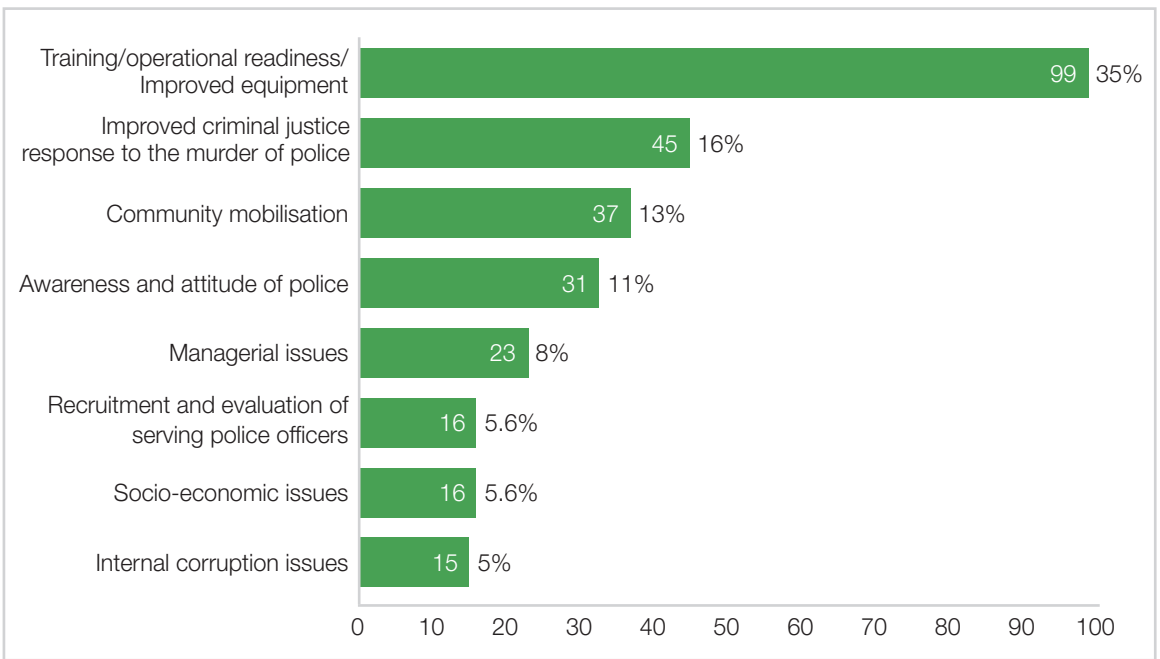
Solutions

Officers were asked for possible solutions that could prevent the killing of officers. As figure 8 shows, many of their responses echoed elements of the reasons for attacks and killings in the first place.

Responses about the possible solutions to prevent killing of officers were grouped thematically, and were rich and varied, which underscores the importance of soliciting opinions from within the leadership personnel. The theme 'Training/Operational Readiness' and 'Equipment' gained the largest response owing to the fact that these issues often overlap with each other. For example one respondent stated, 'Officers must be well equipped and tactically trained to fight back'. Such responses were then coded under both the training and equipment sub-themes. There was also a degree of overlap between the themes of 'training' and 'awareness and attitude of the police' as respondents believed that the attitude and awareness of police officers could be improved through 'emotional intelligence' and 'mindset' training. One respondent suggested using motivational speakers to address staff could assist in improving the attitude and morale of members.

One of the benefits of the questionnaire approach is that potential solutions are often embedded in the respondents comments. One respondent noted, 'It depends – in today's life our members also face personal problems, so we have to do first a risk analysis in order to make sure members personal life is healthy and

Figure 8: Possible solutions to prevent killing of officers[40]



Source: Own data.

[assess their] domestic violence risk'. The fact that an officer with domestic violence issues is allowed to still serve in the police may be surprising to some, however it is a reality to many in South Africa where domestic violence is a common problem.

Many respondents noted that improved relationships with communities would also assist in preventing the danger that officers are exposed to. Reponses noted that there was, 'a breakdown in social order" and that 'high levels of unemployment' and 'social decay of the community's values' appeared to be contributory factors in the poor relationships between the SAPS and the communities they served.

Responses about the criminal justice system were noted across many questions posed. One respondent noted that 'the criminal justice system is totally broken down and is ineffective and as such it was no deterrence' [sic]. Another noted that 'due to the justice system, arrest made by a police official sent to court, case not prosecuted, less sentences'. Again this feeds into the overall poor morale felt within the organisation. If these are the responses from senior personnel, it questions the overall tone being set within the organisation itself.

Conclusion

The stresses that police leaders experience should not be ignored in discussions about danger that the police face. While they may not be injured or killed at the same rate as their colleagues, they endure additional organisational stressors such as enforcing rules and regulations and making personnel decisions. Police work is continually evolving in terms of community orientation and the stressors in the workplace. This would suggest that emotional competence is now more than ever a requirement for successful policing.

In recent times the mental well-being of the police has come into sharp focus. Internationally and in South Africa, the rise in suicides has exceeded those injured and killed on duty. Based on calculations from the 2012–13 SAPS annual report and Statistics South Africa, the number of police deaths by suicide was 73.9 per 100 000 officers. By comparison, 0.9 per 100 000 suicide deaths in the wider South Africans population.[41] As such, understanding the emotional impact on officers in senior leadership roles has value in further unpacking the challenges associated with police work particularly in a South African context. SAPS leadership appear in tune with these concerns.

The 2020 Police Safety Strategy[42] addresses some of the concerns raised here but owing to the worldwide impact of Covid-19 this plan has yet to be truly operationalised. The plan itself, however, appears to be a reimagined version of an older police safety strategy, seen by this author, with issues relating to COVID 19 merely added to it.

Understanding the responses of senior police officials to danger has important consequences for policing. First, it offers some insight into the health and managerial temperament of the larger overall police organisation. Secondly, as argued by Davis and Silvestri,[43] challenging the traditional command-based militaristic style of police leadership and examining the emotive responses promotes a more approachable, supportive, and empowering workplace. Thirdly, it underscores the well-being of the individual officer, which is central to how police conduct the practical business of policing. Identifying the responses of the SAPS leadership to danger may also assist in understanding how police leaders cope with stress. The effect of stress can directly impact their decision making and as a result the leadership given to their subordinates. The findings of this research therefore provide insight into how the police perceive and respond to danger, and contribute to understanding why SAPS may police in the manner in which they do.

To comment on this article visit
http://www.issafrica.org/sacq.php

Notes

1 Dr Gráinne Perkins is the former Interim Director of Police Accountability for the Seattle Police Department in the United States and is an adjunct faculty member at Seattle University. Her professional experience, spanning three continents, working within three different police agencies, is complemented with sustained criminological research and publications on occupational and organisational aspects of policing, including police suicide, memorialisation in policing and body-worn cameras. Her research was awarded the Homicide Studies, 2019 Richard Block Award for a PhD in Criminology from the University of Cape Town South Africa. She is currently writing a book entitled, *Danger in Police Culture: Perspectives from South Africa*, which is due to be published by Emerald Publishers in early 2023. Dr Perkins would like to thank would like to thank Mr Julius Kaka MSc, Research Consultant at Kings College London, who greatly assisted in the first thematic grouping of the data. She would also like to thank Professor Elrena Van Der Spuy, from the University Cape Town, who was instrumental in the development and administration of the questionnaire.

2 The term 'officer' refers to a member of the police service and not specifically to a senior-ranking official. The term officer, member and police are used interchangeably throughout this discussion.

3 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Global Study on Homicide 2011: Trends, Contexts, Data (Vienna: UNODC, 2011), http://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/statistics/Homicide/Globa_study_on_homicide_2011_web.pdf; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Global Study on Homicide 2013: Trends, Contexts, Data*. (Vienna: UNODC, 2013), https://www.unodc.org/gsh/; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Global Study on Homicide 2019: Trends, Contexts, Data*. (Vienna: UNDOC, 2019), https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/gsh/Booklet1.pdf.

4 Anine Kreigler and Mark Shaw, *A Citizen's Guide to Crime Trends in South Africa* (Cape Town: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2016).

5 South African Police Service, Annual Reports 2002–2014 (Pretoria: South African Police Service, 2015), https://www.saps.gov.za/about/stratframework/annualreports_arch.php.

6 This time period was selected as the last research on the murder of South African police was conducted in 2000; see Anthony Minnaar, "The Murder of Members of The South African Police Service: Some Findings on Common Causes and Practical Preventative Steps," *Acta Criminologica: African Journal of Criminology & Victimology* 16, no. 3 (2003): 1–27, https://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC28788.

7 South African Police Service, *Police Safety Strategy Plan* (Pretoria: South African Police Service, 2020).

8 Lizette Lancaster, " Where Do Murders Occur in South Africa?", *ISS Today*, 25 September 2013, http://www.issafrica.org/iss-today/where-do-murders-occur-in-south-africa.

9 South African Police Service, *Strategic Plan 2010 to 2014* (Pretoria: South African Police Service, 2010), https://www.saps.gov.za/about/stratframework/strategic_plan/2010_2014/strategic_plan_2010_2014.pdf

10 Mbekezeki Mkhize and Phathutshedzo Madumi, "Are Police Deaths a Consequence of Flaws in the South African Police Service Administration? A SWOT Analysis," *African Security Review* 25, no. 4 (2016): 323–339, DOI: 10.1080/10246029.2016.1225584.

11 Johan Burger, "Shooting back: The Crisis of Police Killings in South Africa", *ISS Today*, 25 November 2015, https://issafrica.org/iss-today/shooting-back-the-crisis-of-police-killings-in-south-africa; Theresa Mallinson. "Carte Blanche Report: Police Killings What the Numbers Really Tell Us," *Daily Maverick*, 16 August 2011, www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2011-08-16-carte-blanche-report-police-killingswhat-the-numbers-really-tell-us/.

12 Greg Nicolson, "Police killings: Zuma Tells Cops to Fight Back," *Daily Maverick*, 7 September 2015, https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2015-09-07-police-killings-zuma-tells-cops-to-fight-back/.

13 South African Police Service, *Annual Report 2015/2016* (Pretoria: South African Police Service, 2015), https://www.saps.gov.za/about/stratframework/annualreports_arch.php.

14 The research included over 900 hours working alongside three police units (uniform, detectives and the Tactical Response Team), a review of all murder dockets of police in the Western Cape between 2002 and 2014, 19 semi-structured interviews across different ranks and personnel and attendance at nine police funeral and memorial services.

15 One respondent did not declare a home language.

16 Table 1 denotes the rank structure of the South African Police Service members who were present.

17 Etzel Cardeña, Elaine Hatfield, John Cacioppo and Richard Rapson, *Emotional Contagion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

18 Cardeña et al., *Emotional Contagion*.

19 Tom Cockcroft, "Police Culture and Police Leadership," in *Police Leadership*, ed. Pauline Ramshaw, Marisa Silvestri and Mark Simpson (Cham, UK, Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), DOI: 10.1007/978-3-030-21469-2_2.

20 Three 'Unknown' responses were received where two respondents marked all boxes, and one left all blank.

21 Three officers failed to respond (1 Major, 2 Captains).

22 This figure does not suggest that 52 officers were killed as it is possible that two respondents separately reported the death of the same person.

23 The author has knowledge of such shootings that occurred during fieldwork.

24 The Police Safety Strategy Plan (2020) now delineates suicide into two categories, Individual suicide and Homicide Suicide, also known as 'extended suicide', which is noted as the killing of another person and subsequently taking your own life.

25 In question 5, 115 respondents provided three or more answers, 10 respondents gave two answers, eight respondents provided one answer and two respondents failed to respond to the question.

26 Five respondents failed to respond (1 Warrant Officer, 3 Captains and 1 Colonel).

27 South African Police Service, *Annual Report 2015/2016* https://www.saps.gov.za/about/stratframework/annualreports_arch.php.

28 Chiara Carter, "Top Brass to Ambush Fat Cops", *IOL News*, 24 September 2005, https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/top-brass-set-to-ambush-fat-cops-254295; Siphokazi Fokazi, "SA cops are 'fat, sick and stressed,'" IOL News, 12 March 2015, https://www.iol.co.za/news/crime-courts/sa-cops-are-fat-sick-and-stressed-1830856.

29 Gráinne Perkins, "Danger and death: organisational and occupational responses to the murder of police in South Africa-a case study" (PhD Dissertation, University of Cape Town, 2018), http://hdl.handle.net/11427/29287.

30 David Bruce, "Lessons and Limitations of South African Research: Stopping Cop Killing", *South African Crime Quarterly* 2, no. 2 (2020): 13–17; David Bruce, "Killing and the

Constitution – Arrest and the Use of Lethal Force", *South African Journal of Human Rights* 19, no. 3 (2003): 450–454; David Bruce, *An Acceptable Price to Pay? The Use of Lethal Force by Police in South Africa* (Pinelands, South Africa: Open Society Foundation For South Africa, 2011); David Bruce, "Beyond Section 49: Control of the Use of Lethal Force", *South African Crime Quarterly* 36 (2011): 3–12; Anneke Osse and Ignacio Cano, "Police Deadly Use of Firearms: An International Comparison," *The International Journal of Human Rights* 21, no. 5 (2017): 629–649; Duxita Mistry, Anthony Minnaar, Jean Redpath and Jabu Dlamini, *The Use of Force by Members of the SAPS: A Case Study of Seven Policing Areas in Gauteng* (Cape Town: Institute for Human Rights and Criminal Justice Studies and Technikon SA, compiled for the Independent Complaints Directorate).

31 Five officers failed to respond (1 Lieutenant Colonel, 1 Warrant Officer and 3 Captains).

32 Parliamentary Monitoring Group (PMG), "Report of the Portfolio Committee on Police on Oversight Visits to Police Stations in Nyanga and Philippi in the Western Cape Province", 31 October 2014, https://pmg.org.za/tabled-committee-report/2126/.

33 Andrew Faull, "South Africa: Police Murder-Suicide Reveals South Africa's Dark Underbelly", *ISS Today*, 12 Dec 2018, https://issafrica.org/iss-today/police-murder-suicide-reveals-south-africas-dark-underbelly

34 Andrew Faull, "Corruption and the South African Police Service. A Review and its Implications," *Institute for Security Studies Papers* 150 (2007): 20, https://issafrica.org/research/papers/corruption-and-the-south-african-police-service-a-review-and-its-implications.

35 On the 28th of July 2015, at approximately 5 am, Warrant Officer Petrus Johannes Burger Holz was driving to work to begin his shift. On his way between Somerset West, a suburb of Cape Town, and Khayelitsha, a township, he was forced to pull to the side of the highway. His tyres had been damaged by objects that had been deliberately placed on the road. When he pulled off the road he was then subjected to a car hijacking and was stabbed to death at the side of the road. Four suspects were arrested of whom one was subsequently convicted of murder.

36 Perkins, "Danger and death".

37 South African Policing Union (SAPU), https://www.sapu.org.za/.

38 Edward Drodge and Steven Murphy, "Interrogating Emotions in Police Leadership," *Human Resource Development Review* 1, no. 4 (2002): 420–438.

39 Five respondents failed to respond (1 Warrant Officer, 3 Captains and 1 Colonel). Seventy-five respondents provided more than one answer.

40 Nine officers failed to respond (1 Major, 1 Lieutenant. Colonel, 1 Colonel, 3 Captains, 2 Warrant Officers and 1 constable). Twenty-nine respondents selected only one response.

41 Gráinne Perkins, "Shedding Light on the Hidden Epidemic of Police Suicide in South Africa," Mental Health Matters 3, no. 4 (2016): 50–52.

42 South African Police Service, *Police Safety Strategy Plan*. Pretoria: Visible Policing South African Police Service, 2020).

43 Claire Davis and Maria Silvestri, Critic*al Perspectives on Police Leadership* (Bristol Policy Press, 2020).