

Twilight Policing

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Twilight Policing

Private Security in Durban,
South Africa

Veiligheid in de Schemering
Particuliere veiligheid in Durban, Zuid-Afrika
(met een samenvatting in het Nederlands)

Proefschrift

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ANC	African National Congress
APLA	Azanian People's Liberation Army
BAC	Business Against Crime
BEE	Black Empowerment Equity
CID	City Improvement District
CPF	Community Policing Forum
CSVR	Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation
ESCCF	Extended Station Crime Combating Forum
DMA	Durban Metropolitan Area
GBAV	Global Burden of Armed Violence
GOCOC	Ground Operational Co-Ordinating Committee
ICD	Independent Complaints Directorate
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
ISS	Institute for Security Studies
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MK	Umkhonto we Sizwe
NCPS	National Crime Prevention Strategy
NP	National Party
NKP	National Key Point
NKPA	National Key Point Act
PAC	Pan-Africanist Congress
PSIRA	Private Security Industry Regulatory Authority
PTC	Police Tracking Computers
SADF	South African Defence Force
SAIDSA	South African Intruder Detection Services Association
SANDF	South African National Defence Force
SAP	South African Police
SAPS	South African Police Services
SAQA	South African Qualification Authority
SASA	South Africa Security Association
SASFED	South African Security Federation

SASSETA	South Africa Safety and Security Sector Education and Training Authority
SIA	Security Industry Alliance
SOA	Security Officers Act
SOB	Security Officers Board
SSA	Statistics South Africa
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
TVBC	Transkei, Venda, Bophuthatswana and Ciskei (independent homelands)
UIP	Urban Improvement Precint
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
VOCS	Victims of Crime Survey

Glossary

Bakkie	Pick-up (vehicle).
Black Label	Brand of South African beer.
Coolie	Derogatory term for Indian South Africans.
Docket	Police case/document.
Dom passes	Afrikaans for “dumb pass”. Passbooks implemented under the Pass Laws of 1923 to control the movement of non-Whites.
Eish	An expression to show one’s surprise, confusion, anger, or other emotion (slang). Similar to “gosh” or “oh my God”.
Graph	Work (slang).
Induna	isiZulu for chief and/or traditional leader. Also refers to leader, advisor, or boss.
Inyanga	isiZulu for herbalist and/or traditional healer.
Kaffir	Derogatory word for Black South Africans; derived from Arabic term for “unbeliever”.
Larnie	Boss or rich person (slang).
Location	Synonym for township.
Muthi	Traditional medicine, but often used when referring to spells and witchcraft more generally.
Necklacing	A form of lethal punishment, often described as lynching, whereby a rubber tire is filled with petrol, placed around a person’s chest or arms, and set on fire.
Oak	Male (slang).
Ouman	Old man (derived from Afrikaans).
Rookie	Young and/or inexperienced armed response officer.
Skop, skiet en donder	Afrikaans for “Kick, shoot, and thunder”. Refers to the mentality of the state police during apartheid.
Stekkie	Woman (slang).
Swart gevaar	Afrikaans for “black threat”.
Township	Area (residential) designated for non-Whites during apartheid. Also referred to as “locations”.
Umantshingelani	isiZulu for “marching the line”. Refers to security guards and is currently regarded as a derogatory term.

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A great writer, Harry Matthews, once wrote, "Experience itself, past or present: as we represent it in words, it is assuredly modified, it's reduced, it's stripped of what is virtually an infinite ambiguity of interpretation and given only one version of itself- it becomes that other object which is the set of words of our description" (1988: 12). This book is my (own) version of events, and I can only hope that the words I have chosen are an adequate reflection of your perceptions and experiences and that they truly convey how very grateful I am.

Tessa G. Diphorn
Istanbul, May 2013

PART I

**ENTERING
THE TWILIGHT**

Prologue

In October 2007, I embarked on my first visit to South Africa to determine the specific course and dimensions of this research project. Luckily, during my first week in Durban, I found myself among a small group of people who were eager to introduce me to the nightlife, and it was on a Thursday night, *phuza night* as they call it in Durban, when the first seeds of this research topic were sown.

We had gone to someone's house for beers and I felt thrilled to be exploring the city that would be my second home for the next few years. After we'd had a few drinks, the dancing itch kicked in and it was time to venture outdoors. Yet this single move seemed to take forever due to an interminable discussion about how to get from point A to B: how many taxis do we take, which taxi company do we trust, who goes into which taxi, which route to follow to avoid particular intersections, and so on. I felt impatient and agitated. I didn't understand what all the fuss was about. "Why are we worrying about such trivial matters?" I thought to myself. "Let's just go!" And even after my friends had decided and we had reached our destination, the discussion lingered, reappearing in every conversation like a perpetual echo.

I learned there and then that this was an essential part of South African life – a social practice, perhaps a ritual, that is inherent to every type of social activity. The issue at stake was not transport but *security*. That first night was my initiation into understanding how security is ingrained in the daily practices of South Africans and how for many, these practices have become so mundane that their performance goes largely unnoticed. Although many South Africans are acutely aware of their surroundings and regularly complain about how safety concerns impact upon their lives – such as by barricading themselves behind high walls – they are not always fully aware of the complexities behind this all-encompassing presence of security. Certainly, there are varying degrees of security consciousness, ranging from some people who refuse to leave their houses after sunset to others who drive around with their car doors unlocked. Yet at the end of the day, all South Africans, regardless of class, race, age, gender, or background, operate with a constant layer of security consciousness. Although crime statistics justify both the real and perceived need for this alertness to security, the fear of becoming a statistic or the subject of some horror story told at dinner parties is the most pervasive.

As an outsider, I was initially overwhelmed and could not (and perhaps did not want to) absorb it all. The simple act of driving a car turned into an exhaustive series of

enforced security measures: lock your doors, don't leave your windows open, put your purse/bag under your legs or in the trunk, always look in your various mirrors, don't stop at a red light after 21:00, and so the list continues. Only in my second, longer period of fieldwork did I accept and eventually internalise these practices.

The bewilderment I felt at this normalcy and prevalence of security measures gave rise to this research project. How do South Africans experience this "culture of security", both individually and collectively? How does it influence social relations and dynamics? More importantly, which actors take and/or are given the authority and legitimacy to address the situation? It was this last question that led me to the private security industry in South Africa. Over the last six years, I have delved deeply into the lives of the people working in private security. Yet this book is merely a small segment of their world, a wonky slice of cake cut by a dull knife. And although it is primarily concerned with the daily occupational endeavours of these men, this research project started from a desire to understand how we, as individuals, survive and cope in volatile conditions and to whom we assign the authority to guide us in this process.

1

Twilight Policing: The Performance of Sovereign Power

Introduction

November 2008

I'm on day shift duty with William, an Indian senior armed response officer in his early 50s, and we're driving through one of Durban's residential neighbourhoods. After a quiet morning mostly taken up by a range of administrative tasks, we hear over the radio that there has just been a "robbery on a domestic of a client". The suspect is described as a "Bravo Mike wearing a white jacket and dark pants" and is apparently heading towards a nearby petrol station.¹

By chance, we are driving through that very area, and without any obvious sign of hesitation, William takes action: he slams on the gas pedal, commands me to "keep my eyes open", informs the radio controller that we are "going to check it out", and instructs Bongani, a black armed response officer in his late 20s, to provide back-up. Just a few minutes later, we drive by a park and spot a young, black male casually walking by who fits the description. William hits the brakes and jumps out of the vehicle, quickly followed by Bongani, who has pulled up right behind us.

While I remain in the vehicle, I observe how William and Bongani apprehend the suspect: they yell at him to stop where he is, firmly grab a hold of him, and conduct a body search. Bongani stands behind the suspect and clasps his hands behind his back as if he is about to make an arrest, while William stands in front of him and carries out the search. With a commanding tone of voice and intimidating demeanour, William demands that he explain his previous whereabouts and what "he is doing in the area". The suspect initially seems worried and objects to what is happening, but eventually he cooperates, chuckling sporadically as he answers their questions. William and Bongani do not find any money on him or other cause for suspicion, so they let him go. But before they do so, William gives the suspect a sharp shove in the chest and yells, "We know your face now and we're watching you. Don't go doing anything stupid or we'll fuck you up."

¹ Armed response companies use the NATO phonetic alphabet code for communication. Bravo thus stands for B and Mike for M. More specifically, "Bravo Mike" refers to "Black Male", an issue discussed further in chapter eight.

William and Bongani get back into their vehicles and we head towards the client's premises to speak to the domestic worker (maid). She describes how she was robbed of R 100, and after William and Bongani tell her about the man they just searched, she says that he was probably the guy who robbed her.² Bongani is angry that they "let the criminal go", but William is convinced that the man they stopped wasn't the criminal because he had a "normal heart rate" and showed no signs of "guilt or fear". When William offers to inform the police so that the domestic worker can report the case, she adamantly declines. "There's no need, please don't", she says. William nods and tells her to phone the company if she sees the suspect again or if anything else out of the ordinary happens. When we leave the premises, William explains to me how domestic workers never want to report crime to the police out of fear of revenge attacks on them and their family. We bid farewell to Bongani, get back into the vehicle, and resume our patrol of the area.



In the incident described above, we see how a victim of crime sought assistance from private actors, who dealt with the incident in a public space without ever involving the state police. Such occurrences are common across the world and highlight the prominence of "non-state policing bodies", actors engaged in the provision of security who are not (directly) aligned with the state. The global growth of non-state policing has unleashed an array of questions across academic disciplines concerned with violence, (in)security, sovereignty, and (dis)order.³ What do such incidents tell us about the authority and legitimacy of the state police? How should they be analysed, and what do they reveal about policing, security, and violence in post-apartheid urban South Africa and elsewhere?

This research project analyses the complex relationships between policing, security, and violence and contributes to conceptual debates about authority, legitimacy, and sovereignty. It does so through an ethnographic exploration of the everyday policing practices of armed response officers, such as William and Bongani, and their daily encounters with other actors, such as police officers and citizens. This study argues that any analysis of contemporary policing must focus on the entanglements between "non-state" and "state" policing practices and thereby move beyond the public-private policing divide. This research introduces the concept of *twilight policing*, which refers not only

2 Using an exchange rate of 11.3 South African Rand (ZAR) to the euro, this amounts to 8.5 euros. This exchange rate will be used throughout this book.

3 This chapter will not delve into the reasons for the growth of non-state policing, but is based on the premise that it has enlarged and diversified. For further readings on this matter, particularly with regard to the private security industry, see Avant (2005b), Johnston (1999), Jones and Newburn (1998, 2006), Mandel (2001), Schreier and Caparini (2005), Singer (2003), Small (2006), Zarate (1998), and Zedner (2006, 2009).

to the type of policing practices that I encountered in the field but also to a conceptual framework that allows us to analyse the interconnections between public and private policing beyond the South African context.

South Africa: The Research Location

South Africa is an ideal context in which to study the relationships between policing, security, and violence. It is known for its high rates of criminal violence, so high that Anthony Altbeker (2007), a South African criminologist, has labelled South Africa as “*a country at war with itself*”. South Africa is ranked eighth on the list of countries with average annual violent death rates of more than 30 per 100,000, and has the second highest murder rate in the African continent (UNODC 2011).⁴ The violent nature of crime is of particular concern: between 2003 and 2004, violent crime constituted more than a third of all reported crime (Gordon 2006: 94).⁵

One of the corollaries of this “culture of violence” (Altbeker 2007; Kynoch 2005; Scheper-Hughes 1997) is the prominence and ubiquity of non-state policing. Neighbourhood watches, private security companies, citizen patrols, vigilante groups, gangs, street committees, business associations, and other (collective) initiatives make up South Africa’s policing plethora.⁶ Since the political transition of 1994 that ended apartheid rule, crime has played a distinctive role in the formation of citizenship in South Africa, where active involvement in crime control constitutes a criterion for being seen as a “good citizen” (Bénit-Gbaffou 2008; Samara 2010; Singh 2008). Crime is *the* deliberated topic, and one does not have to look far to behold the spread and depth of securitization in South Africa: crime stories occupy the front pages of newspapers, each radio station has its own crime monitor, anti-hijacking presentations and training sessions are readily available and well attended, newspapers and newsletters are filled with “tips on how to be vigilante”, tear-gas-like sprays are sold at family markets, and car alarms are the penetrating sound in the nighttime urban realm. It is not only the

4 In the 2011 list on the Global Burden of Armed Violence (GBAV), the top 14 countries (in order) are El Salvador, Iraq, Jamaica, Honduras, Colombia, Venezuela, Guatemala, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Lesotho, Central African Republic, Sudan, Belize and the Democratic Republic of Congo. UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) (2011) identifies South Africa as having the ninth highest homicide/murder rate with an average of 36.5 per 100,000.

5 For an explanation of the high rates of violent crime in South Africa, see a summarised version of a report compiled by the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) for the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security (JCPS) cluster in *Security Focus* (2010), 28(11): 28-30.

6 For literature on vigilantism, see Buur (2005, 2006), Buur and Jensen (2004), Minnaar (2004), and Oomen (2004); for gangs, see Glaser (1998, 2000), Jensen (2008), Kinnes (2002), Kynoch (1999, 2005), Pinnock (1997), Standing (2006), and Steinberg (2004); for various forms of community policing, see Bénit-Gbaffou (2008), Emmett and Butchart (2000), Gordon (2001), Marks and Bonnin (2010), Marks and Wood (2007), Schärf (1989), and Steinberg (2008).

high crime rates that are important, but also, and perhaps more pervasively, the social consequences of crime and violence – fear and securitization – and the numerous measures employed to survive amidst such circumstances.

Among the wide array of policing bodies, the private security industry is unquestionably the leading player.⁷ The industry originated in the mining sector, entered the urban centres in the 1970s, and exploded during the height of the political resistance of the late 1980s and into the political transition circa 1994. South Africa is globally regarded as the “absolute ‘champion’ in the security industry” (De Waard 1999: 169); it currently has the largest private security sector in the world, valued at approximately two per cent of the country’s total GDP (Abrahamsen and Williams 2011; Singh 2008).⁸ In 2011, there were 8,828 registered private security providers, a growth of more than 60 per cent 2001 (PSIRA 2010-2011).⁹ Besides its vast size, the industry is also highly diverse, being categorised into 20 different types of security services by the Private Security Industry Regulatory Authority (PSIRA), the quasi-state body that regulates the industry.¹⁰

Approximately half of all South African households used physical measures to protect their homes in 2010, and 11.4 per cent employed some form of private security (VOCS 2011: 15). Walk down any road in (urban) South Africa and this is inescapable: the streets abound with high walls, barbed wire, electric fences, CCTV cameras, mobile

7 Within the field of private security, a common distinction is made between private military companies and private security companies (Foaleng 2007; Gumedze 2007; Schreier and Caparini 2005; Singer 2003; Small 2006). Private military companies provide military services that are purposely aimed at influencing a particular armed conflict or violence, and they are therefore widely regarded as “a direct protagonist in conflict” (Foaleng 2007: 44) and “corporate warriors” (Singer 2003). Private security companies, meanwhile, “provide protection services for individuals and property and are used by extractive national or multinational companies, humanitarian organizations and individuals, mainly in situations of armed conflict, violence or instability” (Foaleng 2007: 43). Private security companies, which are often transnational, are primarily concerned with internal security and focus on police-like activities (e.g. guarding, access control, surveillance) as opposed to military activities. This research focuses on private security companies operating in South Africa.

8 In 2009, the industry had an estimated value of approximately 50 billion Rand (Olivier 2009: 20). Individuals aligned with the industry repeatedly used this estimate and presented it as “common knowledge”. The private security industry worldwide has an estimated global value of over \$139 billion, and with prospective annual growth rates of eight per cent, the industry will be worth an estimated \$230 billion in 2015 (Abrahamsen and Williams 2011: 19). North America and Europe currently account for the largest share of the global market (70 per cent), yet with higher growth rates in developing countries, one would expect these parts of the world to constitute a larger portion of the market in the near future (Abrahamsen and Williams 2011: 40). For an overview of private security figures worldwide, see Abrahamsen and Williams (2011), Johnston (1992), Jones and Newburn (2006), and de Waard (1999).

9 I retrieved PSIRA’s annual reports from the website www.psir.co.za.

10 The categories are security guard (individual and communal), security guards (cash in transit), body guarding (CPO), security consultant, reaction services, entertainment/venue control, manufacture security equipment, private investigator, training, security equipment installers, locksmith/key cutter, security control room, special events, car watch, insurance, security and loss control, fire prevention and detection, consulting engineer, dog trainer, and other.

security guards, armed response vehicles, and the emblems of private security firms. South Africa is a country where the ratio of security officers to police officials was 2.56 to 1 in 2010 (Lebone 2012: 801),¹¹ where private security companies guard police stations, where private security personnel usually attend crime scenes before the police, where private security company vehicles look like – and are regularly mistaken for – police vans, and where (privileged) citizens increasingly refer to private security firms as “their police”. It is a country where many citizens, such as the domestic worker I introduced above, choose to call upon armed response officers such as William and Bongani for assistance, rather than the state police.

Aims of this Study

By analysing the private security industry in South Africa, this ethnography aims to contribute to our understanding of non-state policing in three innovative ways. The first is through its focus on armed response officers, a specific type of private security officer working in the armed response sector.¹² This sector emerged in South Africa in the late 1970s and has experienced enormous growth over the last decade.¹³ Armed response officers comprise a substantial portion of the 411,109 active registered private security officers in South Africa (PSIRA 2010-2011).¹⁴ They are armed private security officers who patrol communities in vehicles and react and/or respond to triggers such as alarms and panic buttons that are installed on clients’ premises. Increasingly, however, these officers are also policing public spaces, as the example of the search conducted by William and Bongani shows. My in-depth analysis of armed response officers will generate further insight into the everyday policing practices of private security officers, a field that has received little (academic) attention, particularly in comparison to public police officers. Although scholars such as Button (2007), Manzo (2004, 2006, 2009), Rigakos (2002), van Steden (2007), and Wakefield (2003) are slowly filling this gap, the daily policing practices of private security officers in countries such as Brazil, India, and Kenya (i.e. the postcolonial world) remains a largely uncharted territory.

11 In 2010, there were 151,164 sworn police officers (this excludes civilians who are employed by the South African Police Services (SAPS)) and 387,273 active registered security officers (Lebone 2012: 801).

12 Armed response is also referred to as armed reaction. These terms will be used interchangeably throughout this book.

13 Between 2005 and 2010, the sector experienced a growth of 263.5 per cent (Lebone 2012: 802).

14 Between 2001 and 2011, there was an increase of 111.30 per cent in the number of active registered security officers. This figure only includes the “active” registered private security officers, which is to say security officers who are actively employed in the industry. PSIRA also maintains a database of “inactive” registered security officers, that is, security officers who are registered with PSIRA but are not currently employed in the industry. In 2011, there were 1,369,765 inactive security officers compared to 411,109 active security officers.

The second innovative element of this study concerns the methodology. This research is based on 20 months of ethnographic fieldwork conducted between 2007-2010 and accepts Goldstein's invitation to develop a "critical security anthropology", in which anthropologists "can explore the multiple ways in which security is configured and deployed – not only by states and authorized speakers but by communities, groups, and individuals – in their engagements with other local actors and with arms of the state itself" (2010: 492). My ethnographic approach contrasts with most studies of private security officers, which derive from the field of criminology and employ a quantitative approach to present the "typical security officer" in a particular space and time.¹⁵ The only ethnographic exploration of the attitudes and daily endeavours of private security officers is Rigakos's (2002) excellent account of Intelligarde, a private security company in Toronto, Canada. As the findings of Rigakos's research closely resemble my own, I will refer to his work throughout this book.

This ethnographic study will not only provide insights into private policing in South Africa; it also intends to contribute to our understandings of policing and security in general. This brings us to the third innovative element of this work, namely its conceptual contribution, which is the focus of this chapter. Drawing on studies from the fields of policing, the anthropology of the state, and the anthropology of security, I argue that armed response officers perform twilight policing practices that emerge through interactions between state and non-state policing bodies. In this chapter, I will make this claim through a train of argumentation that consists of four consecutive steps that brings us to twilight policing.

The first step acknowledges the pluralised nature of contemporary policing, which entails that numerous actors, both state and non-state, are engaged in policing practices. This does not uphold the frequently used "state-failure" argument, but instead emphasizes the interactions between different policing bodies. The second step conceptualises policing actors – both state and non-state – as sovereign bodies. This implies that policing bodies claim and/or are ascribed authority to create a particular social order through violence. Violence is defined here as the source of sovereign power and is embedded in policing practices to create a particular social order and to draw social boundaries. This results in exclusionary policing practices, which are particularly evident in urban areas.

The third step critically examines how various sovereign bodies are categorised according to their relationship with the state and thereby defined as either "illegal" and "legal". Such categories suggest a linear relationship between state and non-state

15 Existing research tends to focus on a specific site, such as a shopping mall or theme park (Manzo 2004; van Steden 2007; Wakefield 2003), a specific company (Rigakos 2002), or a certain type of security officer, such as bouncers (Hobbs et al. 2002; Monaghan 2002). Although these case studies are often insightful, they offer little in the way of in-depth description of this occupation and its relation to policing at large.

sovereignties and ignore the diversity of their interactions. I develop this point further in my fourth step, where I show how various sovereign bodies at once complement and compete with one another, suggesting that “state” and “non-state” practices are entangled in numerous ways. This brings us to the concept of twilight policing, which refers to policing practices that are punitive, disciplinary, and exclusionary and that operate in a twilight zone between state and non-state. I therefore argue that the concept of twilight policing is vital for understanding what I encountered in the field. Yet I also contend that twilight policing can serve as a conceptual framework through which to analyse the interconnections between public and private policing practices elsewhere. In the rest of this chapter, I will revisit these steps at regular intervals to demonstrate the conceptual development and significance of twilight policing.

The Pluralisation of Policing

In the fields of criminology and anthropology, it has been recognised that the public-private policing divide is blurry, weak, non-existent or frequently trespassed as state and non-state policing have become increasingly alike and interconnected. Yet despite this acknowledgement, studies of non-state policing continue to voice both political and conceptual concerns about the position of “the state”. Abrahamsen and Williams (2011) term this the “mercenary misconception”, which refers to a reigning perspective that associates non-state policing, such as vigilantism and private security, with militarization and illegal behaviour that defies and seeks to overthrow state legitimacy and authority, particularly in the African continent.

This “misconception” is primarily based on Hobbesian and Weberian understandings of the state and its possession of a monopoly on violence with security provision as its core function. This parallels the distinction Weber makes between force and violence, where the “state is a relation of domination supported by legitimate violence, hence called force” (Pansters 2012: 12). In this line of thinking, “policing” is inherently associated with the “police”; it is “an inherently public good, whose provision has to reside in the hands of a single, monopoly supplier, the state” (Johnston 1992: 24). The provision of security by non-state actors is thus automatically associated with state erosion and failure:

The very idea of private violence stands in a tension-filled relationship to both traditional theoretical conceptions of the state and to deeply held convictions about the proper responsibilities of modern governments, the rights of citizens and principles of democracy. (Abrahamsen and Williams 2011: 4)

From this perspective, non-state policing is “a true Hobbesian nightmare” (Kosmatopoulos 2011: 219), evoking images of armed men, such as William and Bongani, who threaten the authority of the state. Such actors are regarded as “power-challengers” (Osaghae 2004) who are the result of “state abandonment” (Koonings and Kruijt 2007b: 3) and “the state’s inability” (Briceño-León and Zubillaga 2002: 36) to function as the ultimate guardian of its citizens, thereby resulting in a “crisis of security” (Scheper-Hughes 1997).¹⁶ The general rationale is that when the state fails to uphold its end of the “social contract”, “governance voids” (Kruijt and Koonings 1999) and “brown areas”¹⁷ (O’Donnell 1999) emerge that are readily occupied by non-state actors.¹⁸ And as the use of violence (or the threat of such) is ingrained in the provision of non-state policing, the state loses its presumed monopoly on violence. In this view, non-state policing is an indication of state failure.

This “state-failure” perspective is commonly employed for post-conflict societies or those experiencing political transitions. Studies from the “transition literature”¹⁹ highlight the numerous pitfalls in democratisation processes, particularly regarding the re-design of state institutions. “Democracy deficits” (Luckham 2003: 14) emerge, especially in the security sector. Although security is often prioritised to protect citizens during the democratisation process, violence often persists, leading to “peace-time crimes” (Scheper-Hughes 1997) and “undeclared civil wars” (Rotker 2002:19). Political transitions are often described as “dangerous hours” (Scheper-Hughes 1997: 491) that are susceptible to power struggles. Violence and insecurity in such newly created democracies are regarded as “measures of democratic failure” (Arias and Goldstein 2010b: 2). Many hailed South Africa’s political transition as a “miracle”, yet high crime rates, inequality, unemployment, the use of violence by numerous non-state actors, and the increasing demands for more coercive policing practices have darkened this perspective. Like many states in Latin America (Arias and Goldstein 2010a), South Africa can be described as a violent democracy.

Despite its popularity, the “state-failure” hypothesis does not adequately account for the global proliferation of non-state policing and has therefore been met with

16 Concepts such as “collapsed state” (Zartman 1995), “failed states” (Rotberg 2004), “shadow state” (Reno 2000), and “quasi-state” (Jackson 1990) are also used in this line of thinking.

17 O’Donnell (1999) differentiates between three different types of areas: blue zones are regions with a firm state presence, green zones are areas where the state is present but less functional, and brown zones are areas where the state is absent.

18 These concepts are founded on empirical studies conducted in Latin America that analyse marginalized communities where everyday violence and fear are rife and where policing is performed by agents who frequently use force, such as gangs (Jones and Rodgers 2009; Rodgers 2004, 2006b; Savenije and van der Borgh 2004), death squads (Huggins 1991; Oude Breuil and Rozema 2009; Scheper-Hughes 2006) and vigilantes (Godoy 2004; Goldstein 2003, 2004, 2005, 2012).

19 See Carothers (2002), Herbst (2001), Mansfield and Snyder (2001), Osaghae (2004), and O’Donnell (1993).

criticism. For example, Abrahamsen and Williams compare private security in Cape Town and Nairobi to show that “there is no automatic relationship between the growth of security privatisation and state weakness or straightforward delegitimization” (2011: 216).²⁰ The rise of the “penal state”, which is characterised by increased funding for the state’s law enforcement institutions, further highlights the limitations of the state-failure approach (Wacquant 2008). Furthermore, such a perspective also ignores how states are increasingly cultivating a political, social, and cultural climate that encourages the increase of non-state security solutions (Goold et al. 2010). Therefore, the premise that the state is absent or incapable of providing security is flawed when attempting to explain the growth and diversification of non-state policing, particularly for the African continent (Abrahamsen and Williams 2011; Baker 2008; Bertelsen 2009; Lund 2006; Meagher 2012).

Yet perhaps the main source of critique regarding the “state-failure” hypothesis (which also lies at the heart of this research) concerns the interconnections between state and non-state policing, which disintegrate the public-private policing divide. Public policing is traditionally defined as policing carried out by the state in public spaces that (ideally) serves all citizens and is impartial. In contrast, private policing is carried out by private actors who operate in private spaces and are therefore not available to all.²¹ However, numerous studies have emphasized that public policing is increasingly privatised, “commodified” (Loader 1999), and incorporating a “business-like ethos” (Garland 1996: 455), while private policing is increasingly punitive and executed in public spaces (Berg 2010; Rigakos 2002; Singh and Kempa 2007). Furthermore, various policing bodies contain both public and private characteristics; these “hybrid” bodies (Button 2002; Johnston 1992) are “neither the public police, private security or some form of voluntary initiative” (Button 2002: 12).²² Public spaces are also becoming more restricted and guarded or are simply disappearing altogether. “Communal spaces”

20 This comparison shows that South Africa has a larger and more active security industry, yet is also regarded as a stronger and more capable state.

21 The terms “private policing” and “non-state policing” are often used interchangeably. The former often refers solely to private security companies, but Kempa et al. (1999) use the term to describe numerous different actors, such as citizen patrols, private security companies, and neighbourhood watches. In specific reference to the private security industry, the term “private security sector” is regularly used to incorporate all activities surrounding security, such as alarm systems (Singh 2005; South 1988). Others prefer the term “commercial policing”, which highlights the profit-making element and excludes voluntary forms of policing (Loader 2000).

22 Button (2002: 13) differentiates between three categories of hybrid policing bodies: central and decentralised public policing bodies, specialised police organisations, and non-private security private policing bodies. A similar concept is “grey policing”, which refers to “informal forms of cooperation between different social control agencies for which traditional mechanisms of accountability appear obsolete” (Hooijenboom 1991: 18).

(i.e. spaces that are neither public nor private) are becoming the norm rather than the exception (Kempa et al. 2004; Shearing and Wood 2003).²³

The core factors that differentiate public from private policing, such as the executing actors and the spaces of operation, are thus increasingly neither wholly public nor wholly private. Therefore, rather than thinking in terms of public versus private policing, policing is best analysed within “a pluralized security landscape” (Loader and Walker 2007: 3) or a “kaleidoscope of overlapping policing agencies” (Baker 2008: 5) that consists of “extended policing families” (Johnston 2003) and structures of “multilateralization” (Bayley and Shearing 2001).²⁴ Although these concepts employ different points of departure, they all stress the pluralised nature of policing.²⁵ For the African continent, Baker (2008) has coined the term “multi-choice policing” to portray how citizens can choose between different security providers, of which the state is just one possibility;

The extended family may protect the compound, but it is the street committee that resolves the assault at the bar, the sorcerer that detects the culprit, the headman or local priest that mediates a settlement over damages caused by a neighbour, a spontaneous mob that handles the bus station pickpocket, the commercial security guard that secures the entrance to the city centre office, and the state police that are called if a colleague is murdered at the bank at lunchtime. (Baker 2008: 27)

Policing as a Performance of Sovereignty

This research employs the abovementioned pluralised perspective on policing, defining it as a social process that is executed by a range of actors in order to maintain a particular social order (Baker 2010; Button 2002).²⁶ Policing is analysed here as an organised, purposive, and communal social activity that is defined in relation to crime (Baker

23 For more information on the changing nature of spaces, see Ellin (2001), Jones and Newburn (1998), Kempa et al. (1999, 2004), Landman (2006), Lemanski (2004, 2006), and Wakefield (2003).

24 There is also talk of a “security quilt” (Ericson 1994), a “policing web” (Brodeur 2010), and “plural networked policing” (Loader 2000).

25 For example, the “multilateralization” approach from Bayley and Shearing (2001) focuses on a distinction between the “auspices” and “providers” of policing, while “plural networked policing” concept (Loader 2000) focuses on the networks and interactions between different policing bodies.

26 For more policing definitions, see Baker (2008), Bayley and Shearing (1996), Button (2002), Findlay & Zvekić (1993), Johnston (1999), Johnston and Shearing (2003), Jones and Newburn (1998), Loader (2000), and Rigakos (2002). The second chapter of Baker (2008: 10-30), titled “The Genealogy and Analysis of Policing” provides a concise overview of the different paradigms and analytical frameworks of policing.

2010; Button 2002).²⁷ But more specifically, as the second step of my argumentation, I follow suit of other anthropological research on policing in South Africa (Buur 2005, 2007; Comaroff and Comaroff 2006a, 2000b; Hansen 2006; Jensen 2005, 2007) and I argue that armed response officers are “performers of sovereignty” (Hansen 2006). Conceptualising policing bodies as sovereign bodies allows me to examine how different state and non-state actors claim authority to produce a particular social order.

Just as the state has traditionally been regarded as the sole provider of policing and security, it has also been regarded as the sole sovereign power – the Leviathan. Like the recognition that policing has never been solely the prerogative of the state, anthropological studies have argued that the state is not the sole sovereign body and that there are in fact “multiple sovereignties” (Bertelsen 2009) that are found within and across states. This is particularly true for the postcolonial world, which is characterised by fragmented forms of sovereignty (Comaroff and Comaroff 2006a; Hansen and Stepputat 2005a, 2005b).

Primarily based on the ideas of Agamben (1998, 2005), Derrida (1992), and Schmitt (1985), anthropological studies of sovereignty have proliferated over the past decade. As Jennings notes, “*sovereignty*, it seems, has emerged as the concept of our moment” (2011: 24, emphasis in original). Such studies represent a move away from a focus on *legal sovereignty*, which refers to “sovereignty grounded in formal ideologies of rules and legality”, towards the analysis of *de facto sovereignty*, which refers to “the ability to kill, punish, and discipline with impunity wherever it is found and practiced” (Hansen and Stepputat 2006: 296). Although based on different contexts and approaches, these anthropological works view sovereignty as a socially constructed source of power that is reproduced through daily practices and repetitious public performances.²⁸

I employ Hansen and Stepputat’s definition of (de facto) sovereignty as a “tentative and always emergent form of authority grounded in violence that is performed and designed to generate loyalty, fear, and legitimacy from the neighborhood to the summit of the state” (2006: 297). This definition entails that claims to sovereignty are based on the ability to enforce punishment and to do so through violence. Violence is the source of sovereign power and the quality that differentiates sovereignty from others types

27 Although policing is an essential part of social control, it is not equated to social control, as this also involves actors, such as teachers, and activities, such as religious education, that are beyond policing. There are some authors, such as Garland (1996), Minnaar (2007) and Singh (2008) that prefer the term “crime control” to emphasize this focus. See Button (2002), Cohen (1985), Johnston (1999), Jones and Newburn (1998, 2006), and Reiner (1997) for further discussion on this distinction.

28 The following are some of the different approaches and concepts that have emerged from the anthropological focus on sovereignty: social sovereignty (Latham 2000; Rodgers 2006b), shadow sovereigns (Nordstrom 2000), graduated sovereignty (Ong 2000), sovereignty without territoriality (Appadurai 2003), supra-sovereignties (Sassen 1996), selective sovereignties (Moore 2005), fragmented sovereignty (Davis 2010), chaotic form of sovereignty (Rigi 2012), wild sovereignty (Kapferer 2004a), and corporate sovereignty (Kapferer 2005).

of authority. Agamben (1998) defines sovereignty as the ability of a power to define the category of “homo sacer”, that is, those excluded and reduced to “bare life”, the life “that is subjected to the violence of law without enjoying its protection” (Rigi 2012: 61). Sovereign power is therefore not inherently linked to control over a particular territory, but concerns claiming sovereignty over the *body* (Das and Poole 2004; Hansen and Stepputat 2005b, 2006). For example, William and Bongani did not employ (severe) physical violence while searching the suspect, but the way they held him, spoke to him, and threatened him with the statement “we’ll fuck you up” highlights the importance of the *ability* to use violence. Throughout this book, I will analyse incidents where both the ability to use violence and violence itself were employed to claim sovereignty.

I want to further emphasise that sovereignty is not a fixed form of power but rather “an unstable and precarious form of power” (Hansen 2005: 171) that must be habitually revoked.²⁹ Sovereign power is not something that simply exists out there that one can possess or execute; it is a form of authority that must be repeatedly claimed and re-claimed through “exercises of sovereignty” (Sieder 2011: 163). I therefore regard claims to sovereignty as performances; they are not single acts or deeds, but consist of numerous practices that are part of a larger social process (Turner 1982: 91). Performances are always conducted “for someone, some audience that recognizes and validates it as performance” (Carlson 2004: 73). Although they involve a set of pre-established sequences, they are also flexible, changeable, and very often shaped by improvisation. For example, when an armed response officer responds to an incident of crime, he is guided by a particular protocol, a set of procedures. Yet this is affected by other variables that are not known beforehand and that often emerge from the performance itself.

Claims to sovereignty are essentially about creating communities and constructing social borders. Violence is the means by which this is enforced: it constructs order out of (perceived) disorder (Benda-Beckmann and Pirie 2007). Violence is not only defined in reference to its relationship to power (Robben and Nordstrom 1995) and cannot be analysed solely as an instrument; rather, it is deeply rooted in social structures and maintained through social practices (Bourdieu 2002; Das et al. 2000; Foucault 1977; Galtung 1969).³⁰ Violence constructs moral communities, distinguishes between right and wrong, and differentiates “insiders” from “outsiders” (Buur 2005, 2006; Jensen 2005; Pratten and Sen 2007). For example, William and Bongani asked the suspect “what he was doing in the area” and whether he “belonged there”. The social process of defining criminals as “bare beings” (Agamben 1998) and “matter out of place” (Douglas 2002)

29 Kapferer (2004b: 7) employs the term “wild sovereignty” to underline the “wild potency” of sovereign power, while Rigi (2007: 37) defines sovereign power as “chaotic”.

30 For case studies and classifications of different types of violence, see Aijmer and Abbink (2000), Besteman (2002), Concha-Eastman (2002), Krohn-Hansen (1994), Moser (2004), Riches (1986), Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois (2004), Schmidt and Schröder (2011), and Žižek (2008).

and of protecting oneself from these socially constructed threats is suffused with power relations that draw socially imagined boundaries between “insiders” and “outsiders” within and across communities. Such exclusionary policing practices make sovereign power visible (Buur et al. 2007: 15-16).

This visibility of power is particularly evident in urban areas: cities consist of spaces of confrontation and contestation (Holston 1999) that are characterised by exclusion and divisions, in which “divided cities” (Beall et al. 2002; Caldeira 2000; Walton 1976) and “fractured cities” (Koonings and Kruijt 2007a) are becoming the norm. We are witnessing a process whereby the most affluent members of society seal themselves off in “communities of security”, such as gated communities guarded by private security companies against the “Other”, often the “dangerous poor”.³¹ Poorer citizens are forced to resort to more informal or illegal methods of security, such as gangs. These “bubbles of governance” (Rigakos and Greener 2000) and “pockets of safety” (Shaw 2002: 112-113) create cities with “highly different types and levels of security” (Mandel 2001: 135). Security and policing increasingly operate as “club goods” – “quasi-public’ goods that are available to members of a club but restricted in some form or other to non-members” (Crawford 2006: 120). As a club good, policing is inherently exclusive when membership of the “club” is defined. Various forms of non-state policing are expressions of social ruptures and class differences, which are further consolidated by distinct policing practices.

During apartheid, violence was framed in terms of political resistance, whereas now it is generally framed as criminal (Samara 2003, 2010; Scheper-Hughes 1997). The South African state has repeatedly invoked this discourse on crime and security to unify the country, with statements such as “crime affects us all” and “crime sees no colour” suggesting a national problem that is experienced by all citizens, regardless of race or class. Crime is not framed as an exclusive experience, but as one common to all South Africans. Yet the responses to crime are exclusionary and unequal, as the dissimilar forms of non-state policing attest.

In South Africa, social borders are defined along axes of race and class. In 1994, South Africa had one of the highest levels of income inequality in the world, and little has changed since then (Seekings and Natrass 2005: 3-4). Approximately 14 per cent of the total population can afford private security services, with the rest being forced to resort to other means of personal protection (Whitfield 2008: 16).³² Race also continues to be a salient factor in defining social relations in South Africa (Chipkin 2007; Habib and Bentley 2008; Hansen 2012; MacDonald 2006; Samara 2010), where “pockets of safety” are highly racialised. The criminal is equated with the “young, black male”, referred to as

31 For more information on gated communities, see Brunn (2006), Caldeira (2000), Córdia (2002), Coy (2006), Ellin (2001), Landman (2006), Lemanski (2004), and Low (2004).

32 This is based on the premise that households with a monthly income of at least R16,000 can make use of private security.

a “Bravo Mike” by armed response officers. Policing strategies aimed at eliminating crime reinforce such imaginaries. Although the post-apartheid state intended to eradicate repressive policing practices that were primarily enforcing racial segregation, current policing practices, both state and non-state, are reinforcing “the divisions and barriers of society that the political transition sought to undo” (Shaw 2002: 110).

Sovereignties and the State

The first two steps of my argumentation entail that I employ a pluralised perspective on policing and define it as a performance of sovereignty. I argue that claims to sovereignty aim to create and/or maintain a social order through violence. In this section, I will develop my third step of argumentation by analysing how sovereignties are defined according to their relationship with the state. However, I will problematise this defining process for two reasons. Firstly, such categorisations are not clear cut due to the blurred boundaries between legal and illegal domains. I will make this claim by analysing the distinction, in both emic and etic terms, between vigilantism and private security. Secondly, the relationships between sovereignties and the state are not linear, but diverse and complex, as several authors have shown (Humphrey 2007; Rigi 2007, 2012; Rodgers 2003; Sieder 2011).

Vigilantism is a generic term – a “cloak of deception” (Pratten and Sen 2007: 18) – to describe acts of violence or organized forms of security.³³ Johnston has provided what many regard as the classic definition of the term:

Vigilantism is a social movement giving rise to premeditated acts of force- or threatened force- by autonomous citizens. It arises as a reaction to the transgression of institutionalized norms by individuals or groups – or to their potential or imputed transgression. Such acts are focused upon crime control and/or social control and aim to offer assurance (or ‘guarantees’) of security both to participants and to other members of a given established order. (1996: 232)

Although Johnston (1996) emphasizes that vigilantism is not always illegal, it is routinely defined as such in the literature. For example, Landman (2010: 230) categorises vigilantism as a form of “illegal nonstate violence”, Martin (2013: 154) describes it as an informal security node whose “methods of control must be predominantly carried out in ways deemed illegal by the state”, and Baker (2008) defines vigilantes as “informal

33 For further reading on vigilantism in South Africa and elsewhere, see Abrahams (1996, 1998), Buur (2005, 2006), Buur and Jensen (2004), Goldstein (2004, 2005, 2012), Harnischfeger (2003), Heald (2005), Kirsch and Grätz (2010), Minnaar (2004), Oomen (2004), Pratten (2008), and Pratten and Sen (2007).

organized security groups”. Vigilantes are therefore conceptualised as actors who operate illegally and/or informally and assert power through “the usurpation of sovereignty” (Comaroff and Comaroff 2006a: 16). In South Africa, vigilantism is also associated with illegal behaviour and is differentiated from other forms of policing, such as community policing and private security, on the basis of its “illegal” use of violence.

Private security companies, on the other hand, have been described as “formal security nodes” (Martin 2013) and “formal commercial security groups” (Baker 2008). They are defined as actors that operate within the legal ambit of the state, primarily due to state regulation systems. In South Africa, for example, the Private Security Industry Regulatory Authority (PSIRA) is a state-led regulatory system that stipulates how the private security industry must operate and determines forms of (judicial) punishment in the event of misconduct. The use of coercion by private security officers is thereby regarded as an extension or outsourcing of state coercion that operates within the legal parameters of the state. Private security officers are engaged in “institutional violence”, which is violence emanating from the state and its “formal allies” (Pansters 2012: 24). Private security companies are therefore seen as “permissible sovereign bodies” and vigilantes as “non-permissible sovereign bodies”.

This conceptual and perceptual difference between vigilantism and private security illustrates how state law defines particular sovereignties as illegal or legal. Yet I argue that such a categorisation overlooks the complexities of the practices of such sovereignties. The use of violence by a vigilante organisation may be defined as illegal, but citizens may view it as legitimate and legal, and the same holds for the use of violence by private security officers. For example, the apprehension of the suspect by William and Bongani may not have been “tolerated” in other contexts. As is also evident in the growth of “pockets of safety”, there are contesting ideas about the legitimate use of violence and the (necessary) means to create social order, issues discussed at length in the field of legal pluralism (Comaroff and Comaroff 2006a; Merry 1988). In this ethnography, I will demonstrate that condoning or supporting the use of violence by armed response officers is not uniform, but varies according to company, armed response officer, client, police officer, and so on. Defining sovereign bodies as illegal or informal as opposed to legal or formal ignores this variability. In fact, there are numerous conflicting social discourses about the legitimate use of violence, which points towards a disintegration of illegal versus legal binaries.

This disintegration is augmented by the fact that state representatives, such as police officers, may themselves not abide by the law, either by participating in crime and violence or by “upholding zones of exception where illegal groups operate with impunity” (Hansen and Stepputat 2006: 305).³⁴ State representatives very often operate

34 For further discussion, see Arias (2006), Bayart et al. (1999), Caldeira (2002), Davis (2009), Heyman and Smart (1999), Kapferer and Bertelsen (2012), and Rigi (2012).

in non-state zones – zones of illegality – while non-state bodies operate in state zones – zones of legality – often in a type of “dirty togetherness” (Podgórecki 1987). I therefore claim that just as particular policing bodies cannot be defined as wholly public or private, they cannot always be defined as exclusively legal or illegal. Referring back to the distinction between vigilantism and private security, I argue that despite state regulation, private security companies do not always operate within the legal ambit of the state. Similarly, vigilante groups do not always operate outside this domain. Like Gordon (2006: 238), I question the extent to which vigilantism and private security are in fact distinct phenomena, an issue that will re-surface throughout the rest of this book.

Furthermore, I believe that such a distinction implies a linear relationship between state and non-state sovereignties. Like the idea of “pockets of safety”, it presupposes a situation in which sovereignties operate distinctly. Several studies, such as Leeds’s (1996) analysis of the emergence of “parallel power systems” in Brazil, reinforce the notion of distinct claims to sovereignty that operate in discrete domains. However, numerous authors have shown that these relationships are much more diverse and complex. Rodgers (2004), for example, talks of “competing sovereigns” in his study of gangs in Nicaragua, while Sieder (2011) refers to “contesting sovereignties” in her research on indigenous authorities in Guatemala. Both studies reveal a struggle between different claims to sovereignty. In her study on the *marshrut* system in Russia, Humphrey refers to a “localized form of sovereignty” that is “nested within higher sovereignties” (2007: 420). In a similar vein, Rigi (2007, 2012), develops the concept of a “chaotic mode of domination” in order to analyse the shifting balances of power and the means by which the coercive apparatus of the state transcends “the boundaries between the legal and illegal, the formal and informal, the legitimate and illegitimate, public and private” (2007: 41). Taken together, these various studies highlight the multiplicity of relationships between sovereignties that cut across the state versus non-state and legal versus illegal divides.

State and Non-State Entanglements

In this section, I draw upon the abovementioned studies to develop my fourth step of argumentation, in which I analyse the multidimensional relationships between state and non-state sovereign bodies, which are continuously in flux due to shifting temporal and spatial circumstances. Building on existing anthropological insights into the state,³⁵ I will argue that sovereignty is a form of power that is relative to the performance,

35 Sources include Kapferer and Bertelsen (2012), Krohn-Hansen and Nustad (2005), Sharma and Gupta (2006), Steinmetz (1999), and Trouillot (2001).

assertion, and infringement of other sovereign bodies (Hansen and Stepputat 2006; Humphrey 2007; Latham 2000; Rigi 2007, 2012).

In developing my argument, I employ the ideas of Abrams (2006) and Mitchell (2006), for whom the state comprises two features. The first is the state system, which refers to the various institutions and practices of the state. The second is what Mitchell (2006) calls the “state effect”, which refers to particular representations and understandings of the state, that is, the way in which the state is “discursively produced as an entity that is distinct from and sits above the non-state realm” (Sharma and Gupta 2006: 16). These two different features are connected, co-dependent, and mutually reinforcing; together they create “the state”.

The state is thus not simply the sum of the institutions and bodies that execute “state functions”; rather, it is imagined and socially constructed through everyday practices (Das and Poole 2004). The state is not something that can be separated from society, but is “constituted *through* society” (Sieder 2011: 170, emphasis in original). Thus, when William and Bongani were patrolling the streets and searching the suspect, they were not only contesting state sovereignty and undermining the power and legitimacy of the state police; they were also reinforcing ideas of what the state is by acting like the state.

Non-state policing actors operate like state actors (Davis 2010; Rodgers 2006b) by performing statist functions and appropriating “languages of stateness” (Hansen and Stepputat 2001: 5). As stated by Baker (2008: 19), “such policing groups do everything that the public police does and do it as the police do it”. Although non-state policing actors may view themselves as separate from the state apparatus, they are simultaneously acknowledging the state and demarcating their role in relation to the state. For example, armed response companies portray themselves as “service providers” that operate in a market system, but they also mimic the state police by designing vehicles that look like “cop cars” and uniforms that resemble those of the public police. In other words, they are appropriating the state’s “marks of sovereignty” (Bodin 1992, in Hansen and Stepputat 2005b: 7) and particular “state spectacles” (Hansen and Stepputat 2001) to obtain legitimacy. Non-state policing actors thus “represent at once the fading of the state’s jurisdiction and its continual refounding through its (not so mythic) appropriation of private justice and violence” (Das and Poole 2004: 14).

Similarly, when citizens resort to non-state actors for security, they display a lack of confidence in the state police and define themselves vis-à-vis the state. When citizens demand that private policing agents act like the state – such as by patrolling public spaces and arresting suspects – they are in effect expressing what they envision, demand, or expect from the state. Although particular state bodies – in this case, the public police – may not be the sole actors enforcing these practices, this does not mean that statist practices are not produced. Thus, the performance of “unstately stateliness” (Lund 2006: 677) by non-state actors also constitutes what the state is; the meaning of the state is also reliant on the meaning of the non-state, and vice-versa. Non-state policing practices are

thus mechanisms through which ideas and representations of the state are discursively fabricated, as highlighted by Abrahamsen and Williams:

If the state is perceived not merely as a formal institution of power, but as the effect of a wider range of dispersed forms of power, then PSCs [private security companies] can be seen to help produce and enact the state in the eyes of its inhabitants, making the state more real and tangible in everyday practices (2011: 223).

In his work on security and violence in the barrios of Bolivia, Goldstein describes the state as a phantom, one that is “simultaneously here and not there” (2012: 81); not always physically present through state institutions and representatives, but nevertheless extant in (re)producing violence and insecurity. In the course of my research, I identified many cases where the state police was not physically present, but where the idea of the “state” was. These “ideas” and perceptions shape notions of violence, security, and authority and affect how policing agents operate. This further highlights how labelling the state as absent, weak, or malfunctioning elides its role in non-state policing, violence, and (in) security.

Thus, non-state actors may undermine the authority of the state, but they simultaneously seek a certain degree of recognition from and partnership with the state. They may function as an alternative to the state and thereby challenge its authority, but they also reproduce particular ideas of what the state should be. Like Arias (2006) and Nordstrom (2000), I will employ a network approach to explore the multistranded engagements between sovereign bodies. More specifically, I will use the “local security network” concept proposed by Dupont (2004, 2006). Dupont defines a security network as “a set of institutional, organizational, communal or individual agents or nodes that are directly or indirectly connected in order to authorize and/or provide security to the benefit of internal or external stakeholders” (Dupont 2006: 38). Following this logic, local security networks are “initiatives that seek to harness the public and private resources available in local communities” (Dupont 2004: 79).³⁶ A security network approach analyses security as a system of agencies that coincide to produce a particular type of social order.³⁷

36 Dupont (2004) analyses three other types of security networks: institutional security networks, international security networks, and virtual/informational security networks. These are not directly applicable to my research and will therefore not be discussed here.

37 In his analysis of security networks, Dupont (2004) also examines how networks consist of different types of capital, namely political, economic, cultural, social, and symbolic capital. In the rest of this book, I will focus on the different elements and factors that make up local security networks. However, I will not categorise these as different types of capital, but will regard them as resources and traits.

Local security networks consist of “dominant and dominated actors” (Dupont 2004: 84). They are therefore not “egalitarian social structures” (Dupont 2004: 84); some networks are complementary whilst others are competitive. Local security networks consist of different types of relationships, making them porous, flexible, dynamics, and context dependent. I use local security networks as an analytical tool with which to analyse the ground-level interactions between non-state and state bodies. This will allow me to examine how state sovereignty is reproduced, contested, and reformulated as non-state actors claim sovereignty. Thus, this research seeks to provide insights not only into non-state policing but also into the role of the state police, and perhaps of the state at large.

Twilight Policing

This brings us to twilight policing, the conceptual framework through which I propose to analyse how different sovereignties overlap, complement, and compete with each other. Twilight policing originates from “twilight institutions”. This term was originally outlined in a special issue of *Development and Change* from 2006 and refers to the way in which particular institutions in Africa both strengthen and challenge the state’s authority. Twilight institutions are defined as institutions that “operate in the twilight between state and society, between public and private” (Lund 2006: 678). Such institutions exercise public authority, actively shape governance, and enforce decisions and rules on a collective level. They do not replace the state, but provide alternative forms of governance in specific local contexts. They do not function on behalf of the state, but operate like the state by incorporating state-like characteristics.

Twilight institutions challenge the state by exerting governance and legitimised authority, yet they strengthen the state through “symbolic borrowing” (Thumala et al. 2011: 294) and by mimicking statist practices. This multidimensional relationship creates a particular twilight zone, a zone of “ongoing contestation” (Buur 2006: 741). This zone does not necessarily comprise of processes where public actors become more privatised or private actors become more publicised – two processes that are frequently discussed in the policing literature – but it concerns the imbrication of public and private elements, which makes “it difficult to distinguish unequivocally between what is state and what is not” (Buur 2006: 750). This is similar to Auyero’s (2007) “gray zones”, which are sites “where the deeds and networks of violent entrepreneurs, political actors and law enforcement officials secretly meet and mesh” (in Pansters 2012: 24).

How can we use the concept of twilight institutions to understand the policing practices of private security officers and companies at large? As the majority of the policing literature illustrates, private security companies are corporate actors that are steered by market interests and traditionally operate in privately owned spaces, yet

they are also increasingly taking over state police functions such as the provision of security in public spaces to non-paying citizens. They supplement the state by frequently working alongside state bodies in both formal and informal partnerships, yet they also substitute and challenge the state by providing particular services that the state does not. In this way, they influence how citizens perceive the state and its ability to act as their custodian.

However, to classify all armed response companies as twilight institutions would be to ignore the diversity among companies, armed response officers, and their interactions with others. Furthermore, this research focuses not on institutions but on policing practices. Thus, rather than speaking of “twilight institutions”, I utilise the core elements of this notion to develop the concept of “twilight policing”. Twilight policing refers to policing practices that are habitually performed by armed response officers and that emerge from a dual process of collaboration and competition between state and non-state bodies. This occurs in a twilight zone between state and non-state, and between illegal and legal spheres. The twilight zone is a collection of spaces where the lines between public and private and legal and illegal are continuously in flux. According to Lund (2006: 673), the term “twilight” in “twilight institutions” implies that the “contours and features of these institutions are hard to distinguish and discern” and does not refer to the temporal aspect of twilight, which would suggest “that these institutions should gradually disappear”. I use the term “twilight” to evoke an in-between period, such as the period between day and night, and a state of uncertainty and obscurity.

I further argue that twilight policing is a *joint performance*. It consists of policing practices that are shaped by the various interactions between different actors. For example, the suspect, the domestic worker, and the physical absence of the state police influenced how William and Bongani acted. Throughout this book, I will discuss other factors that are not directly evident in such episodes, such as company policies and state regulation, but that also influence how a performance unfolds. Analysing twilight policing as a joint performance further stresses the interconnectedness of policing practices.

Yet I also aim to analyse what these entanglements (re)produce. This refers to the performative nature of policing practices, whereby their mere enactment reproduces a series of effects (Butler 1997). Twilight policing practices are iterative: they are based on existing understandings of violence and security, and through their habitual enactment, they lead to further actions and meanings. Thus, performances not only signify how meaning is given; in addition, their enactment gives them further meaning. They do not simply make claims to sovereignty, but they also produce state effects. Therefore, I analyse not only how various actors “meet and mesh”, as Auyero (2007, in Pansters 2012) does with his “gray zones” does, but also, with recourse to the performative nature of policing, what is generated *through* this meeting and meshing. Twilight policing concerns claims to sovereignty that are neither public nor private, but that

are the outcome of the imbrication of these two domains, creating something “new” – something “twilight”.

Such an analysis is best approached through ethnographic fieldwork, which allows one to examine everyday practices and uncover local dynamics and perspectives over an extended period of time. In my research, I used participant observation as my key research method to observe firsthand what occurs on the ground and how different actors and interactions shape the joint performance of twilight policing. Furthermore, my long stay in Durban allowed me to establish rapport with my research population, to understand their perspectives on policing and violence, and to analyse how their policing practices are embedded within larger social structures. In summary, this research project is an ethnographic analysis of the daily policing practices of armed response officers and their interactions with other actors in Durban, South Africa. I aim to identify the individuals who provide this particular security service, what this occupation entails in daily practice, and how armed response officers are related to and interact with other security agents. I argue that I need the framework of twilight policing to analyse what I encountered in the field and to describe the policing practices performed by armed response officers. The framework of twilight policing is crucial for analysing the interconnections between state and non-state policing practices and to gain insight into the general workings of sovereignty in a context of high crime rates and pervasive insecurities.

The Book

The first part of this book, which includes this introductory chapter, is entitled *Entering the Twilight*. The next chapter, “*Sierra Foxtrot Golf*”: *Doing Ethnographic Fieldwork in Durban*, examines my methodology. I explain why Durban was chosen as the research location, discuss decisions I have made about how to write about race and violence in South Africa, clarify the process of selecting and gaining access to my informants, and elaborate on my methods. But more importantly, I use this chapter to reflect on my role as researcher. I delve into issues of gender and race that shaped my role in the field and discuss particular experiences that highlight the emotional, ethical, and moral dilemmas that emerged during fieldwork. I examine these methodological issues in a separate chapter so as to provide a transparent and comprehensive account of how data were collected and analysed. As I conceptualise policing as a performance, it seems necessary to elucidate my own participation (on and off stage) in the numerous performances discussed in the course of this book.

Chapter three, entitled “*Old school*” *Policing versus “the New South Africa”*: *Violence and Security in South Africa*, provides a historical account of policing and security in South Africa. The argument presented here is twofold. The first is that non-state policing

has existed in South Africa for decades and that the current policing panoply is not a recent or post-apartheid development. The interactions between state and non-state have a deep-rooted history that need to be incorporated into the analysis to understand current engagements between state and non-state policing bodies. The second argument is that contemporary policing in South Africa is marked by contesting discourses on the “right” style of policing, particularly concerning the use of violence. Twilight policing is a manifestation of this contestation, a surfacing of uncertainties and various forms of “in-betweenness”.

The second part of this book – *Setting the Stage* – consists of four chapters that examine the different actors and local security networks that “set the stage” for the performance of twilight policing. Chapter four, “*The Promising Horse*”: *The Armed Response Sector*, analyses the industry at large. In addition to providing a descriptive account of the sector, this chapter analyses three defining elements thereof, namely the disciplinary measures and forms of surveillance implemented by companies, the (re) production of masculinization processes that define the industry as a “man’s world”, and the racial hierarchies within the industry that put “Whites on top and Blacks at the bottom”. Chapter five, “*Wanna-be Policemen*”: *Being an Armed Response Officer*, provides a descriptive account of the lives, perspectives, and experiences of armed response officers. I examine their motivations, how they distinguish themselves from other private security officers, a typical day “on the road”, the different tools they employ on duty, and the occupational hazards they face. Taken together, chapters four and five show how the occupational culture of armed response is designed to resemble that of the state police and fosters an environment for twilight policing practices.

The next two chapters analyse the interactions between armed response officers and other actors through the framework of local security networks. Chapter six, “*It All Comes Down to Them*”: *Daily Interactions with the “State”*, examines the relationship between private security agents and the state. The first section focuses on state regulation and the post-apartheid state strategy of “partnership policing”, in which the private security industry is given a “junior role”. The second and largest section examines on-the-ground interactions between armed response officers and police officers. The first claim made in this chapter is that such encounters – which are often informal and ad hoc – are marked by both cooperation and competition, which constantly redraw the boundaries between state and non-state policing. The second claim is that police officers, as state representatives, play an active role in drawing armed response officers into the twilight zone. I examine how both armed response officers and police officers move across the public-private policing divide and how this diminishes the importance of the notions of “public” and “private”.

Chapter seven, “*Getting Connected with the Community*”: *The Beneficiaries of Armed Response*, analyses the relationships between armed response officers and citizens and/or clients. In this chapter, I distinguish between formal and informal local security

networks, which I then sub-categorise into high-maintenance, collaborative, and competitive local security networks. By analysing these myriads of networks, this chapter makes two arguments. The first is that clients are the “dominant actors” in such networks in that they largely define what armed response officers do. The second concerns the current trend in the industry, namely the establishment and growth of “collective arrangements”, both formal and informal, whereby citizens “club” together to collectively benefit from armed response. Through these arrangements, armed response companies increasingly serve “communities of security” which mandates them to operate in public spaces. The dominant position of clients and the growth of collective arrangements entail that armed response officers engage in an array of policing tasks that take place in the public sphere and thereby provide the backdrop for the performance of twilight policing.

In the third part of this book – *Inside the Twilight Zone* – I first examine performances of twilight policing and then review my key findings in order further highlight the relevance of this concept. Chapter eight, *Performances of Twilight Policing: Public Authority, Coercion, and Moral Ordering*, analyses performances of twilight policing and their punitive, disciplinary, and exclusionary nature. Drawing on Goffman’s (1959) dramaturgical approach, I present three empirical vignettes that show how twilight policing is a joint performance – a manifestation of actions undertaken through the coming together of various local security networks. In the final section of this chapter, I examine twilight policing at the micro level, describing its performance as strenuous and capricious. Twilight policing is analysed as a liminal experience in which individual armed response officers engage in a twilight sensation of belonging and exclusion.

I end this ethnography with a concluding chapter, *Expanding the Twilight*, which examines three threads that are woven throughout this entire book. I then offer some final thoughts about what this means for “the state”. The aims of this chapter are to tie together the different claims of this book, to emphasize the meaning, significance, and contribution of twilight policing, and to propose how it can serve as an analytical framework within which to examine the imbrication of state and non-state policing practices beyond South Africa.

2

“Sierra Foxtrot Golf”:

Doing Ethnographic Fieldwork in Durban

Introduction¹

In the summer of 2010, I spent four weeks living in one of Durban’s former Indian townships to study a community-based company.² Through friends of mine, I found accommodation with a hospitable Indian family. However, a few days into my stay, I noticed that a substantial amount of my money was missing. The following incident occurred after this realisation.



I tell Sylvia, the mother of the family, about the missing money, and she immediately suspects Thuli, the black maid, for numerous reasons, such as the way she had rushed out of the door the day before and had not come to work today. Sylvia immediately phones Thuli, but she can’t reach her, so she proceeds to call anyone who might be able to put us in touch with Thuli. Shortly afterwards, Sylvia realises that a young boy who often assists her with her gardening can probably tell us where Thuli is. He’s most likely at school, so Sylvia suggests visiting him there to get more information.

My first reaction is to go to the police station. Although I realise that it is very unlikely that I will get my money back, I want to report the incident for two reasons. The first is for insurance purposes. The second is as a matter of principle – a lot of crime goes unreported in South Africa, and after frequently urging my social acquaintances to report crime, I feel I should follow suit. Just as I’m gathering my things to go to the police station, Sylvia pulls me aside and says, “We need to find Thuli quickly, so we can get the money before she spends it. If we go to the police, we’ll be sitting there all morning before anything happens and then Thuli will be long gone. We need to act now, so phone the company.”³ I’m torn about what to do. I know the company will help me, since they probably want to make a good impression. A part of me is also curious about how they will react, given that I am a non-client looking to make use of their services. Yet I am also a researcher who is studying the firm. Do I want to make my role even

1 A similar version of this chapter has been published, Diphooorn (2013). The pseudonyms in this chapter differ from those used in the article.

2 A township refers to a geographical area that was designated for non-Whites during apartheid. All non-Whites lived in townships.

3 To uphold the anonymity of this firm, I will refer to it here simply as “the company”.

more ambiguous by transforming into a client? All these questions race through my mind, and I feel pressured to make a decision quickly. With Sylvia encouraging me, I decide to phone Paul, the Indian owner of the company, to explain the situation. His voice is stern and serious; he says that someone will come to the house right away.

As soon as I hang up, I know I made the wrong decision. I feel that I'm taking advantage of my privileged role as researcher, that I am consolidating the uneven relationship between the company and myself, and that I am exacerbating the situation. As a researcher, one is always at the receiving end; one has to be grateful that one's informants allow you to be there to conduct one's study. But now, by asking them to assist me by providing a "security service", I am placing myself in a tricky position. Will I have to return the favour? Will they now be expecting certain things from me? Will this impede my ability to be critical? I share my doubts and worries with Sylvia, but she is unmoved and says, "Tessa, this needs to be done now. So let's just see what happens."

Within about three minutes, Kevin, an Indian armed response officer in his early 40s, is standing in front of the house; when he comes in and says "Hello Tessa", I immediately feel that this is a personal matter. Sylvia takes the lead in explaining the story to him, reiterating that we need to go to the school as soon as possible to find out where Thuli is. And she stresses that both of us need to come with them. Kevin returns to the office and comes back with Michael, an Indian armed response officer in his late 20s, and Sylvia and I jump into the back of their vehicle to head out into one of the townships that sits among the sugarcane fields. In the car, the armed response officers explain that we need to be cautious, because we're entering a very dangerous area where they are not well liked.

The entire drive is uncomfortable and tense. I remain silent, simply because I do not know what to say. I feel guilty, ashamed, like we are doing something wrong. I keep thinking about what will happen when we find Thuli – what will they, or *we*, do to her? And during the fleeting moments when I'm able to escape my own thoughts, I hear the two armed response officers proudly recollecting past glories while Sylvia tries to convince them that they need counselling to cope with the traumatic nature of their occupation. Everything tells me that this entire situation is unethical, but I somehow can't find the courage and moral fortitude to intervene.

When we enter the township, Kevin and Michael start asking people where the school is, but people seem unwilling to help us. I can tell that Kevin and Michael are more on guard here. When we eventually find the school, my feelings of guilt worsen and I become nervous. Here we are, in an armed response vehicle, with two armed guys who look like soldiers, sitting outside a semi-rural, impoverished school. Kevin and Sylvia head over to the school to find the woman in charge while Michael and I wait in the car. They return a while later and explain that the woman could not find the boy. Sylvia thinks she's lying to protect him. I'm simply relieved that the situation is over and glad we can leave, but then Sylvia encourages the officers to ask people where

Thuli lives. And within a matter of minutes, we find a man standing outside a half-empty convenience store who tells Kevin where Thuli's house is.

When we get to the house, an elderly lady approaches us. She tells us that Thuli lives in a house down the hill, but that they can only reach the house by foot. As Kevin and Michael walk down, Sylvia and I stay and chat with the lady. She's very curious as to what has brought us here, and Sylvia tells her everything; hearing of the theft, the lady gets upset and advises us to come at night, when Thuli won't expect us. Kevin and Michael soon return, saying that they only found Thuli's sister, who said that Thuli hadn't been staying there for the last few weeks. Sylvia is certain that this is a lie to protect Thuli. It seems that we've come to a dead end; everybody agrees that it's time to go back, that there's nothing more we can do. I'm incredibly relieved. "Let's get (the hell) out of here", I say.

Feeling slightly more at ease now that this episode has passed, my role as researcher resurfaces during the ride back and I start to ask questions:

Me: So is this normal stuff?

Michael: Yes. Very normal. But this situation was a bit tricky; it could have backlashed on us.

Me: What do you mean? How come?

Michael: You see, if something would have happened, they could have charged us for intimidation or anything like that. We didn't have a warrant or anything like that.

Me: So then why did we go?

Michael: Because...yeah...we needed to get your money back. But if you went to the police first, opened a case, then we could have acted on that case. We could have arrested someone on that open case. Now it was just an investigation or something like that.

Me: Why didn't you say anything?! I would have happily gone to the police station first. I had no idea.

Michael: Because we wanted to help you and show you what we do.

When he says this, I want the ground to open up and swallow me, to forget this incident has ever happened. I keep silent for the rest of the ride home. I feel ashamed, stupid, and obligated to them. As soon as I get home, I go to the police station to lay a charge of theft. When I explain the entire situation to the police officer in question, I feel ashamed, like I've been cheating on him by going to the company first. Yet to my surprise, the police officer shows no sign of disapproval, but says, "That's what happens here, and well, you saved us a lot of time".

Later that afternoon, I go to the company office and apologise to the owner for the entire ordeal. He seems insulted by my apologies and says stoically, "If anything happens,

no matter what, I want you to phone me first and then the police. So I'm happy you did what you did. It is our responsibility to take care of you. So promise me that you'll do the same in the future." I nod awkwardly and hope that a situation like this never arises again.



This incident provides numerous points of analysis regarding the company's role in the community, the community's expectations of the company, and the relationship between the police and the private security company. Yet it also raises several methodological questions about the practical, moral, and ethical concerns that surfaced during my fieldwork. This chapter will delve further into these methodological issues to elucidate how I conducted fieldwork and to demonstrate how the role of researcher is often a precarious one.

The first section will focus on Durban and my reasons for choosing it as the research location. The next section will clarify certain decisions I have made regarding writing about race and violence in South Africa. The third and fourth sections provide an account of the actual methodology and issues of access. The next four sections analyse my role and impact as a researcher – the “Sierra Foxtrot Golf” (Special Female Guest), as one company called me for the purposes of radio communication⁴ – and deal with issues of emotion, identity, safety, ethics, and morality. As a whole, this chapter is intended to make my research process more transparent, to explicate my role as researcher, and to show how data were collected and the analysis was conducted. As I conceptualise policing as a performance, it seems judicious to understand and elucidate my own participation (on and off stage) in the numerous performances discussed throughout this book.

Durban: The Research Location

This ethnographic study of the everyday policing practices of armed response officers was carried out in the Durban Metropolitan Area (DMA).⁵ In this section, I want to explain briefly why Durban was chosen as the research location.

As shown in the maps at the beginning of this book, Durban is located along the eastern coast of South Africa in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. The DMA covers an area of approximately 2,300 square kilometres, which accounts for nearly 1.5 per cent

4 Armed response companies use the NATO phonetic alphabet code for communication, where S is Sierra, F is Foxtrot, and G is Golf.

5 Although Durban Metropolitan Area (DMA) is the official name, the city is more commonly referred to as Durban. The isiZulu name of the city, eThekweni (or the eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality), is also frequently used.

of the entire province. The city has an estimated population of 3,027,974, making it the second biggest in South Africa after the Greater Johannesburg metropolitan area. As for every South African city, the current urban structure of Durban is largely the result of apartheid policies of segregation and displacement. In 2000, new borders were demarcated to include further peripheral areas that physically enlarged the city by approximately 68 per cent. A new name was also given: eThekweni Municipality (Marx & Charlton 2003).

First known as Port Natal, Durban was founded in the 1820s as a British settlement. The city originally functioned as a minor trading post for internal commerce, but it soon established itself as a colonial port and trading centre for the overseas contacts of the Boer Republic of Natalia and the Colony of Natal (Beinart 2001; Brookfield and Tatham 1957; Vawda 1997). Durban's economy also relied on the sugar industry, which itself depended largely on capital and labour imported from India, resulting in a large influx of Indians, especially between 1860 and 1911.⁶ Although they arrived as indentured labourers, the majority settled down and remained in the area (Davies 1981).⁷ This has had a marked impact on Durban's demographics: the Black/African community accounts for 63 per cent, the Asian for 22 per cent, the White for 11 per cent, and the Coloured for three per cent (Marx and Charlton 2003). Durban is regarded as South Africa's "Indian city", and it is for this reason that I specifically chose to include an Indian owned company.

There were two further reasons for selecting Durban as a field site in addition to its demographic diversity. The first is that Durban has long occupied the top position in crime tables in South Africa, particularly in terms of murder and aggravated robbery. In 2007, Durban was identified as the violent crime capital of South Africa (Masango 2007, in Marks and Wood 2007: 150). In 2009, KwaMashu – one of Durban's biggest townships – was labelled the murder capital of South Africa, with more than 300 murders that year.⁸ These prevailing crime rates made it a suitable location in which to analyse the relationships between crime, (in)security, and authority. The second reason is that existing research on crime and policing in Durban is scarce, particularly in comparison to Cape Town and Johannesburg.⁹ This research therefore aims to fill a micro-contextual gap.

6 This contrasts with the production of wool in the Eastern Cape, which depended on large areas of land (Singh et al. 1997).

7 A second yet smaller group of Indians arrived in South Africa during the 1880s to set up trade networks businesses (Hansen 2012: 28).

8 Source: online database of *The Mercury* newspaper, accessed 23 September 2009.

9 See Ballard (2005), Bénit-Gbaffou (2008), Hentschel (2011), Marks (2005), Marks and Bonnin (2010), and Marks and Wood (2007, 2010).

A Note on Writing

Before I discuss how I conducted my research and the challenges this posed, I first want to explain three decisions I have made about how to write about policing and violence in South Africa. The first point concerns race. As stated by Hansen, “Every ethnographer of South Africa will have to reckon with this social fact in order to understand and describe contemporary social and cultural life in the country” (2012: 6). Throughout the research process, and particularly during the writing phase, I have thought at length about how to approach, define, and discuss issues of race. The diversity of paths taken by other scholars working on and in South Africa did not make this process any easier.

Apartheid legally classified South African society into four racial groups: White/European, Coloured, Asian, and African/Native. The term “Black” referred to all “non-Whites”. For this book, I employ these same racial categories, primarily because my informants still used them to define themselves and others. However, when I use the term “Black”, I am referring to individuals who were previously labelled as “Native” or “African”. Another word that I use regularly is “non-white”, again because my informants regularly did so. In fact, many informants preferred the label “non-white” to the earlier category of “Black”, which encompassed Blacks, Indians, and Coloureds. Like Ashforth (2005), I will use capital letters, such as in “White” and “Black”, in reference to groups of individuals, particularly as a means of identification. For example, when armed response officers talk of criminals as Blacks, I will use a capital letter, as they are making reference to a group of individuals they define according to race. When I use these terms as adjectives, such as for “a black armed response officer”, I will not capitalise them.

The second point concerns anonymity. Although several informants did not object to their identity being made public, and some even encouraged it, the majority of my interlocutors expressed a desire for anonymity. For the sake of consistency, I have decided to extend anonymity to all parties, including the companies and community organisations that I studied. It is for this reason that companies have been given letters in chapter four. Furthermore, the industry is highly competitive, and many of those who worked in it, particularly company owners, regularly asked me which company I thought was the “best”. I refrained from taking part in this debate, which is another reason for not revealing the names of the companies. Moreover, when discussing particular incidents that occurred during my fieldwork in the course of this book, I will refer only to months instead of specific dates. This is intended not only to protect the identities of the armed response officers, but also, and in particular, to prevent companies from identifying each other.

However, in order to be able to follow certain informants throughout this book, I have provided particular armed response officers with pseudonyms from a range of names that actually existed in order to use realistic names. For example, in the introduction, I refer to “Michael”; although this was not his real name, there is another

informant called Michael. Furthermore, I often use pseudonyms that reflect the racial identity of the informants. For example, the pseudonym of one Indian armed response officer is Sanjeev, a common Indian name. As I argue that issues of race continue to shape contemporary policing and perceptions of violence, I believe it is important to indicate the racial identities of my informants.

The third point I want to make here is that many of the narratives and quotes in this book have sometimes been shortened. However, they have not been altered or corrected in terms of grammar or speech. At a conference, I was once criticised for not removing grammatical errors or swear words, such as "fuck", from my quotes. The person in question argued that my method made my informants look "uneducated" or even "aggressive". Although I understand this point, I do not believe that it is my role to correct or alter the language used by my informants. Rather, I want to give an accurate impression of how my informants actually speak. I have therefore opted not to remove swear words, slang, or grammatical errors from my quotations.

Methods

I spent a total of 20 months in the field, spread across three periods: October to December 2007, June 2008 to May 2009, and April 2010 to September 2010. The first period was an orientation study to determine the exact research topic; the second period functioned as the core phase of data collection; and the third period developed and filled existing empirical gaps.

The bulk of the data collected for this project derives from participant observation. Participant observation is understood here as "a method in which a researcher takes part in the daily activities, rituals, interactions, and events of a group of people as one of the means of learning the explicit and tacit aspects of their life routines and their culture" (DeWalt and DeWalt 2002: 1). A complete lack of participation, described by DeWalt and DeWalt (2002: 19) as *nonparticipation*, did not exist in my research – I was always there and thus always participating. Likewise, there was no sense of full participation, complete immersion, or "going native", as I always remained an outsider.

My second research method was conducting interviews of various types. Most of these took place in Durban; where they occurred elsewhere, this is indicated in the footnotes. I conducted semi-structured interviews with company owners and people in positions of authority, such as leaders of organisations and high-ranking police officers, in order to make full use of the limited time available (to us). Other interviews were less structured and were guided by mental topic guides, often taking place over lunch or while walking around a particular area. In total, I conducted 167 such interviews: interviews that were pre-arranged (i.e. where an appointment was made in advance). However, this figure excludes the open interviews and unplanned conversations I

carried out during periods of participant observation. It is this second type – the more informal interviews – that generated the majority of my data. For example, when I attended community policing forum meetings, I not only analysed the structure and content of the meeting but also spoke to participants. Furthermore, I conducted several group interviews, particularly among security officers, but this happened in a rather ad hoc way, and was more of a “group talk” than a formal focus group discussion. I also recorded the life histories of several individuals who had been working in the industry for a long time in order to trace the developments of private security and policing in South Africa the past few decades.

During interviews and participant observation, I used both recording and writing devices. Several interviews were recorded and then transcribed. When going “on duty”, I always carried my recorder with me and I always informed my informants when I used it. As it was practically impossible to record all 12 hours of each shift, I recorded conversations that I deemed to be important at the time. I always carried a notebook in which I would jot down keywords related to events, such as *car chase*, themes in conversations, such as *trauma*, and my own emotions, such as *anger*. During meetings and gatherings, I would often make a rough sketch of the scene to record, for example, the positioning of the participants around a table. After each shift, I wrote up field notes that I brand *mosaics of data*, which included jotted-down keywords, fragments of transcribed interviews, and detailed field notes written afterwards. Unlike Murray (2003), I did not distinguish between personal, observational, or methodological notes, since I believe that such a categorization disregards the interconnectedness between emotions, method, and knowledge. Rather, personal accounts and methodological issues are woven throughout the notes as a key ingredient of the empirical data, resulting in “messy texts” (Denzin 1997) that voiced various facets of the research process.

In addition to participant observation and interviews, I also conducted a small amount of data analysis, such as employee contracts, contracts between companies and clients, minutes of meetings, and reports created by companies and community organisations. I initially planned to carry out a large-scale survey of several companies to complement the qualitative data. However, this was not possible due to time constraints. As an alternative, I sent a form to 11 companies in order to acquire basic information about them, such as the number of people they employed, their overheads, and their wages bills. All of the companies completed the form, but they all omitted particular sections. I am also certain that many did not provide accurate information, particularly regarding sensitive issues. One example is the salaries paid to armed response officers: for almost all of the companies, the amount stated on the form was higher than what the armed response officers showed me on their pay slips. Therefore, although these forms provided some baseline data, the validity of this data are questionable. For this reason, I do not rely heavily on this information in the chapters that follow.

Another prominent technique that I employed throughout the research process was the frequent rereading of my field notes, both in and out of the field. This initially served as a means of recalling the research data, yet it has also allowed me to trace developments in my emotions, my relationships with my informants, and my analytical insights. According to Beatty, "the evocation of feelings is an exercise in imaginative recovery" (2010: 440). I concur that recapturing and re-experiencing identical feelings is impossible, as hindsight evokes other emotions than those originally conjured. However, I also argue that a retrospective analysis developed over time is fruitful precisely because of the change in perspective.

Access and Doing It

After getting settled in Durban and conducting several preliminary interviews, the first part of my fieldwork involved participating in private security training courses. In October 2008, I completed the private security training courses of levels E, D, C, and armed response training at one particular training school. As this is the first step to becoming a private security officer, it seemed logical to commence my research here. This allowed me to follow some of my fellow trainees individuals throughout the early stages of their careers. Once I completed the security training courses, I focused on gaining access to the companies.

The companies

Although I frequented several companies and interviewed the owners of more than 20, I decided to focus on four companies for in-depth analysis. These firms were selected to reflect the diversity of the industry. The first is an internationally owned company that operates globally. The second is a Durban-based company that operates solely in the DMA. The third and fourth are community-based companies: one operates in an affluent, predominantly white area while the other operates in a former Indian township on the outskirts of the city.

I gained access to the companies simply by approaching the owners and/or managers and requesting permission to study their activities. Although two other companies denied my request for safety reasons, the others consented on the condition that I sign confidentiality and liability agreements, which I readily accepted.¹⁰ In return, the managers and/or owners asked me to provide feedback at the end of my fieldwork. All of them indirectly inquired about their performance and success in comparison to

10 These agreements stipulated that I could not hold the company liable in case any form of damage was inflicted upon myself and that no information regarding the company could be shared with a third party outside of my research, such as newspapers or other companies.

other companies, but I deflected such questions and focused solely on issues of potential improvement.

In total, I spent approximately 750 hours with armed response officers in their vehicles – this amount only includes the actual time spent in their vehicles during their shifts. When I went out on duty with the armed response officers, I wore a bulletproof vest on which I attached my university business card to clearly show that I was a researcher and not an employee of the company. In addition to the 750 hours spent on the road, I regularly hung out at the company offices and spoke to various individuals to discuss particular issues. In addition, I conducted participant observation in the control room and accompanied technicians and sales reps on their rounds.

With two of the four companies, I was only permitted to accompany armed response officers who occupied high-ranking positions, such as supervisors. This was ostensibly for safety reasons – senior officers were not the first to attend a crime scene and would arrive after a situation had been made safe – but I also suspect that the managers wanted me to accompany a more experienced officer so that I would get a better impression of their respective companies. With the other two companies, I was permitted to accompany the lower-ranking armed response officers. The owner of one of these companies instructed the armed response officer to first assess the safety of the situation and then conduct another check with me. In addition, all four companies initially forbade me from going on night shifts, though three of the companies later retracted this decision.

When I started working with a particular company, I initially focused my efforts solely on that company, such as November 2008, when I exclusively focused on one company. Eventually, however, my days “on duty” alternated between companies; I would do a Monday night shift with company A, followed by a Wednesday day shift with company B, and so on. For example, in July 2010, I went on shifts with each of the four companies. Furthermore, my 750 hours on duty and the additional time I spent in the field were not spread evenly across the four companies. Out of the four, two received slightly less attention. This was due to practical reasons: one of the companies was less forthcoming when providing information and access, while the other was smaller and thus required less consideration. And eventually, personal relationships also played a role: I had established better rapport with certain employees of particular companies and thus spent more time with them.

On and off duty

Initial access to the armed response officers was quite easy to arrange, but gaining their trust and establishing rapport took time. As has been the case for other researchers working on policing (Horn 1997; Marks 2004), many armed response officers suspected that I was a spy for company management, the police, or other companies, and that my intention was to “watch them” and report back to a higher authority. Fortunately, this

suspicion dwindled over time, and eventually the armed response officers came to trust me in both occupational and personal matters.

In the early stages of my research, I accompanied numerous armed response offices in their vehicles, finding myself with a different officer for each shift, and sometimes even in several vehicles during the same shift. As time passed, however, I increasingly accompanied the same few individuals. Out of the dozens of armed response officers whom I spoke to, I developed close relationships with ten individuals, who were spread across the four companies. I spent a great deal of my time with these 10 men, visiting them at their homes and meetings their families. This allowed me to get a better sense of the person behind the uniform and to analyse the impact of their work on their personal lives. They are my key informants, and their stories and our experiences together form the core of this book.

Clients and community organisations

While the companies were carefully chosen to reflect the diversity of the industry, I randomly selected clients, community organisations, and citizen based initiatives. The majority of the data collected from community organisations and clients originated from interviews and participant observation at meetings and community patrols. In total, I spent approximately 100 hours with citizens on their patrols in different parts of Durban in order to understand the community aspects of policing. To gain access to clients, I did not use the companies' client databases but instead included clients whom I encountered while accompanying armed response officers. On these occasions I was able to question the clients, and in some cases I arranged follow-up interviews on my own. Furthermore, many of my social acquaintances were also consumers of private security and they readily shared their experiences and opinions.

Due to the abundance of community organisations operating in Durban, I used a snowball method to find informants and I interviewed members of organisations when I came across them. As a consequence, my study covered neighbourhood watches, street patrols, community policing forums, street committees, and many more groups. However, since my research was primarily concerned with private security, I specifically focused on citizen initiatives that were aligned with private security companies. The result was that I spent most of my time with clients and community organisations in areas that also had private security, which meant that I excluded, or focused less on, organisations in lower-income areas, such as informal settlements.

The state police

Acquiring access to the state police usually requires one to seek official permission from national level authorities. Since the focus of my research was not the state police per se, I chose not to go through this time-consuming bureaucratic process. Similar to the process of meeting clients, the first point of access was on-the-ground

encounters between armed response officers and police officers. The second involved open interviews with police officers during meetings organised by the police, such as community policing forum meetings. The third means of access was conducting more structured interviews with police officers of different ranks. During my research, there were three police officers and two police reservists whom I met with regularly, and it was thanks to the latter that I was ultimately able to accompany state police on their shifts for approximately 80 hours. This was not done systematically, however; the shifts were random in terms of time and place, ranging from a two-hour patrol in an affluent area in 2009 to a full night shift in a lower-income area in 2010.

Other security issues

Besides these three key actors (armed response officers, citizens, and state police officers), I incorporated numerous other individuals, methods, and topics related to security into my research. I investigated other types of security officers, such as security guards and cash-in-transit officers. I worked as a car guard for a few days. I analysed security officers in other work-related settings, such as disciplinary hearings and job interviews. I tagged along with private investigators and bodyguards and did a polygraph test. I interviewed members of security associations, trade unions, and the regulatory authority (PSIRA) as well as security training providers, firearm trainers, and other relevant individuals. I visited Westville Prison, volunteered for a non-profit organisation, namely The Advice Desk for the Abused, and interviewed ward councillors, social workers, journalists, and academics. All of these efforts allowed me to gain a richer understanding of private security, policing, and crime in South Africa.

The “Emotionality of Participation”¹¹

In the past, social scientists generally excluded mention of personal emotions from their analysis for the purposes of objectivity. Primarily due to the “crisis of representation” and the influence of feminist theory, reflexivity is currently regarded as an “unavoidable precondition” (Madden 2010: 23) for any ethnographic fieldwork that strives to “achieve a methodological rigour” (Nilan 2002: 369). Although what is meant by *reflexivity* remains to be debated, there is a general consensus that ethnographers must understand their own position and role in the social world that they are studying and recognize that they, as persons with their own personality traits, backgrounds, and world perceptions, play

11 In another work (Diphoorn 2013), I have delved into this concept by analysing several experiences from the field to highlight the dialectic between emotions and participation. The article explores three different modes of participation, namely active participation, reluctant participation, and passive participation, with which to analyse the position of the researcher, as a participant, in relation to other research participants.

a decisive part in shaping the entire research process (Beatty 2010; Coffey 1999; Denzin 1997; Madden 2010). I regard reflexivity as the "reciprocal interplay of one's relationship with oneself and with others" (Jackson 2010: 36).

Even today, however, the emotions of the researcher are often marginalized or disregarded due to a reigning assumption that the "emotional" and the "analytical" stand in a dichotomous relationship and that they produce two different sets of data (Campbell 2002; Coffey 1999; Davies 2010; Liebing and McLean 2007). I contest this view and concur with the main claim presented by Davies and Spencer (2010) that emotional experiences are not obstructive and detached from the more objective analytical data, but that, when reflected upon, they are inseparable from other data we regard as knowledge. Thus, emotions are not merely research tools; they also frame data, constitute data, and function as data in their own right.¹² Being reflexive therefore also involves "researching the researcher" (Campbell 2002: 35) and exploring "the emotional practice of doing research" (Pickering 2001: 491).

This is particularly important when researching emotionally charged topics, such as violence, where our emotions are more salient and weigh heavier on our analysis (Campbell 2002). After all, researching violence is emotional – for both the informants and the researcher – and it thus carries additional responsibilities that exceed those associated with traditional ethnography (Campbell 2002; Cramer et al. 2011; Ghassem-Fachandi 2009; Robben and Nordstrom 1995). Existing ethnographies on violence clearly portray the emotional turmoil inherent in such research, and my own work follows suit. Feelings of estrangement, frustration, guilt, and disgust and the recurrence of nightmares and insomnia were all part of the research experience. I often dreaded going on duty with my informants due to these emotions, and I frequently had to persuade myself to "get over it". The rapid fluctuation from one strong emotion to another was exceptionally exhausting, and I regularly felt unable to share my experiences with others – both friends and colleagues – because "they didn't understand" and "they hadn't been there".

In the field, I experienced this as an impediment to the research process and I felt an incessant need to neutralize or subdue certain emotions. I felt I was failing to understand my informants when I was disgusted by their behaviour or felt aversion toward them. When I overtly defended my informants to others and sympathised with their views, I feared falling victim to what Robben (1996) calls "ethnographic seduction". This refers to "a complex dynamic of conscious moves and unconscious defences" (Robben 1996: 72) that can surface during interactions with perpetrators and victims of violence and that prevents researchers from losing "their critical stances toward the manifest discourse" (Robben 1996: 72) of their interviewees. However, as Hage (2010:

12 See Beatty (2010), Campbell (2002), Davies (2010), Hage (2010), Lee-Treweek and Linkogle (2000), and Lumsden (2009).

150) argues, experiencing certain emotions, whether similar or different to those of our informants, does not mean we are unable to employ an analytical lens; it merely requires “much more effort—an effort that is in itself emotional”. Furthermore, the perceived need to ignore or transform certain emotions is in itself an emotional process of empirical value (Davies 2010).

In the following chapters, my emotions repeatedly pierce through the various narratives. As understandings and definitions of violence are culturally constructed, a researcher’s field notes on an incident of violence are interpretations of violence (Robben and Nordstrom 1995). The empirical vignettes are thus personalised narratives of violence directed by my own moral compass. Phrases such as “crying frantically” and “going at it hard” are subjective interpretations. My field notes are thus products of my own definitions and representations of violence, which probably differ from those of my informants.

“You’s a wit stekkie”: Doing Research as a White Woman

Despite recognising the importance of reflexivity, I frequently grappled with the required depth of this approach and the position it should take within my narrative texts. In my field notes, I did not hold back and habitually probed my own identity and emotions. How, though, do I incorporate these parts of the “self” into this book? Ethnographers have been criticised since the mid-1980s for being “emotional exhibitionist” (Ellis and Flaherty, 1992: 3, in Pickering 2001: 486) who produce “confessional tales” (van Maanen 2011) that are “narcissistic, overly reflexive, and not scientific” (Denzin 1997: xv). I argue that writing about the self should not be at the heart of the ethnography; it is a crucial part of the research context, but it is *one part* among many. Reflexivity is about “bringing the author/observer into the analysis – as a source of light but not as the light itself...as directly related to the object under study, but not the object itself” (Leibing and McLean 2007: 6). In this chapter, I heed this advice as I attempt to elucidate how I analysed my research setting.

During my attempts to dissect and understand my impact in the field, I discovered various “selves” (Coffey 1999; Denzin 1997) that emerged in different field settings; on some occasions certain selves were prominent, while at other times they were absent. There were various stages of “identity negotiation” (Huggins and Glebbeek 2009b: 9); sometimes I tactically implemented a degree of “impression management” (Goffman 1959), while at other times this was reactive, spontaneous, and identifiable only in retrospect. Furthermore, the numerous selves were continuously reshaped throughout the research process (Coffey 1999; Davies 2010; Jackson 2010).

In the course of my research, the two most prominent aspects of myself that appeared most prominent were race and gender. I was repeatedly reminded that I was

a *wit stekkie* – slang for white woman – further affirmed by the ascribed name “Sierra Foxtrot Golf” – the Special Female Guest – for radio communication by one of the companies. The concept of gender is not one that I delve into in this study. Although I do discuss a “macho culture” and certain notions of masculinity amongst my research population, the predominance of males in my research population eliminates the need for a discussion about gender differences.

My gender clearly shaped my role as researcher, however. As a white, upper-middle-class woman from the Netherlands who conducts research with and about predominantly non-white South African men, my gender and skin colour continuously differentiated me from my informants, an issue also explored by other female researchers.¹³ Although gender plays a role in any ethnographic research, it weighs heavier for a female studying police institutions due to the inherent masculinity of such an environment.¹⁴ My research made me more aware than ever before of my being a woman, and I continuously analysed whether I possessed certain feminine traits and how my identity was expressed and defined through clothing and behaviour (Coffey 1999; Hunt 1984).

At the outset of my fieldwork, I was warned about “hustling” (Easterday et al. 1982, in Lumsden 2009: 504), and I expected sexual advances to be an obstacle. Although this proved to be the case, such encounters did not impede the research process. In fact, I was frequently alone with men in their vehicles and I rarely felt unsafe. The armed response officers often boasted among each other when I accompanied them and sometimes there was a degree of quarrelling about whom I would “crew with” for the day. In concurrence with Hunt (1984) and Marks (2004), and in contrast to other literature on women studying male institutions, which predominately highlights the “gendered stumbling-blocks” (Huggins and Glebbeek 2003: 384), I claim that my gender was more advantageous than problematic.

Indeed, I sometimes think that this research would have been more difficult had I been a man, since I would have had to prove my own masculinity and participate in the macho culture of armed response officers. In contrast to Rodgers (2001, 2007) and Venkatesh (2008), I was fortunate not to be subject to violence or coercion in the field, as women are regarded as harmless, powerless, less threatening, and in need of protection (Horn 1997; Lumsden 2009; Westmarland 2001a). It didn’t matter that I didn’t know how to shoot properly or dismantle a firearm. Similarly, I didn’t have to impress my informants with my own “war stories” and use of force. The perception that, as a female, I needed protection was thus rather beneficial and stopped me from having to

13 See Gurney (1985, 2003), Horn (1997), Hunt (1984), Huggins and Glebbeek (2003, 2009a, 2009b), Lumsden (2009), Marks (2004), Sharp and Kremer (2006), and Westmarland (2001a, 2001b).

14 See Horn (1997), Hunt (1984), Huggins and Glebbeek (2003, 2009a, 2009b), Marks (2004), and Westmarland (2001a, 2001b).

use violence. I was therefore not engaged in “the praxis of violence” (Rodgers 2001: 3), though I was unquestionably a part of its manifestation and interpretation.

As a woman, there were two contrasting images assigned to me – the potential sexual partner and the understanding listener – and I often sought to manoeuvre between these two. When interviewing company owners, for example, I was purposely naive and subordinate. When attending sessions at the shooting range, meanwhile, I felt compelled to act tougher and like “one of the guys”. Occasionally I was flirtatious, and at other times non-sexual. As my informants regarded grief and distress as normal feminine emotions, I often purposely adopted a nurturing role, delving into my emotions in order to encourage my informants to share theirs. By disclosing my own feelings, I was able to create space for discussion between my informants and myself. They initially presented themselves as tough men; they weren’t “sissies” or “faggots”, and they could handle the dangers of the job. When I first discussed some of my emotions, they were cold and distant, treating certain dangerous incidents as mundane. Eventually, however, almost all of them shared stories about traumatic incidents, nightmares, and domestic problems stemming from “taking the work home”. Thus, the passing of time, the perception that “as a woman, you understand”, and the act of disclosing my own feelings made the emotional side of my informants’ occupation (and their personal lives) accessible empirical data. I am not implying that a man could not have uncovered this data. Rather, I am simply highlighting how being a woman shaped my means of acquiring such information.

Besides being a woman, the colour of my skin also played a role in my identity vis-à-vis my research participants, an inescapable factor in the South African context, where issues of race continue to shape social relations. In his book “Help, I have become a white man”¹⁵ (2009), Dutch journalist Bram Vermeulen describes how he became acutely aware, often unwillingly, of his skin colour while working in South Africa. I recognised a lot of his experiences; during my fieldwork, as never before, I was repeatedly reminded of my “whiteness”. The vast majority of armed response officers are non-white, and my skin colour unquestionably influenced my position in the field. In her book on a specific unit of the South African public police, Marks (2004: 887) describes how her informants warned her that being a white woman made her a target for crime. The same occurred on two occasions during my own research when I was not allowed to accompany my informants because they were entering “areas where they [local residents] hate white people and they will purposely attack you”.

As mentioned previously, many armed response officers suspected that I was a spy for company management, the police, or other companies. Primarily due to my skin colour, most of my informants initially assumed that I worked for “management” and believed that access was granted to me on account of my whiteness, as illustrated by

15 Translated from Dutch: “Help, Ik ben blank geworden”.

the following transcript of a conversation I had with Nick, a high-ranking Indian armed response officer in his 30s:

Me: Well, I'm white. Do you think that played a role in me being here with you now?

Nick: [He thinks for a while, he smiles...] Yes, I do.

Me: So if I was black or Indian, the managers at [...] wouldn't have helped me out or allowed me to conduct my research?

Nick: Yes. Of course, you being a foreigner helped. And I think that they just interested in what you do...But yes, you being white definitely made it easier.

Me: And do the other guys think this as well?

Nick: Of course!! When you first came, the first few days, I was nervous! I mean, all of a sudden there's this wit chick in my car, I felt that you were like evaluating me or whatever.

Me: And that's because I'm white?

Nick: Yes, no. I mean, if they would have put anyone in my car, it would have made me nervous, but you being white definitely made it more serious. And when the other guys met you, everybody was asking each other: what's this *witto* doing here? Is she here to spy on us for the big boss? Because you're white and the managers are white, many people saw a connection. You can understand that, can't you?

Me: Of course. And how is it now?

Nick: It's different now... I mean, you're different, and I tell you everything. The guys like you being here, they enjoy your company, but in the beginning, we were nervous, we didn't understand it.

Me: And do you think that I would have been accepted quicker if I was an Indian or a black female?

Nick: Yes. It would have made the guys less nervous. But at the end of the day, you've been accepted, because we trust you, because of the way you are. But your colour is always there, and any new guy coming in will think the same.

Many informants echoed Nick's sentiments, and this clarified the nature of countless other interactions. For example, when we encountered clients, they always started speaking to me first, seemingly under the assumption that I held a managerial position, although I informed them that I was a researcher and not a company employee. It seemed that my "whiteness" exuded a degree of authority. Like Goldstein (2009) and Huggins (Huggins and Glebbeek 2003), I felt that being white automatically afforded

me a certain social status and thereby framed particular interactions.¹⁶ This ascribed social status was particularly palpable during my private security training, when fellow trainees expressed bafflement that a white woman would participate in such a course, believing that I “didn’t need the training”. Something similar occurred when I worked as a car guard (as a form of participant observation) at Pavilion, one of Durban’s largest shopping malls, and a white male gave me a tip and said, “Please don’t use it on drugs”. It seemed that the man could only conceive of a white woman working as a car guard if she was in a desperate situation.

Encounters with women while on duty were particularly interesting, particularly with women victims who I felt became more comfortable when I entered the room, particularly white women. One such incident took place in December 2009 during a night shift with Brian, a high-ranking Indian armed response officer in his early 40s. An elderly white woman had been attacked while she slept; she was held at gunpoint, beaten, tied up, and robbed by three black males. When we arrived at the scene, the woman was still tied up; she was partially naked and was shaking and crying uncontrollably. Brian attempted to untie her, but this only made her more hysterical. She kept looking at me, which I interpreted as an indication that she wanted *me* to assist her. So, heeding her signs of consent, I untied her. As soon as her hands were loose, she grabbed hold of mine and refused to let me go. When others, such as the police, arrived at the scene, she declined to interact with anyone except me. For the next few hours, I acted as a “go-between” between the old woman and everyone else, and I am certain that she sought comfort from me as a woman, and more importantly, as a white woman. In fact, when encountering other “Whites” in the field, such as police officers, I very often felt that they assumed some sort of bond with me, that our similar skin colour automatically implied a mutually recognised connection. Similarly, some of the company employees and armed response officers initially assumed that I preferred to go on duty with the (very few) white officers.

My skin colour also became an issue during conversations about race or when racist remarks were made. Initially, many of my informants felt uncomfortable discussing issues of race with me. As a non-South African, I was often accused of being unable to understand the importance of race. Yet accentuating the “foreign self” also had its advantages. Although I am white, I am not a white South African, and I do not therefore share the same history; my parents or grandparents were not potential players in the apartheid system. While some informants did link my Dutch nationality to the origin of Afrikaners, this never posed any real problems. I was therefore described as a “different type of white”.

16 Like Huggins (Huggins and Glebbeek 2003: 373), I found that being an academic consolidated my perceived social status, as I was regarded as “smart” and “knowledgeable”.

Dangers in the Field

May 2010

I was on night shift with Lushen, the Indian owner of a small private security company, and two of his "volunteer" friends. During a coffee break with several police officers at a gas station, we heard about an ongoing hijacking. We immediately got back into our vehicles and sped off. All three of my acquaintances readied their weapons, and Lushen commanded me to put on my bulletproof vest, a difficult task in a speeding car making tight turns. The men were very excited, saying things like "This is going to be a good one" and "Finally we get some action". As we approached the scene, they instructed me to jump out of the vehicle on the opposite side to the suspects when we came to a standstill and to seek cover next to the car's engine. It was only then that the danger of the situation dawned on me; my heart started pounding, my mouth became dry, and I nervously scratched my face and head. A large part of me wanted to jump out of the car and run away, but I felt that there was no turning back.

As I tried to absorb their instructions, the car suddenly screeched to a halt amidst a volley of gunshots. I had no idea where they were coming from or who was shooting. I got out of the car, crawled around to the bonnet, and curled up tightly in a foetal position right next to the engine with my arms covering my head and ears. Shots continued to ring out, and at one point I was sure that a bullet was not far, fizzing past my head like a firework. And then, unexpectedly, there was complete silence and the caustic smell of gunpowder lingering in the air. I remained still and realised that I had been holding my breath the entire time. For the rest of the night shift, I chain-smoked in the hope of calming my nerves.



Although I had previously experienced violence in the field, this was my first taste of a life-threatening situation. I asked myself whether I should have stayed at the gas station when news of the hijacking came through. Substantial literature in anthropology, criminology, and sociology analyses the troublesome nature of researching violence in conflict, post-conflict, and "peaceful" settings.¹⁷ Although violence and danger were certainly not daily occurrences, I experienced several fearful, emotionally charged, and ethically ambiguous incidents in the field. I occasionally placed myself in "ambient danger" (Stanko and Lee 2003: 4) and was forced to ask myself whether I had gone too far and should impose limits on my participant observation. "Risk control" (Jamieson 2000: 61) and weighing the value of certain data against the risk involved are often

17 See the last chapter in Ghassem-Fachandi's (2009) book, entitled "Guide to further reading", in which he provides a review of research and literature on violence. Also see Beek and Göpfert (2012), Cramer et al. (2011), Das et al. (2000), Krohn-Hansen (1994), Lee (1995), Nordstrom and Robben (1995), Punch (1986), Rodgers (2001, 2007), Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois (2004), and Sluka (1990).

unfeasible (Kovats-Bernat 2002: 211). Although one may become more adept at calculating risk over time, certain dangers are unavoidable or unforeseeable. Perceptions of what constitutes danger change over time, and bad luck cannot be pre-calculated (Feldman 1991; Lee 1995; Peterson 2000; Sluka 1990, 1995).

Although violence and danger did not occur on a routine basis and many days were spent simply hanging out and chatting, I risked exposure to such circumstances when I decided to step into the armed response vehicles, which made it impossible to dissociate myself from violence and those perpetrating it.¹⁸ As Liebling and Stanko state, “Researching violence means we choose to (or become obliged to) explore the dangerousness of violent groups or settings” (2001: 424). Thus, I do not employ Lee’s (1995) notion of being an “involuntary participant”; my presence was not involuntary or accidental. I therefore think that researchers need to take responsibility for their choices. One must therefore try to make a realistic appraisal of what the fieldwork entails and be certain of one’s choice to pursue it in advance.

As my fieldwork progressed, I increasingly asked myself why I had selected this topic. Do I, as a researcher, “seek out danger” (Westmarland 2001b: 532), and thrive on “the business of thrill seeking” (Winlow et al. 2001: 537)? In relation to Clendinnen’s (1999) notion of the “Gorgon effect”, is there something that makes me find violence-related topics intriguing and worth researching? Researching violence is often regarded as something exotic and edgy, a way of “breaking new ground” (Lee-Treweek and Linkogle 2000: 10). Although the thrill of violence was certainly not my initial motivation, my attitude changed as the research progressed and certain boundaries, both practical and moral, I had initially set continuously shifted. In all truth, the research was addictive and frequently incited adrenaline and feelings of invincibility. On days when “nothing” happened, we sat around in anticipation for the next prescription of action and adrenaline. It is a world into which one is easily drawn and in comparison to which everything else seems boring and mundane. I clearly recall taking a writing break in June 2010, during which time I started to experience withdrawal-type symptoms; the serenity and lack of action made me restless, I had difficulty concentrating, and it took days before the constant need to be ready and alert finally dissipated.

Many scholars discuss the need to take time away from the field in order to reorient, unwind, and cope with the mental and physical burden of long-term ethnographic research.¹⁹ Although this was my initial plan, it turned out to be more difficult than I had expected. Riding on the “researcher-high” of collecting fascinating data, I did not slow down but rather pushed myself further. It was only when a visiting colleague expressed concern about my hair loss and weight gain and the dark circles around my

18 See Hunt (1984), Jamieson (2000), Lee-Treweek and Linkogle (2000), Marks (2004), and Rodgers (2001, 2007).

19 See Ghassem-Fachandi (2009), Huggins and Glebbeek (2003), Hume (2007), Lee (1995), and Sluka (1990).

eyes that I realised I needed to leave the field. It took an “outsider” to make me realise the physical burden of the research.

Thereafter, regularly leaving the field allowed me to recharge my batteries and distance myself from the research setting, but it also increased my reluctance to continue my fieldwork. It was challenging to step back into that social world after spending time in a safer and more comfortable one. Yet all of these emotions – being excited about the progress of the research, experiencing withdrawal-type symptoms during breaks, feeling pressurised to leave the field, and resuming my research reluctantly – are empirical data. They not only shed light on how I experienced the research and the interconnectedness of my emotions and actions, but they also accentuate a fundamental difference between my informants and myself: unlike myself, my informants are not able to take a break when the physical and emotional burden takes its toll. I therefore concur that taking breaks from the research setting is essential; they provide distance and the space to examine the shared and unshared experiences with informants.

A further question that arises is whether witnessing violence, especially when one places oneself in danger, has analytical value and serves the research objectives; if it does not contribute to the core aims of the research, then experiencing emotional turmoil and personal risk is irresponsible. I argue that participation – and thus witnessing violence – added value to my research. Nilan contends that “dangerous” events are not the most insightful, and that the “data collected after the event or in quieter moments (...) turn out to be the most evocative” (2002: 383). However, to make full use of these “quieter moments”, one must also be present at the “dangerous”. This is particularly so when attempting to build rapport with informants. Ghassem-Fachandi discusses “interrupted reciprocity” (2009: 6), a specific type of rapport that is established between the researcher and the researched through an encounter with violence that allows bonds to be readily established. Experiencing particular (violent) incidents alongside my informants unquestionably influenced the type of rapport established.

Ethics and Morality

Experiencing violence also places researchers in ethically ambiguous positions. The majority of anthropological studies on violence focus on the victims of violence as opposed to the perpetrators (Clendinnen 1999; Rodgers 2001).²⁰ Although researching both “groups” can be emotionally distressing, I argue that there is a difference between listening to someone talk about violence and witnessing someone *being* violent. I found it easier to disassociate myself from violence when it was merely narrated. Violence that

20 Although I recognise that there is no clear dichotomy between “victims” and “perpetrators”, a discussion of this issue is beyond the scope of the current chapter.

is witnessed (first hand) is harder to ignore however; it affects us in the here and now and demands an instant reaction.

Issues of ethics are more salient in cases of “situational danger”, that is, danger that “arises when the researcher’s presence or actions evoke aggression, hostility, or violence from those within the setting” (Lee 1995: 3-4). One such episode occurred during a night shift at a public, festive event when a young man walked past me and whispered something vulgar in my ear. Although none of my informants knew what the passerby had said, the look on my face spoke volumes. Kenny, an Indian armed response officer in his late 40s, immediately approached the man, started shouting at him, and punched him in the face. Feeling guilty and embarrassed, I intervened and convinced Kenny to let it go, which fortunately he did. In the days that followed, I learned that most of my informants agreed with Kenny’s actions, though this did little to appease my guilt. In this episode, I had caused my informant to use violence on my behalf, albeit unwillingly and unintentionally. I questioned whether it was ethical to continue with the research. The question “Can research on violence lead to violence and what happens if it does?” (Liebling and Stanko 2001: 422) dominated my thoughts. What if Kenny had not stopped and the situation had escalated? And what would have happened if I had been injured during one such incident of violence? Although I had signed a liability agreement, how would their failure to protect me impact on my informants? In the incident involving our search for Thuli, what would have happened if we had found her, and would I have been able to influence their behaviour? All researchers inevitably influence their research subjects, but when researching violence one’s impact can be disastrous, so where does one draw the boundaries?

In the course of the following chapters, I will discuss several incidents where my informants engaged in either violent or illegal behaviour and I did not intervene. I continue to question whether I did the right thing. Should I have interceded? Was my silence and passivity unethical, and was I now complicit to their actions? These questions linger in my thoughts, not least because fellow anthropologists have expressed concern over my behaviour. Although each incident yields a different explanation, my overall decision not to intervene was based on two main premises. The first was that I often felt that an intervention would not cease the violence. I knew beforehand that studying armed security entailed witnessing the use of coercive measures by my informants. Although I recognise that I often functioned as an audience to their performances of violence, and I am certain that my presence as a woman exacerbated masculine behaviour (such as with Kenny’s intervention), I am also convinced that my presence was not decisive, as many armed response officers exhibited this type of behaviour both before and after my fieldwork.

Secondly, knowing that physical violence came with the terrain, I felt that expressing my judgment would be simply inappropriate: I was there to analyse my informants’ actions, not to judge or change them. Research on violence inherently posits a researcher

into degrees of judgmentalism (Liebling and Stanko 2001; Rodgers 2001). Any act of violence is "ingrained with moral tension" (Hume 2007: 151) and involves a "deep moral bias" (Rodgers 2001: 3) on the part of the researcher. However, in concurrence with Murray (2003), I believe that the ultimate duty of our research is to our profession, however difficult this may be. In various incidents, I prioritised my role as researcher over my need to express my emotions and moral standpoints; the importance of recognising potentially valuable data outweighed the desire to escape or change the situation. Being an onlooker (in the eyes of my research participants) as opposed to an arbiter opened doors for me, since it showed me the "ugly side" of my informants, who felt free to "let loose" thereafter. By not judging them, I had somehow passed a test and as Crapanzano states, such tests are "a way one's informant learns something about you" (2010: 65).

Though I rarely articulated my judgements, they formed a sizeable part of my field notes and continuously suffused my attempts to comprehend certain situations. The struggle to remain open-minded and non-judgmental in my relationships with my informants was particularly arduous. Like several other scholars (Hume 2007; Lumsden 2009; Pickering 2001), I disliked many of my informants and dreaded accompanying them during their shifts. To make matters worse, some of these individuals were also the most valuable and interesting in terms of data. The truth is that I developed close relationships with many of my informants and I missed them when I left the field. Similar to Pickering (2001), I questioned whether I shared some of their characteristics, what my enjoyment of their company revealed about my personality, and how my time in the field had changed my moral compass. Experiencing these contrasting feelings, relentlessly thinking about my standpoints and personal characteristics, and negotiating between opposing emotions is draining.

The racist and sexist sentiments of some of my informants influenced my dislike for them and hearing informants discuss particular racist ideologies infuriated me. Sexual jokes and vulgar remarks about a woman's physical appearance or sexual activity were common. Although I generally ignored them, they made me feel uncomfortable and this became increasingly difficult when my informants "walked the walk". One example was Andre, an Indian armed response officer in his mid-40s, who told me that he occasionally visited prostitutes while on duty. This became more alarming when he discovered he was HIV-positive (after I had encouraged and accompanied him to get tested) and continued having unprotected sex with prostitutes. I was confronted with the troubling reality of this during a particular night shift with Andre in 2009, when we suddenly stopped at the side of the road to see a prostitute. When she arrived, the two of them disappeared behind a bush, returning a short while later. Not only did I feel uncomfortable and unsafe while sitting alone in the vehicle, but I also felt disgusted for the remainder of the shift at the thought of the sex act and the possibility that he had

passed on HIV. I was troubled with issues of loyalty towards both his wife and children and the managers of the company.

Following this incident, and given our close relationship, I shared my feelings of aversion and disapproval with Andre. At the start of my fieldwork, I did not disclose my opinions regarding the behaviour of my informants. Rather, I questioned my informants about their conduct in an attempt to understand it: why had they acted in such a fashion, what had they hoped to achieve, and what had they felt at the time. Nevertheless, by merely posing these questions, my personal sentiments became manifest, and over time I resigned myself to voicing my beliefs more openly. Many informants regularly questioned me about these, and towards the end of the fieldwork, we often had heated and thought-provoking discussions.

However, rather than stating that my informants' behaviour was wrong and thereby consciously entering a "hierarchical relationship" of morality (Becker 1967: 240), I concentrated on providing alternatives and explaining that such behaviour was not common in my social environment in the Netherlands. By purposely presenting my "foreign self", my informants perceived my comments as less judgmental and understood why I probed into their justifications. Towards the end of my fieldwork, when I had established close bonds with many of my informants, my judgements softened and I came to sympathise with their behaviour and divergent perspectives. The black-and-white notion that "violence is bad" no longer moulded my moral framework, and I increasingly understood the actions of my informants.

Concluding Remarks

The issues discussed in this chapter are the main, but certainly not only, methodological dilemmas that emerged during my fieldwork. What this discussion makes clear is that while all ethnographic fieldwork is difficult and poses practical and ethical challenges, researching violence further complicates such matters. Yet I contend that such studies are both viable and fruitful. Although I do not intend to underestimate or trivialise the emotional turmoil associated with such research, I argue that emotionally charged experiences should be analysed as crucial components of one's data. Although it can be demanding for both the researcher and the researched, participation obliges us to experience emotions, which, when reflected upon and analysed, afford us a more detailed understanding of the research problem and setting. I hope that this chapter has provided a coherent overview of how I conducted myself, both professionally and personally, during fieldwork, and that this will remain in your thoughts throughout the following chapters, where my position in the field will sieve through the text.

3

“Old school” Policing versus

“the New South Africa”:

Violence and Security in South Africa

Introduction

February 2009

During a busy morning shift, Brian and I take a short break to grab a bite to eat on one of Durban’s busy streets lined with restaurants, bars, and shops. The company Brian works for has many clients on this road, so he reckons it’s a good place to stop and monitor what’s going on. While eating our snacks in the vehicle, we see a vagrant walking down the road making a lot of noise; it is obvious that he is intoxicated. Brian grunts and gets out of the vehicle to “deal with the situation”. He approaches the vagrant, tells him that he is disturbing the peace, and asks him to leave the area, but the vagrant refuses. Growing impatient, Brian grabs the man by his sweater and forces him into one of the side streets, away from public view. Then, two elderly white women who have apparently been observing the situation come out of nowhere and start yelling at Brian, accusing him of hurting an innocent man and taking unnecessary measures. “You can’t just go hitting people anymore”, one of them shouts at him. The women proceed to lecture Brian about human rights, equality, and treating people with decency. Brian remains silent, nods, and shows his obedience and subordination. As soon as the women leave, he rolls his eyes, comes over to me, and says, “Can you believe this shit?”

A few hours later, Brian and I receive word from the control room that there has been a break-in at a client’s residence and that one of the suspects has been apprehended by one of Brian’s colleagues. When we get to the premises, we encounter the white male client screaming at the handcuffed black suspect and demanding that Brian’s colleague beat him to punish him for his deeds. Because Brian is of higher rank, he takes over control of the situation. While we wait for the police to arrive, the client repeatedly demands that Brian assault the suspect to “teach him his lesson”. When Brian refuses, the client becomes agitated and accuses Brian of not doing his job properly. “Back in the day, you would have done differently”, he says sardonically. “What has happened to this country?” The client threatens to switch to another company, one that will “do as I want” and employs men that are “man enough”. Luckily for Brian, the police arrive shortly afterwards and take over.



In the preceding vignette, the first incident shows how two citizens show concern for the welfare of the vagrant, frown upon the use of coercion and intimidation, and remind Brian that violence is no longer socially acceptable. The usage of the word “anymore” indicates a change from a previous order. The second incident depicts a different situation: the use of force and punishment is actively demanded, reference is made to “back in the day”, presumably a period when a different mandate existed that tolerated coercion, and the client expresses frustration towards the current state of affairs. These two incidents, which occurred within a few hours of each other, highlight an ongoing struggle between public demands for a forceful approach to policing reminiscent of the apartheid era and the policing style envisioned by the post-apartheid state, which promotes human rights and democratic policing. Although these episodes occurred in white suburbia, this tension is experienced among all classes and races, with similar views expressed in many of Durban’s black and Indian townships.

The “old school” and “new school” modes of policing are widely regarded as opposite ends of a spectrum: the former is seen as authoritative, efficient and “hard”; the latter as democratic, inefficient, and “soft”. Between these two ends lies a field of possibilities marked by friction to which each actor in the policing panoply is exposed. This alludes to an ongoing quest for the “right” style of policing, which as Marks and Wood point out, is “at a crossroads” (2010: 323). This indeterminate status plays a large role in shaping the uncertainty, ambiguity, and insecurity that defines twilight policing. The following chapters analyse how twilight policing emerges through local security networks involving various actors, while chapter eight examines how the coming together of these networks gives rise to the performance of twilight policing.

This chapter will provide the contextual background of twilight policing. It has two objectives. The first is to examine the development of policing and security in South Africa over the last few decades, with a particular focus on the role of the private security industry. This will show that alliances and connections between public and private policing bodies are not a new phenomenon. Twilight policing, which concerns the interconnectedness between public and private policing practices, can only be understood against this historical background. The second objective is to analyse the current transition of South African policing, which exists in a space between eradication of the “old” and implementation of the “new”. The dissonance between that of the “old school” versus that of the “new South Africa” show that South Africa is home to competing discourses on the “right” style of policing, particularly concerning the use of violence. Twilight policing is a manifestation of this contestation, a surfacing of uncertainties and various forms of “in-betweenness”.

This chapter employs a chronological structure. The first section examines the militarized and repressive policing style of the apartheid state and looks at how race determined citizens’ experiences of state policing. The second section analyses the emergence of the private security industry, which supplemented apartheid policing

through various forms of legislation and social networks. These two sections show that non-state and state policing in South Africa have operated side by side, and often interchangeably, for decades. The third section focuses on the transition period of the early 1990s, which was marked by widespread violence, the dismantling of apartheid legacies, the implementation of new policing strategies that centred on democratic and community policing approaches, and the boom of the private security industry. This section highlights the uncertainty and instability to South Africa's political transition and shows how this was the main source of the private security industry's exponential growth. The fourth section presents a brief overview and analysis of contemporary policing. It discusses current predicaments faced by the South African state, particularly its public perception and legitimacy, the debate surrounding the "shoot to kill" policy, and the private security industry's transition from a "club to a business" (Singh 2008). This last section shows that policing strategies are fiercely debated in South Africa. The chapter concludes with a short discussion of how historical and contemporary processes in South Africa shape the context in which twilight policing is performed.

Apartheid Policing

Any contemporary analysis of South African policing must incorporate the structural impact of the apartheid regime. This section analyses how apartheid racially segregated South African society and how policing bodies were involved in maintaining this segregation.

Racial segregation

Officially implemented in 1948 when the National Party (NP), led by D.F. Malan, came to power, apartheid had the fundamental goal of segregating races in political, economic, cultural, and social spheres. During apartheid, race was the "overriding feature of all facets of life in the society" (Posel 2001b: 65). Various legislation, such as the Urban Areas Act (1923), the Population Registration Act (1950), the Group Areas Act (1950), the Separate Amenities Act (1953), and the Bantu Education Act (1953) legally constructed the notion of race, which divided South Africans into four categories: White/European, Coloured, Asian, and African/Native.¹ The term "Black" referred to all "non-Whites".² Although apartheid was an encompassing project that was strictly implemented,

1 The 1923 Urban Areas Act entailed that blacks could only reside in urban areas for labour and economic purposes; the 1950 Population Registration Act functioned as the official racial classification register; the 1950 Group Areas Act determined the various residential areas designated for each race; the 1953 Separate Amenities Act stipulated the use of different public facilities; and the 1953 Bantu Education Act entailed separate education provision.

2 See Posel (2001a, 2001b) for an historical account of the development of these racial categories.

scholars such as Beinart (2001: 145) claim that the Nationalists “did not have a complete blueprint when they arrived in office”, but that their policies responded to the changes of the time, particularly massive urbanisation. Classifications of race coincided with the development of the urban centres; apartheid was essentially about controlling and excluding non-Whites from the city (Parnell 2005; Parnell and Mabin 1995).³

Although there was a strong biological basis for apartheid’s racial classification, Posel argues that race was a socio-legal concept. Before 1948, race was not deemed to be a fixed category, but was a “legal and bureaucratic construct” (2001a: 92) that was largely determined by one’s social standing. After 1948, however, state efforts aimed to create fixed and uniform standards of race as an imperative constituent of the nation-building process: racial classification was intended to create a powerful and coordinated state. Nevertheless, social factors permeated this classificatory process, incorporating education levels, speech, and general appearance.

Although all state bodies played a part in the implementation of apartheid ideology, responsibility for maintaining racial segregation fell chiefly to the state police. As Gordon frames it, the state police were the “frontline enforcers of apartheid” (2006: 5). Established in 1913, the South African Police (SAP) was based on a colonial model that was highly militarised from its inception (Brewer 1994; Brogden and Shearing 1993; Marks 2005).⁴ When apartheid was officially implemented in 1948, state policing increasingly focused on race relations, race control, and political policing: the police were “the key agent of state policy, as well as the most immediate symbol of Black oppression” (Brewer 1994: 207).⁵

As segregationist policies were implemented throughout the 1950s, black political resistance against the regime escalated, leading to the notorious Sharpeville massacre of March 1960, when the SAP opened fire and killed 69 protesters. In April 1960, the two main liberation movements – the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) – were banned.⁶ In the decades that followed, however, underground movements flourished and exiled communities strengthened international opposition to the apartheid regime. Protests such as the Natal Strikes of 1973 and the Soweto uprising of 1976 tested the power and authority of the nationalists. As resistance increased, though, so did police brutality, and ruthless methods, such as torture, were

3 See Brookfield and Tatham (1957), Davenport (1991), Freund (2005), Mabin (2001), Maylam (1995), Parnell (1997), and Smith (2001) for more information about urbanisation and apartheid in South Africa.

4 This is linked to the formation in 1910 of the Union of South Africa, which was an amalgamation of four colonies: Cape, Natal, Transvaal, and the Orange Free State (Beinart 2001; Terreblanche 2002).

5 A range of legislation provided the police with additional power to execute the apartheid ideology, such as the 1950 Suppression of Communism Act and the 1955 Criminal Procedure and Evidence Amendment Act (Hornberger 2011: 22).

6 The ANC was founded in 1912. In 1955, the ANC and other black organisations created the Freedom Charter, which outlined their vision for an equal South Africa.

commonly used (Beinart 2001).⁷ As Brewer states: "What was important to policing race relations under apartheid was brute force, an organizational culture and managerial ethos which encouraged this, and an armoury of equipment which made the police into a killing machine" (1994: 222). The militarisation of the state police particularly intensified during the 1980s when resistance against the regime proliferated.⁸

Policing during apartheid therefore focused on maintaining a racist political and social order and not on crime prevention or investigation. State policing served the white minority with blacks policed in order to protect white privilege. Seventy five per cent of the country's police stations were concentrated in white areas, and those that did exist in black areas were vastly under resourced (Shaw 2002: 11). As Shaw states: "Black people were policed for control and not crime prevention; the police aimed to prevent crime in white areas not by reducing it in black areas but by preventing the uncontrolled movement of black people, who were considered to be its perpetrators" (2002: 1).

Policing in the townships largely revolved around the enforcement of "Pass Laws", which controlled the movement of blacks into white areas, and laws that focused on social behaviour, such as liquor and tax laws (Brogden and Shearing 1993: 63).⁹ And as the violence in the townships did not threaten whites, it was largely disregarded (Kynoch 2005). The result was that whites and non-whites experienced policing very differently, as highlighted by Steinberg:

And so blacks and whites lived in parallel worlds. White people assumed that providing security was the role of the state. Black people knew that if they wanted security, they would have to acquire it themselves, whether in exchange for money, or neighbourliness, or ethnic and political solidarity. (2008: 161)

Due to the lack of state police engagement in crime prevention, various forms of non-state policing flourished in the townships, including self-defence units of the ANC, street committees, gangs, and People's courts (Glaser 1998, 2000, 2005; Kynoch 1999; Schärf 1989). Violence went hand in hand with protection and was rife in the townships. It was not always connected to political resistance; much of it was "rooted in gang disputes, tax wars, competition for resources and even personal grudges" (Kynoch 2005: 501).

7 The 1967 Terrorism Act was a crucial piece of legislation that "gave senior police officials authority to detain without trial or legal counsel, secretly and indefinitely, anyone who they have 'reason to believe' had committed an act defined as terrorism by the law" (Gordon 2006: 58).

8 During apartheid, the military (SADF) and the police (SAP) worked closely with one another to combat any threat defined as "terrorism". In 1973, the government laid out a military strategy that compelled the SADF to assist the SAP when needed (Gordon 2006: 145). There were also (secret) death squads within the SAP, with Vlakplaas as the most famous death squad operation camp. See Pauw (1997) for more information.

9 Gordon (2006: 56-57) describes the "Pass Laws" as the "cornerstone of apartheid", since they were responsible for a large amount of arrests.

Nevertheless, it was labelled as “political”. As it maintained disorder in the townships, it did not pose a real threat to the security forces, but was exploited to promote further internal power struggles and divisions (Gordon 2006: 68).

Self-governance and state proxies

In addition to the Group Areas Act of 1950, which segregated residential areas according to race, the apartheid state created self-governing homelands, also known as tribal reserves and “Bantustans”, of which some were independent and others were not.¹⁰ The police were responsible for the relocation of Africans to their designated residential areas and homelands (Brewer 1994: 225).¹¹ Consequently, all Africans were forcibly repatriated to these Bantustans, and eventually over half of the African population lived in these areas (Munro 2001). The Bantustans were governed by tribal structures and power was exercised through traditional chiefs. In KwaZulu, the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), a Zulu cultural-nationalist organisation led by Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, maintained control through a highly centralised government that operated predominantly through networks of patronage. With the creation of the homelands, policing was decentralised to homeland police forces.¹²

During the 1980s, violence – both resistance and state suppression – reached new heights. With the exiled ANC threatening to make the townships “ungovernable”, the apartheid state declared a state of emergency in 36 magisterial districts on 21 July 1985.¹³ To suppress the burgeoning resistance movement, Prime Minister P. W. Botha implemented a “dual strategy” (Hornberger 2011: 27). The first part, known as the “total strategy”, placed the military in charge of security, allowing it to penetrate everyday life in the townships (Cawthra 2003; Cock and Nathan 1989).¹⁴

The second part of the “dual strategy” focused on seeking legitimacy for the state among the non-white population, to win their “hearts and minds”. In alignment with

10 The Bantustans were created through the Bantu Authorities Act in 1951 and the Bantu Self-Government Act of 1959. The independent Bantustans were Transkei, Venda, Bophuthatswana, and Ciskei, also known as the TBVC independent states. KwaZulu, Lebowa, and QwaQwa received partial autonomy, while Ovamboland, Kavangoland, and East Caprivi were granted self-determination (Beinart 2001; Terreblanche 2002).

11 Shaw (2002: 4) states that around three-and-a-half million people were forcibly resettled during apartheid.

12 Independent homelands, such as Transkei, received their funding from the central government and were thus highly dependent on the national government for their survival (Beall 2006; Munro 2001). The non-independent homelands, meanwhile, were financed by both the central government and the homeland authority, and they were thus less reliant on the central state (Brewer 1994: 285; De Haas and Zulu 1994).

13 The State of Emergency was lifted on 7 March 1986. However, a second state of emergency was declared on 12 June 1986 (Marks 2005: 51).

14 The use of military power was further consolidated by threats from neighbouring countries, such as Zimbabwe and Angola (Hornberger 2011: 26).

the notion of self-governance manifested in the Bantustans, the Black Local Authority Act of 1982 was implemented "to devolve the government of black townships to local authorities without resources, capacity or legitimacy" (Marks 2005: 46). This Act paved the way for the creation of the Black municipal police, better known as the "Community Guards" or "Blackjacks". The Blackjacks were employed by local councils to protect black councillors and municipal property in the townships. Their main objective was the enforcement of the Pass Laws (Brogden and Shearing 1993). They received much more rudimentary police training and they did not carry firearms. In addition, Special Constables, popularly known as "Kitskonstabels" (instant constables), were introduced in 1986 to further support the municipal police. Together, the Blackjacks and Kitskonstabels conducted the bulk of the black-on-black policing in the townships, functioning as the prime executors of brutal policing tactics (Brewer 1994: 305; Brogden and Shearing 1993: 83; Fine 1989). Many regarded them as "common thugs to whom the state had given uniforms and sticks" (Steinberg 2008: 73).

The main explanation given by the state for the creation of these black police forces was a shortage of manpower. However, as Brogden and Shearing have argued, it was also "a part of the game plan designed to confuse and conceal the reality of everyday policing in South Africa from both local and international audiences" (1993: 69). Recruiting black police officers eliminated the negative publicity accruing from international news footage of white police officers attacking blacks; images of police violence were now framed as "black-on-black violence". The violence exacerbated by the increase in attacks on black policemen at the end of the 1980s, which forced the government to move them to police barracks outside the townships (Brewer 1994; Hornberger 2011).¹⁵

In addition to these formally established black policing bodies, which functioned as "satellites of the SAP" (Shaw 2002: 13), the apartheid state also supported vigilante groups that were instigators of violence. Vigilante groups that were directly supported by the SAP and local councils were known as the "third force" (Brogden and Shearing 1993: 85; Ellis 1998).¹⁶ According to Brewer (1994: 307-308), there were six different types of vigilantes operating in the townships:

those created by communities as alternative sources of law and order because they reject or fail to get sufficient protection from the police; Asian and Coloured vigilantes who protect their communities from attacks by Africans; those established by the African local community councils to act as their personal forces; those connected with homeland governments; groups

15 In 1989, the Blackjacks were incorporated into the SAP under the Police Third Amendment Act (Brogden and Shearing 1993: 82).

16 The 40 reports produced by the Goldstone Commission and the hearings from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) yielded a great deal of information regarding state support for such vigilantes and the promotion of violence (Shaw 2002: 14).

dominated by conservative political organizations, such as Inkatha and the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB); and, finally, those directly sponsored by the security forces.¹⁷

The homeland police, vigilante groups, and black policing bodies therefore functioned as allies of the apartheid state police (Hornberger 2011; Marks 2005: 50). The “ungovernability” strategy of the ANC and the militarised brutality of the state police (exerted through its satellites in the townships) not only intensified violence in the townships but also created divisions between those supporting the liberation movements and those aligned with the apartheid state. The most common method of killing in the townships, known as *necklacing*, whereby a tyre filled with petrol is placed around a person’s neck and then set on fire, became a notorious and ruthless means of punishment.

Thus, although ostensibly designed to promote “self-governance”, the policies in fact served as a means for the apartheid state to police the townships indirectly and from “a distance” (Hansen 2006: 281). The black experience of state policing in the townships during the apartheid era was predicated on encounters with the state’s proxies: the Blackjacks, black homeland police officers, Kitskonstabels, and vigilantes.

The Private Supplement to the State

A wide range of actors executed policing in the townships: some were political, while others were criminal; some were aligned to the apartheid state, while others were fighting to overthrow it. Townships were riven by violence and this went largely unnoticed in the white areas protected by white policemen. Furthermore, the private security industry played a large role in supporting the apartheid state, that is, in protecting white privilege.

The growth of the private security industry was directly correlated with the widening protests by liberation movements and the increasing repression by the apartheid state (Grant 1989; Irish 1999; Shaw 2002; Singh 2008). Before the 1970s, private security companies operated only in rural areas and on industrial sites. Private security

17 For Durban, Minnaar (1992) has identified four different types of vigilantes, which he defines as “warlords”. The first were those who resembled the *induna* (traditional rural leaders), of whom many originated from the Shepstone system that permitted chiefs to rule over their tribal groupings and collect taxes. The second were the “squatter lords” (42) – individuals who assumed power when an *induna* was absent and used extortion to fund their own personal vigilantes to ensure crime prevention. The third were the urban councillors, who employed a patronage-based system to exercise control, such as by determining the allocation of grant sites for housing. The fourth included gang leaders who gained power through force and intimidation. The prevalence of these different types of warlords, who sometimes coexisted within a small area, created a sphere of intimidation, extortion, fear, and insecurity (Minnaar 1992).

was particularly operative in the mining industry, a large part of South Africa's economy and a drive of migrant labour of black workers from across the country (Beinart 2001; Brogden and Shearing 1993; Philip 1989).¹⁸ Yet by the mid-1970s, approximately ten private security companies were operating in Durban, and by the end of the 1980s, such companies conducted the vast majority of policing in white areas.¹⁹

The National Key Point Act (NKPA)

With state forces increasingly called upon to deal with political unrest throughout the country, supplementary manpower was needed on the ground. After an upsurge in strategic attacks by the ANC, such as the hit on a fuel plant outside Johannesburg (Shearing and Berg 2006: 201), there was a desperate need for additional security that would not deplete state resources. This need was primarily met by extracting resources from the "crime prevention sector" (Cawthra 2003; Shaw 2002). Through various changes in legislation, tasks that had previously fallen under the remit of the state police were handed over to the private sector (Brogden and Shearing 1993; Grant 1989; Irish 1999; Singh 2008).

One of the main changes in legislation was the establishment of the National Key Points Act (NKPA) 102 of 1980. The NKPA stipulated that responsibility for security provision (predominantly guarding) at strategic sites deemed crucial for national security should be transferred to the management/owners of these sites. The Minister of Defence determined which sites were labelled as National Key Points.²⁰ Although the task of providing security was reassigned to private individuals, authority and control remained in the hands of the state.²¹ The NKPA is a good example of a state body

18 Security in the mining industry was primarily provided in-house, with guards employed and trained by the mining companies (Philip 1989: 214). In-house security is defined as "a service rendered by an employee on behalf of his employer" (PSIRA 2001). This contrasts with contract security, which involves contracting a third party, such as a company, to provide security services. Contract security refers to "companies and individuals who are in the business of providing security services or products to individual clients for hire or sale" (Grant 1989: 94). Although in-house security still exists, contract security is more common in contemporary South Africa.

19 My informants provided the following names of companies that existed during the 1970s: Durban Security, Induna Security, Safeguard Security, AA Security, Springbok Security, and Anderson Security.

20 A national key point was defined as "any place or area that is of such national importance that its loss, damage, disruption, or immobilization may prejudice the Republic, or any place or area which the Minister (of Defense) considers necessary or expedient for the safety of the Republic or in the public interest" (Jackson 1987: 37, in Philip 1989: 213).

21 The security officers at a national key point site fell under government authority (either the SAP or a commanding officer of the Defence Force). The Minister of Defence could also determine in meticulous detail the nature of a site's security provision and exert control over the whole operation (Grant 1989: 107-108). The Minister thus had the power to decide which company would provide security for each particular site.

outsourcing some of its responsibilities to the private sector.²² The South African state utilised the manpower and public expenditure freed up by this move to strengthen the armed forces, while simultaneously maintaining control over the private agents now overseeing its strategic sites. Private security firms (and the individuals employed they employed) formed alliances with the state. As Grant (1989: 109) stated a few years after the NKPA's introduction, "The National Key Points Act is clearly part of the security apparatus of the state".

For private security firms, the protection of NKP sites demanded the use of paramilitary skills and tactics. The work was highly lucrative and "propelled the security firms into elite status" (Singh 2008: 44). The National Key Points Act thus played a key role in the emergence of private security in the form of "firms" that were "managed by former policemen or soldiers who maintain[ed] formal and informal contacts with the SAP" (Prior 1989: 198).

The Security Officers Act (SOA)

The collaborative relationship between the private security industry and the apartheid state was further strengthened by the creation of the Security Officers Act (SOA) of 1987 and the accompanying Security Officers Board (SOB). The SOA was "a framework for the extension of the network of a state-corporate 'partnership' policing further into civil society" (Brogden and Shearing 1993: 72). After a period of exponential growth in the industry during the 1980s, there were increasing demands for a formal regulation system. This was particularly for the purposes of monitoring and controlling security officers, who were predominantly black males, as the following quote of a white male who owned a guarding company at the time narrated:

You see, during the 1980s, when the ANC went crazy with planting bombs all over the place, and on strategic places too, things changed, the industry exploded. There was once a bomb explosion on Smith Street outside the White House, you know that building where they used to renew the *dom passes*²³... well...yes, I happened to be in the area and I immediately... You see, I have a military background, so my natural instinct is to go to these places, not run away from them. Anyways, I drove to the site and quickly noticed that the *watchman*²⁴ that usually worked on that site was missing. Now everyone, including the police, assumed he was dead, but I knew better. He was ANC

22 Another example of state-enforced privatisation is the privatisation of the railway police in 1987 (Brogden and Shearing 1993: 72).

23 "Dom pas" (literally, dumb pass) was the name given to the passbooks implemented under the Pass Laws of 1923 to control the movement of non-Whites. All non-Whites were compelled to carry their "dom pas" wherever they went.

24 The term "watchman" refers to a security officer. Today it is regarded as derogatory and is rarely used.

– a spy. You see, in that time, the ANC was smart, they knew that watchmen were posted at important sites, strategic for the South African government, and they infiltrated this sector. Four out of the 27 bombs that went off in Durban, planted by the ANC, were on my sites, I worked those sites... and in all of them, the guard was involved, they were ANC...they used many ways to enter the industry to attack the South African government. For example, they would go to jail, pay bail for some criminal, and then force him to work as a guard, as a spy for the ANC... This is how it all got started, the SOB; we needed a way to screen the guys coming in. We needed to know that these guys were okay, and not going to bomb the sites where we had our money coming in.²⁵

To overcome this “political problem”, company owners used their collective contacts within the SAP to set up an informal screening system whereby the SAP would assess potential employees in order to determine their viability for employment by a private security company. As time passed, this informal system was formalised by the then Minister of Law and Order through the SOA (Grant 1989: 107). The main goal of the SOA was to monitor and regulate the employees in the industry through the oversight of the Board (SOB).²⁶ The Act entailed compulsory registration with the Board and laid down rules regarding disqualification and withdrawal of registration. The SOA was thus the first step towards state regulation of the industry, currently implemented and enforced by PSIRA. In this period, however, regulation symbolised a partnership between the public and the private – a unified effort to achieve the same goal. The enactment of the SOA had “the very purpose of developing a relationship between the state and private security companies” (Berg 2003: 179).

Armed response: “techies” and “one-man shows”

The NKPA primarily affected the guarding sector, but other parts of the industry, such as the armed response sector, also grew due to the increasing political pressure on state law enforcement. The armed response sector emerged in the late 1970s through “techies”: companies that installed alarms for commercial businesses. Armed response began as a basic system: alarms were connected to phones that dialled messages to the nearest police station in the event of an activation. Clients were referred to as *key holders*, and although they sometimes received the alarm notifications, the vast majority were diverted to police stations, which then sent officers to attend the sites in question.²⁷

25 Interview: 13 March 2009.

26 Although passed in October 1987, the Act was not promulgated until April 1989 (Grant 1989: 103).

27 Clients are still referred to as key holders. When signing an armed response contract with a company, clients list the people who will be key holders for the premises. When the control room receives an alarm notification, all of the key holders are contacted before an armed response officer conducts a perimeter check.

Due to the high percentage of false alarms and the shortage of manpower in the SAP, particularly in the 1980s, there was a call for change, as a white former owner of an armed response company states:

The system in the 70s, early 80s, it was quite rudimentary and simple, and the amount of false alarms were great, and the police being under pressure, as they were at that time...attending to alarms wasn't high on their list of priorities, and you could never prove that the police in fact got the call...so...it left quite a big void in the market.²⁸

Recognising this vacuum, existing companies developed a system that no longer required the assistance of the police, who warmly welcomed this innovation. One company, Chubb, established a system known as the *warden service*, whereby key holders were notified of an alarm activation and then contacted Chubb Security, which instructed a warden to attend the residence alongside the key holder. Other companies slowly adopted this system. The wardens, who were often company owners, were the first form of armed response as we know it today. Other companies directly employed individuals specifically for this purpose:

So we employed these individuals to do an armed response instead of getting the key holder to meet a warden on the premises, we would send our armed-reaction guy around; he was armed and he would do an investigation. Rather than having two people go to the site, we reckoned it would be easier to just have one, and have him officially linked to us, the company. And we wanted to make it easier for the client (...) If he could see a positive break-in, he would come back to the control room, this would be put on radio and the control room would then get hold of the key holder and the police (...) If it was a false alarm or [there was] no visible sign of entry, we would just record it and the customer would get a history of what happened.²⁹

Thus, the armed response business was initiated by companies that initially specialised in the technical side of security and that only later made the move to providing armed reaction services. This stands in contrast to the second type of entrant into the market, namely, the “one-man shows” that emerged in the mid 1980s. These largely comprised ex-policemen or ex-SADF soldiers who served a handful of clients using their own vehicles and firearms.³⁰ One of the companies with which I worked closely started as

28 Interview: 30 June 2010.

29 Interview: white former owner of an armed response company, 30 June 2010.

30 These individuals are also referred to as the “*bakkie brigade*”, as most of them operated from *bakkies*, a South African term for a pick-up.

a "one-man show". The owner was a police reservist who decided to establish his own business. For ideological reasons, the company began life as a free service available to all citizens, and as word spread and more and more people sought the owner's assistance, the company gradually converted citizens into "clients" and expanded into alarm installation.

The armed reaction sector thus started with two different types of companies: the "techies" and the "one-man shows". By the end of the 1980s, both forms existed and several companies were created through a fusion of the two.³¹ There were a handful of established companies providing a service that was referred to as "armed reaction", including Total Highway Security, Rennies, Chubb, ET, Night Guard, Cobra, and Contact.³² Unlike the guarding sector and the NKPA, the growth of the armed response sector was not directly supported by legislation, but it was promoted by police officers on the same premise: it released police officers from particular tasks, particularly in the crime prevention sector, allowing them to concentrate on the job of maintaining racial segregation.

The "old boys' network"

The political and financial connections between the industry and the apartheid state – at both national and local levels of policing – created and maintained the "*old boys' network*" (Singh 2008). This refers to a string of social relations among white men operating within the industry and the apartheid armed forces. Singh (2008: 43) describes this network as a "club" where "membership was exclusive and largely restricted at the administrative levels to those with police, intelligence and military backgrounds". The South African Security Association (SASA), established in 1965, was a direct manifestation of the "old boys' network".³³ SASA functioned as a type of "gentlemen's club" whose membership was limited to larger firms (Grant 1989).³⁴

Similar to the state armed forces, the representative face of the industry was a white male with a military or policing background; the private security sector was a white man's world. At the outset, the industry comprised white expatriates from Kenya, Zimbabwe, and Zambia who immigrated to South Africa after those states became

31 Sub-contracting between the two forms also occurred.

32 Another reason given for the growth of the armed response sector in the 1980s was the implementation of the Minimum Wage Act of 1984. This made armed reaction a more attractive option for those who had previously relied on guarding, as the Indian owner of an armed response officer stated: "Before this, everybody had guards and you paid them nothing, so you could do it. But with the minimum wage law, it became too expensive to have guards, and armed response became a better option; it was cheaper and easier. So people started to buy alarms, and then also [to] get armed response. This was the trigger" (Interview: 10 May 2010).

33 The establishment of SASA is widely regarded as the first official sign of an active industry (Grant 1989: 100; Singh 2008: 43).

34 SASA still operates as one of the many security associations. Its core function is its monthly publication of *Security Focus*, a journal that is widely read by members of the industry.

independent (Shaw 2002: 112; Singh 2008).³⁵ As time passed, soldiers from the SADF and police officers from the SAP entered the private security industry, a process referred to as “*poaching*”.³⁶ Brogden and Shearing (1993: 72-73) use a pamphlet from a private security company operating in Johannesburg in 1989 to illustrate how most companies comprised former police officers. The pamphlet depicts a tough and sturdy man wearing a police-like uniform with the caption of “super Cop”. The owner of the company highlights: “I employ only ex-policemen- trained professionals. We drive around in black cars with tinted windscreens. Our guys are good-looking, people you can trust.”³⁷

As former policemen dominated the industry, there were numerous similarities between the public and private forces. Through a review of various newspaper articles and reports, Brogden and Shearing (1993: 72-73) demonstrate how private security companies used comparable equipment to the SAP and SADF and operated correspondingly, particularly with regard to their racist policies and the use of force. As they comprised former colleagues, private and public police officers were quick to cooperate. Although working for different agencies, they shared the same objective: to safeguard white privileges. The “old boys’ network” thus resulted from and further facilitated the entrance of former policemen and soldiers into the industry (Singh 2008; Shaw 2002). The existence of several family companies consolidated the tightly knit group (Grant 1989: 99).³⁸

Taken together, the National Key Point Act, the Security Officers Act, the evolution of the armed response sector, and the “old boys’ network” testify to the history of alliances and connections between the public and private armed forces with the common aim of protecting white property and privilege (Singh 2008: 43; Shaw 2002). Private security firms provided logistical, technical, and personnel support to the SAP (Brogden and Shearing 1993: 73), and the SAP often relied on the extensive surveillance

35 The millennium issue of *Security Focus* contains an historical piece on the industry with a specific focus on the contribution of several individuals. This article shows that many founders of the industry served in one of these colonial police forces (2000: 6-15). The industry was therefore initially an English-speaking domain, but this changed significantly during the 1980s due to the state’s favouritism for Afrikaner SADF and SAP personnel. As former SADF and SAP personnel entered the private sector, it became increasingly Afrikaans (Shaw 2002: 112; Singh 2008).

36 In this context, “*poaching*” refers to the recruitment of police officers by private security companies.

37 The movement of police officers to the private sector was not always appreciated. In 1976, the Commissioner of the SAP complained about policemen being lured away with higher salaries by private security firms. In fact, the departure of white police officers from the SAP into the private sector is sometimes used as an explanation for the increase of black officers in the SAP (Brewer 1994: 278).

38 When recounting the history of the industry, many informants made remarks such as “that company was run by family x and later the owner’s son took over”. During the 1970s, in particular, family companies dominated the private security industry (Grant 1989). In August 1998, *Security Focus* contained a cover story about the Austens, a family described as “South Africa’s longest-running security dynasty” (10), dating back to 1875. Another example is the Bartmann family, who previously owned Springbok Patrols, one of the oldest and largest security companies in South Africa (*Security Focus* 1997: 10).

activities of the private sector (Philip 1989). The private security industry played a complementary role in apartheid policing (Shaw 2002: 111); it was regarded as the "major 'hidden' supplement to the state police" (Brogden and Shearing 1993: 71). Although profit making was the prime motivation for private security companies, many chose to identify with the discourse of state sovereignty as opposed to framing themselves in market-based terms (Singh 2008: 44).

The Transition Era: Change and Uncertainty

As should now be apparent, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, policing in white and non-white areas was fundamentally different. In white areas, the state police provided protection and security – primarily as a result of containing the violence in the black townships – and the private security industry supported the maintenance of white privilege. Although rarely on the receiving end, whites were aware of the "*skop, skiet, donder*" (kick, shoot, and thunder) mentality that prevailed among the state police, and it was generally perceived as an efficient policing style. In the townships, meanwhile, violence was the norm, stirred by actors who were either aligned with the state or striving to overthrow it. This section will discuss how the post-apartheid state aimed to transform this divergent experience of policing by eliminating the oppressive practices and reputation of the existing system and creating a state police that served all South Africans.

Transition-era violence

The release of Mandela and the unbanning of the ANC in 1990 cleared the way for the peace negotiations that officially started in 1991. Policing was a top priority, particularly given the violence that was spreading like wildfire in the townships. Often referred to as "black-on-black violence" or "transition-era violence", the fighting was driven by a power struggle between the ANC and the IFP over their prospective role in the post-1994 government.³⁹ The ANC's leading position at the negotiation table and its call to

39 For a fascinating photographic portrait of the violence during the transition period and an account of the experiences of the photographers themselves, see Marinovich and Silva (2000). For more information on and analysis of the transition-era violence, see Adam and Moodley (1992), Bonnin (2000, 2006), Bremner (2001), Campbell (1992), de Haas and Zulu (1994), Kynoch (2005), Percival and Homer-Dixon (1998), Sitas (1996), and Zulu (1993).

unite all Bantustans into a new, greater South Africa frightened chiefs such as Buthelezi, who feared losing power.⁴⁰

This power struggle between ANC and IFP supporters escalated with the increasing involvement of the “third force”, the coercive arm of the apartheid state, who supplied arms and weapons (Ellis 1998). The clashes were not confined to Natal and quickly spread to the Rand. Pietermaritzburg experienced the brutal “Seven Day War” in 1991, and “... the province of Natal became the site of the worst violence of the apartheid era” (Popke 2000: 245). The National Peace Accords of 1991 permitted the immediate implementation of reforms addressing issues surrounding security. One of the main reforms was the establishment of the Internal Stability Division 1991 to deal with public order and rioting and to control transition-era violence (Shaw 2002: 26; Marks 2005).⁴¹

Democratic policing

The South African peace settlement of 1994, which was born of years of negotiations between the ANC and the National Party (NP), is regarded as a textbook success story in the world of conflict resolution (Beall et al. 2005; Sisk 2001). Yet when the ANC assumed power in 1994, the security sector still required large-scale reform. The new state police was formed through the amalgamation of eleven different police forces: the SAP, the police forces of the “independent states”, and the agencies that policed the six “self-governing homelands”, such as KwaZulu.⁴² The amalgamation was a complex and often volatile process. Not only were relations between officers plagued by past differences, but

40 Chiefs such as Buthelezi took a strong stand against the creation of a new federal South Africa, and Buthelezi himself, acting on behalf of Inkatha, refused to take part in the 1994 elections until the very last minute (de Haas and Zulu 1994). Eventually, Inkatha decided to participate in the elections, primarily due to two compromises made by the ANC. The first was the offer of a cabinet post to Buthelezi, and the second was the provision of a place in the constitution for traditional leaders (Beall et al. 2004).

41 Another reform was the placement of the Special Branch, a notorious police unit, under the investigations division. According to Hansen (2006: 281), “The heart of the police force was the Special Branch hunting ‘terrorists’”.

42 The ANC did not have a police force, so this was not included. The creation of the post-apartheid defence force, the South African National Defence Force (SANDF), occurred differently. At the end of 1993, an agreement was made between the NP and ANC to establish the Transitional Executive Committee (TEC). One of the fundamental aims of the TEC was the creation of the Joint Military Coordinating Committee (JMCC), a body aimed at ensuring the integration of the numerous armed forces throughout the country (Cawthra 2003). These included the armies of the “homelands”, the SADF, and the MK (Umkhonto we Sizwe), which together formed the new South African Defence Force. Later on, APLA (the Azanian People’s Liberation Army, the armed wing of the PAC) and the self-protection units of the IFP were also incorporated. The size of these various armed forces ranged from 90,000 for the SADF (both civilian and military members) to 28,000 for the MK and 11,000 for the TVBC (Cawthra 2003: 38). However, many prefer to speak of this process as one of amalgamation, rather than integration, since many elements of the SADF, such as equipment and training, pertained into the SANDF (Cock 2005). Many individuals dropped out throughout the years due to “integration problems”, and many accepted cash handouts, particular former SADF personnel (Cawthra 2003).

varying levels of training further complicated the integration of the various members into a unified force, as one Indian police officer recalled:

It was difficult, then. Many might say now that it wasn't a big deal, but it was. We had to force our mind to think differently; we had to learn how to work with our former enemy, and trust him, for back up. Different cultures, languages, skills, styles, everything was different. And for the first few years, it was rough. And I think we're still dealing with it; it isn't over yet.⁴³

The main aim of the police force was to restore relationships with citizens, particularly non-white communities, which was encapsulated in the mantra of democratic and community policing.

Under the South African Police Service Act of 1995, the name of the police force changed from the South African Police (SAP) to the South African Police Service (SAPS), and the Independent Complaints Directorate (ICD) was set up to investigate police misconduct (Hornberger 2011: 44).⁴⁴ The 1996 National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS) and the 1998 White Paper on Safety and Security dictated a state focus on law enforcement, social crime prevention, visible policing, service delivery, institutional reform at the national level, and policing at provincial and local level (Cawthra 2003; Shaw 2002). The NCPS envisioned a "multi-agency approach" (Singh 2008: 14) whereby the government would work alongside other actors, such as the private security industry and businesses, to combat crime. A new paradigm of policing thus emerged, one that "was not merely about transforming the police; it was also about transforming society *through* the police" (Hornberger 2011: 4, italics in original). Increasing police accountability and legitimacy would be the driving force, based on the premise that once the new police force was under political control and regained its legitimacy in formerly neglected areas, order would be restored (Shaw 2002).

The core strategy for enhancing state legitimacy within communities was the creation of community policing forums (CPFs).⁴⁵ Thoroughly outlined in the government's Community Policing Policy Framework and Guidelines of 1997, CPFs were created as platforms for direct engagement and communication between police officers and citizens. These forums centred on empowerment, accountability, and solving crime together with

43 Interview: 3 April 2009.

44 Various other watchdogs were also established to monitor police behaviour, such as the Civilian Secretariat for Safety and Security, which was staffed by civilians and operated until 1998 (Hornberger 2011: 44; Shaw 2002: 32).

45 Several authors (Steinberg 2011; van der Spuy 2000) argue that "community policing" was imported from abroad at the request of the international community. According to Steinberg (2011: 353), "Anglo-American crime prevention embodied ideas whose importation to South Africa in the immediate post-apartheid period was unfortunate". See Brogden (2005) for a global analysis of the export of community policing models.

communities, and were concentrated in areas that were previously neglected by the state (Baker 2010; Cawthra 2003; Jensen 2008; Leggett 2005; Shaw 2002).⁴⁶

The boom of private security

As the transformation of the SAP into the SAPS primarily revolved around improving legitimacy and accountability, tackling crime was not seen as the core aim (Cawthra 2003; Shaw 2002). Yet as crime rates continued to rise after 1994, anti-government sentiment intensified, as Shaw argues:

For a period of time, however, government response was partly to deny crime was a problem and partly to respond in an *ad hoc* fashion as representations were made to it on particular issues. The result was a real frustration with government's inability either to concede openly that crime was a problem and then show the clear will and intention to do something about it (2002: 34).

This neglect was one of the main reasons for the exponential boom of the private security industry in the late 1980s and early 1990s. As influx controls broke down in the late 1980s⁴⁷ and crime started entering the white suburbs, many whites became fearful for their future; from their point of view, a change in government entailed a loss of economic privilege, a decline in political power, and a reduction in social status. Many feared the consequences of the national elections of 1994 and demanded immediate protection from blacks who seemed set to spill over into the suburbs seeking revenge (Shaw 2002). Private security companies readily provided this protection.

Private security was increasingly seen as indispensable for the white minority, who were the main users of such services (Shaw 2002). Writing in 1993, Brogden and Shearing state that, "private security companies (...) have assumed much of the day-to-day policing of the white suburbs" (73). Due to the vast movement of policemen to the private sector, clients often equated private security with the police. In the eyes of many clients, the change from a public to a private security body entailed little more than a change in uniform (Brogden and Shearing 1993: 73; Shaw 2002). And as the state police had served them well, they held similar confidence in the private security industry. This was especially true for the armed response sector, which experienced a rapid growth during this period, as one white company owner explained:

46 There were calls to build certain community policing forums from existing street committees and people's courts, but many of these had collapsed from the continuance of violence or were militant (Shaw 2002: 30). The CPFs have been highly criticised over the years for numerous reasons. For more information, see Leggett (2005), Munneke (2012), Pelser (1999), Pelser et al. (2002), Shaw (2002), and Steinberg (2011).

47 The Pass Laws were abolished in 1986 and replaced with a policy of "orderly urbanization" (Beinart 2001: 268).

Armed reaction really grew then, and it was just on the back of fear. Nelson Mandela had been released, ANC was unbanned, and everybody thought that everybody was going to come through the front doors and get rid of all the whites in the country. And electronic security, armed reaction, realised a growth; I don't think this country will ever see that type of growth again. It was huge, absolutely massive. I remember that we had people phoning us all the time, asking for alarms. We just couldn't handle it; we had to recruit new guys everyday to keep with the growth. It was unbelievable.⁴⁸

After the boom of the early 1990s, armed reaction companies were everywhere. A white former owner of an armed response company stated that: "In the mid 1990s, around '96 or so, there was virtually a different armed reaction company on every street corner".⁴⁹ The continuous demand for private security was matched by a growing number of suppliers, including both the police and ex-combatants, who were not merged into the new armed forces. Several opted to work for private military companies operating abroad, but many entered private security domestically (Cock 2005; Mashike 2008).

Contemporary South African Policing

Let it be clear that the 1990s constituted a decade of transformation and uncertainty. This section will briefly examine how the situation has changed since then by reflecting on recent crime trends, the highly debated "shoot to kill" policy, and the transformation of the private security industry from a "club to a business" (Singh 2008: 43).

"A Country at War with Itself"

Crime rates continued to increase during the 1990s and remain high today so high that Anthony Altbeker (2007), a South African criminologist, has described South Africa as "a country at war with itself". This section will not present a comprehensive analysis of South Africa's crime statistics, but will outline a few relevant trends.⁵⁰

In 2010-11, there were an average of 44 murders, 181 sexual offences, 278 aggravated robberies, and 678 burglaries per day in South Africa (Lebone 2012: 708). In 2007,

48 Interview: 22 April 2010.

49 Interview: 30 June 2010.

50 For crime statistics compiled and released by the South African Police Services (SAPS), see www.saps.gov.za. This study does not discuss the reliability of crime statistics, as this has been done at length by others. For further analyses of crime in South Africa, see the documents compiled by the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) (www.iss.co.za), the South African Institute of Race Relations (www.sairr.org.za), and the Centre for Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSV) (www.csvr.org.za). Also see Altbeker (2007), Comaroff and Comaroff (2006c), and Shaw (2002).

the country had the highest incidence of armed criminal violence in Africa, and approximately 50 per cent of cases result in fatalities (Muggah and Alvazzi del Frate 2007: 3). Furthermore, Johannesburg has the highest level of gun-related victimisation of any city in Africa, with more than half of all robberies conducted at gunpoint (Muggah and Alvazzi del Frate 2007: 4).

Since 1994, however, the overall rate of serious crime in South Africa has decreased by 20 per cent, murder rates have dropped by 52 per cent, and attempted murder rates have fallen by 55 per cent (Lebone 2012: 708). Recent victimisation studies also show signs that the crime situation is improving, with a general decline since 2007 (Statistics South Africa (SSA) 2011: 27). For the period 2008-2010, more than 40 per cent of South African households believed that violent and non-violent crime rates had decreased, while 35 per cent believed there had been an increase (Statistics South Africa (SSA) 2011: 2). Furthermore, the Victims of Crime Survey (VOCS) shows a continuous improvement in feelings of safety. In 2003, 23 per cent felt of respondents reported feeling safe to walk alone in their area at night, with this figure rising to 37 per cent in 2010. Likewise, in 2003, 85 per cent felt safe to walk alone in their area during the day, while in 2010, this figure was 88.2 per cent (2011: 8).

The decreasing murder rate and increased sense of safety may suggest improvement, but this is not necessarily the case across the entire spectrum of crime rates. Some forms of crime, such as commercial crime (i.e. corruption, fraud, money laundering), have actually increased over the last decade. Another such category is the so-called trio crimes, which include business robberies, car hijackings, and house robberies.⁵¹ Figure 1 depicts trio crime rates in South Africa between 2002-3 and 2011-2. The graph shows an increase in all three types of crime from 2004-5 to 2008-9. Between 2009-10 and 2011-12, there was a decrease in both house robberies (from 18,438 to 16,766) and car hijackings (from 14,915 to 9,475), but business robberies continued to rise (from 13,920 to 15,951). Taking the whole period into consideration, we see that business robberies have increased by 190 per cent and house robberies by 85 per cent, while car hijackings have decreased by 35 per cent.

In this discussion, I focus on the trio crimes as opposed to other crime categories (e.g. sexual violence) for two reasons. The first is that these crimes play the most prominent role in shaping people's perceptions of crime and safety, particularly due to their violent nature (Altbecker 2007; Burger et al. 2011; Shaw 2002). Such crimes have a deep impact, both directly, such as through the sudden loss of possessions or cash, and indirectly, such as through enduring emotional trauma. Approximately 53 per cent of South African households believe that housebreaking and burglary are the most

51 The trio crimes are themselves a subset of the category of aggregated robbery, which also includes street robbery, car hijacking, truck hijacking, cash-in-transit robbery, bank robbery, house robbery, and business robbery (Burger et al. 2011: 30).

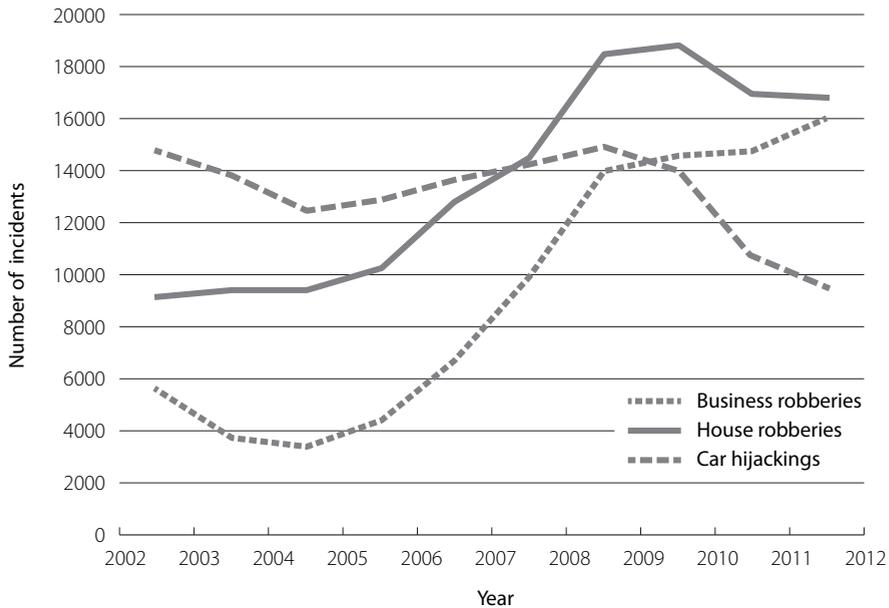


Figure 1: Trio Crime Rates in South Africa, 2002-3 – 2011-2

Source: Institute for Security Studies (ISS)⁵²

common types of crime (Statistics South Africa (SSA) 2011: 2). In 2011, home robbery was the both the most commonly experienced and the most feared form of crime in South Africa (Statistics South Africa (SSA) 2011: 4).

The second reason for the present focus on trio crimes is the link between these and the private security industry. Clearly, trio crimes are precisely the forms of felony that the private security industry is intended to combat, and they are therefore those that private security officers are confronted with most often. Furthermore, as the incidence of these crimes continues to rise, the demand for private security services also looks set to increase. The continuous growth of the industry is thus closely tied to the rise in rates of trio crime.

Crime remains a serious problem in contemporary South Africa and combatting crime is regarded as a national priority by the state and citizens. Perhaps the biggest change over the past decade is that the “crime problem” is no longer denied or masked. Furthermore, it has been recognised by citizens and the state that South Africa’s crime problem is not a post-apartheid phenomenon; crime was no less common during apartheid, but its prevalence was concealed for political ends, as Kynoch also argues:

52 This information is accessible online at www.iss.org.za.

“South Africa’s endemic urban violence, in other words, is not a post-conflict affair, but rather a continuation of generations of violence” (2005: 495).⁵³

Following widespread criticism of the post-apartheid government, the 1999 elections brought hope for change when the newly appointed President, Thabo Mbeki, and Minister of Safety and Security, Steve Tshwete, publicly acknowledged the need for a tougher and more efficient approach to crime, labelling criminals as “rogues” and “sub-humans” (Gordon 2006: 85). Soon after, a new national policing strategy, “Operation Crackdown”, was implemented. The scheme entailed the selection of crime priorities to be tackled by 124 police stations around the country using a combination of roadblocks and search operations (Pelser 2000).⁵⁴

Despite such developments, perceptions of the state police remained poor. At the beginning of 2006, only 36 per cent of the South African population believed that the government was handling crime “fairly well” or “very well”. That same year, 48 per cent of the public stated that they trusted the police, which was an improvement of 13 per cent from 2000.⁵⁵ However, about half of all South Africans also believed that “all” or “most” police officials were involved in corruption, which was a higher proportion than for other government officials.⁵⁶ The police force is one the least trusted institutions in the country (Mattes 2002). The perception of the police force as corrupt is most likely influenced by recent corruption cases involving two former police chiefs, Jackie Selebi and Bheki Cele.⁵⁷

The management of crime statistics and their accessibility to the general public is another sensitive issue. In 2000, the then Ministry of Safety and Security imposed a moratorium on the release of crime statistics, stating that they were not valid and reliable. The moratorium was lifted a year later, but the release of crime statistics remains a widely contested issue, and citizens regularly feel that they are being “left in dark”

53 Various crime studies have argued that crime rates post-1994 cannot be compared to crime rates during apartheid, since the latter excluded “black-on-black” crime on the basis that “blacks did not count” (Comaroff and Comaroff 2006c: 220).

54 The racial composition of the police force has also changed: by 2002, more than 80 per cent of police officers were black, up from 55 per cent a decade earlier (Shaw 2002, in Steinberg 2011: 355).

55 This is part of a general increase in public trust in the country’s state institutions since 2000 (Mattes 2006: 12).

56 According to the study by Mattes, 48 per cent of South Africans believe most police officials to be involved in corruption and 10 per cent stated that they themselves have been involved in corruption with the police, such as paying a bribe (2006: 14).

57 Jackie Selebi was appointed police chief in 2000 and was elected Interpol president in 2004. He resigned from both duties in 2008 due to allegations of corruption. Selebi was charged with accepting bribes worth of 1.2 million Rand and having active links to organised crime. His prison term started in December 2011, but he was released from prison in July 2012 for health reasons. President Jacob Zuma appointed Bheki Cele as police chief in 2010, but in October of the following year Cele was charged with corruption and suspended from office. Cele’s predecessor was Mangwashi Phiyega, South Africa’s first female police chief.

and "lied to".⁵⁸ Comaroff and Comaroff highlight how crime statistics have become "commodified knowledge" (2006c: 210) in South Africa, where citizens regard statistics as "information as an inalienable right" (222). This also became apparent during my fieldwork, in which citizens vigorously discussed crime statistics when they were released.

"Shoot to kill"

On 16 August 2012, 34 platinum miners were killed and 78 injured by the South African state police during a strike. The incident, hereafter referred to as the "Marikana Massacre", grabbed news headlines across the globe and raised questions about the nature of public order policing in South Africa. Numerous media reports declared the episode the most lethal use of force by the state police since apartheid. Debates centred on why the police officers opened fire and whether it was a case of self-defence or an outright attack on the strikers. Concerns about the use of force by police officers became even more pressing in late February 2013, when video footage was released that showed how a Mozambican taxi driver was handcuffed to the back of a police vehicle and dragged through the streets. The man in question was later found dead in a police cell.

These incidents, along with many others that have not received international attention, prompt concerns about the use of force by the state police. The constant references made by journalists and analysts to the apartheid era signal identification with the past. Policing in the "new South Africa" aimed at eliminating the oppressive practices and reputation of the state, yet the "Marikana Massacre" and other incidents force us to question whether state policing has indeed transformed over the last two decades. Steinberg (2008,2011) argues that the South African state police are unable to win consent from citizens, and that, as a means of gaining legitimacy and displaying authority, they are increasingly resorting to paramilitary methods reminiscent of the apartheid state.

Throughout 2010 and 2011, the news media provided extensive coverage of a bill in parliament that proposed to discuss possible amendments to Section 49 of the Criminal Procedure Act. The proposed amendments entailed expanding police power to permit the use of lethal force when affecting an arrest. It was popularly known as the "shoot to kill" policy. Like the discordance between "old school" policing and "policing of the new South Africa", there was both public outcry and support. Support for the amendments centred on the need to provide the police with more power (particularly legal power) to arrest criminals and effectively combat crime. The potential amendments were expected to decrease police fatalities, of which there were 100 between 2009 and 2010 (Bruce 2011: 40). There is a dominant perception in South Africa that criminals have more power

58 These feelings were particularly evident during CPF meetings, when crime statistics were released to those in attendance. Citizens often felt that the statistics were inaccurate or wrongly categorised.

than the police, that the South African constitution cares more for criminals than police officers, and that the state is generally too liberal and lenient. “Human rights policing” practices are seen as antithetical to the development of a penal state capable of effectively addressing crime (Comaroff and Comaroff 2006c; Hornberger 2011). The use of force is regarded as a key factor in empowering police officers and acquiring legitimacy:

More importantly, violence, especially state violence, opposite which human rights like to position themselves, is no longer so easily delegitimised as meaningless, destructive and irrational. State violence is increasingly (popularly) approved of and institutionalised as a way of getting things done, or even as a way of bringing about justice. Police officers can shoot robbers on the spot without disciplinary consequences, and be celebrated as crime-fighting heroes. (Hornberger 2011: 178)

In my research, all police officers, regardless of race and rank, voiced feelings of inadequacy, fear, and powerlessness in combating crime. More specifically, many expressed reluctance to attend particular crime scenes for safety reasons and fear of potential retaliations from criminals. The following quote from an Indian police officer portrays this:

This whole shoot to kill thing in the media, it’s bullshit. Policemen are shit scared to do anything. I can give you so many examples of policemen who will not attend a crime, like an armed robbery, in progress, because they’re too scared. They’ll wait till it’s over, till the suspects are long gone. They know that if they go, and something happens that can be questioned, they’ll have to put up with the shit. I’ve seen so many cases of suspects accusing police officers of theft. If any shooting occurs, there’s an investigation; in the meantime, the policeman isn’t being paid, or has to wait in jail. How is he supposed to feed his family? So many of us think: I’m gonna avoid the heat, come in later, and save my ass! Criminals are treated better than we are, with all this talk of human rights. It’s like our hands are cuffed, not theirs.⁵⁹

In her recent work on the public order police in Durban, Marks (2005) notes how officers still reminisce fondly about apartheid policing practices, with some claiming that they were more efficient and therefore preferable. Hornberger (2011) discusses “nostalgic talk” among state police officers and analyses it as a means to understand how they constructed “the past in direct reaction to the present” (104). Such talk, she claims,

⁵⁹ Interview: 12 May 2010.

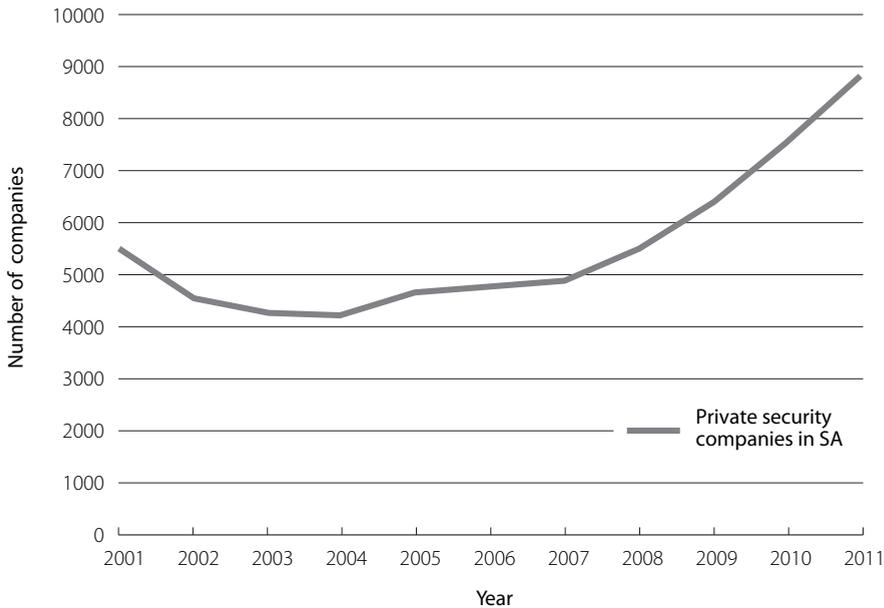


Figure 2: Registered Private Security Providers in South Africa, 2001-2011

Source: PSIRA’s Annual reports⁶⁰

shows how police officers believe(d) their use of violence in the past meant that they were “respected” and effective.

The “shoot to kill” policy, does however, also push for more repressive policing and push for the risks of exacerbating current police abuse of force, corruption, and misconduct. This is particularly worrying because figures show that there were 1,092 fatalities due to the use of force by police officers between 2008 and 2010, the highest number since the creation of the Independent Complaints Directorate (ICD) in the late 1990s (Bruce 2011: 3). The increasing militarisation of the police also points towards a revival of apartheid ways. In April 2010, the South African Police Services reinstated a new ranking structure that resembled the pre-1995 military rank system, in which senior superintendents became colonels, and directors became brigadiers. Such efforts are geared towards creating a stronger image for the state police:

60 All annual reports created by the Private Security Industry Regulatory Authority are accessible online at <http://www.psira.co.za>. There is a lack of reliable data about the amount of private security providers before 1990, as formal regulation and registration only commenced in 1989 with the establishment of the Security Officers Act (SOA). Although data are available from 1990 onwards, the figures for 1989-2001 cannot be compared to those for 2001-2009. This is because the SOA, which operated between 1989 and 2001, excluded in-house security and private security operating in the homelands (TBVC), whereas the new database, which was established through PSIRA registration in 2001, does include these forms of security.

The recent change to military-style names and ranks may be seen as an attempt to counter perceptions that community policing was ‘soft’ on crime (...) A reintroduction of military ranks would encourage stricter discipline and help them once more to ‘fight fire with fire’ in the ‘war against violent criminals.’ (Minnaar 2010: 12)

From “club to business”

The militarisation of the state police and increasing public demand for more forceful policing has also affected other policing agents, such as the private security industry. Since the transition, the industry has experienced continuous growth, as can be seen in Figure 2, which shows the number of private security companies operating in South Africa between 2001 and 2011. Although Figure 2 shows a decrease in the number of companies between 2001 and 2004, this is due to mergers within the industry (discussed further in chapter four) and does not imply a reduction in security provision.

In addition to this growth, the industry has transformed from a “Club to Business” (Singh 2008: 43). During the transition and after 1994, the private security sector was viewed with suspicion by the post-apartheid government, who saw it as part of the old order and feared that it would foster the development of private militias bent on overthrowing the ANC government (Singh 2008; Shaw 2002). This was particularly true for the SOA, which was seen as a partnership between the industry and the old state that served to protect “the economic interests of a white-dominated and controlled industry” (Minnaar 2005: 95).

To further tighten control over the industry, amendments were implemented to expand the scope of the industry, resulting in the birth of the Private Security Industry Regulation Act No. 56 of 2001, monitored by the Private Security Industry Regulatory Authority (PSIRA).⁶¹ Although certain provisions remained, PSIRA introduced numerous changes, such as including in-house security, locksmiths, and private investigators for registration (Berg 2003).⁶² Yet a more profound change concerned the relationship between the industry and the state. Whereas the SOA was regarded as a partnership between the two bodies, PSIRA was conceived as an industry watchdog. Numerous employees in the industry – particularly those who experienced the SOA firsthand – feel that the government has hijacked the SOA and taken away their input, which was a cornerstone of the SOA’s foundation. One example of this hijacking is the composition of the governing Council: the Security Officers Board consisted of six officials from the private security industry, whereas the PSIRA Council lacks any

61 The Act came into operation on 14 February 2002.

62 Many other legislative changes accompanied the introduction of PSIRA with the aim of tightening regulation. For example, in the past inspectors were required to make an appointment with a company prior to a visit, whereas the current legislation permits them to inspect companies unannounced (Interview: PSIRA inspector, 25 March 2009).

industry representation. Currently, the Council members do not have any "direct or indirect financial or personal interests in the private security industry or represent in any way the interests of those within the industry" (PSIRA 2001).⁶³

In addition to increasing regulation, the state also aimed to change the racial composition of the industry, as the majority of owners and managers of companies were white. In 1996, the then General Secretary of the Black Security Companies Owners Association, Steve Dube, declared that blacks only held approximately four per cent of the top positions in the industry (Irish 2000: 25). Faced with this white dominance of private security, the post-apartheid state implemented various efforts to "de-whiten" the industry by increasing access for non-white workers.⁶⁴ The government also promoted partnerships and mergers between small black-owned companies and larger white-owned companies, and there were cases of black-owned companies buying out their white-owned competitors (Irish 1999).

An article in *Security Focus* from March 1997, entitled "Johnnie Mhlungu: Pioneering a new path in security", relates the story of how Senzele "Johnnie" Mhlungu became the executive chairman of Springbok Patrols, then the largest privately owned security company in Southern Africa.⁶⁵ Previously, Mhlungu had been chief executive of Khulani Holdings; when the latter was bought out, he received a 51 per cent stake in Springbok Patrols. Published in 1997, the article clearly reflects the attitude of that time, as the follow excerpt reveals:

The acquisition by Khulani Holdings [...] is yet another milestone in the democratisation of a free enterprise system which, for many years, has been denied to the majority of our population. Likewise, the security industry itself is in the process of transformation of an industry historically fraught with the exploitation of labour and unprofessionalism into a leading edge industry borne out of the need [to] engineer a solution to the unprecedented levels of lawlessness in our country.⁶⁶

Despite their apparently democratic intentions, many of these buyouts and mergers were (and still are) viewed by many industry personnel as strategic alliances on behalf of white former owners to win government tenders, rather than as dedicated efforts to change the

63 The Security Officers Board (SOB) consisted of ten members: six officials from the private security industry, a commissioned officer of the SAP, an officer aligned to the Minister, and two other persons assigned by the then Minister of Law and Order. The current Council consists of a chairperson, a vice-chairperson, and three councillors who are appointed by the Minister of Safety and Security.

64 One example is Trans-Sizwe Security, a firm that specifically employed former ANC and PAC guerrillas after 1994 (Shaw 2002: 112).

65 This company belonged to the Bartmann family discussed previously.

66 This is an extract from a speech given at a gala event on 7 March 1997.

racial imbalances of the industry. As Shaw notes: “Senior managers within the industry were eager to show their support for the new order, not because they were politically close to the new government, but because it made commercial sense to have government on its side” (2002: 112). Since 1994, government tenders have proved to be very lucrative, especially for companies with a racially diverse or non-white racial composition (Irish 1999). However, companies are often accused of putting on a “black face” in order to win such tenders; in these cases, a firm may employ a black chairman, but control remains in the hands of the previous (white) owners. During my research, many informants accused several black owners I knew of being “puppets” for white former owners.

Despite efforts to escape the legacies of apartheid, the industry remains racially imbalanced. The majority of management and high-paid positions are still occupied by white men who employ a predominantly non-white force of private security officers, particularly in the guarding sector (Abrahamsen and Williams 2007). Thus, despite the changes of the last 18 years, the industry, particularly in terms of management, remains a white-dominated one, as an informant stressed:

Private security is still a white man’s world. It may function more as a business, but that army mentality is still deep in the minds of many. Former policemen are still valued higher than any *oak*,⁶⁷ and the black man is still seen as the guard, at the low end of it all. And it’s gonna take a while before that is out, it really is.⁶⁸

In order for companies to acquire government support, the discourse of private security has changed. While state support was previously obtained by framing security in terms of state sovereignty, it is now obtained by marketing security as a commodity. However, many in the industry do not appreciate this transformation. For some, the “soul” of the business has disappeared and the industry has become “cut-throat”, steered by fierce competition and “financial issues” rather than “crime and passion”. The white owner of a guarding company once told me:

The industry at the moment, it’s cut-throat and vicious. It’s become so saturated that you gotta be creative to find new ways to make money, to up the game, to beat your competitors. You know, back in the day, it was all about fighting crime, helping people, you know, really putting your heart and soul into this business. I loved the work back then, I really did, and I know others did. Now it’s a dog-eat-dog world; everyone wants their slice of the pie, and they want a big piece

67 *Oak* is slang for male.

68 Interview: white former employee of the industry, currently managing an anti-crime community organisation, 10 September 2008.

too. It's all about money, money, money. And these regulations – they are good intentions and they do help, I must admit that, but with every little thing you do, you have to write it down or they'll give you a fine. Back then, I would have encouraged my children to get into the game, but now I say: don't even go there. If you want a happy, headache-free life, stay away from private security. Because it will eat you up and spit you out! That I can promise you.⁶⁹

The increasingly competitive nature of the industry is evident in the abundance of employers' associations. There are currently 38 such associations in South Africa (Shearing and Berg 2006: 203).⁷⁰ Although there have been numerous attempts to merge these groups into one overarching organisation, these umbrella organisations are widely regarded as inefficient.⁷¹ Rivalry between associations and companies, often initiated and prolonged by personal vendettas, hampers coordination within the industry.⁷²

Concluding Remarks

The year of 1994 heralded great change for South Africa. For the state police, the end of apartheid rule implied transforming a militarised police force that protected white privilege and controlled the movement of non-whites into a force dedicated to democratic policing for all citizens. A similar, albeit less drastic, transformation occurred within the private security industry, which had previously aligned itself with, and been endorsed by, the apartheid state. Since 1994, the industry has evolved from a "club to a business", with private security services now framed as a commodity rather than as a political instrument.

This chapter has sought to provide a historical backdrop against which to understand the emergence of twilight policing. It has shown that there have always been interconnections between state and non-state policing in urban South Africa. During apartheid, the state created proxies to police the non-white population from a distance

69 Interview: 13 March 2009.

70 Understanding the development of the numerous security associations over the decades is an exhausting task, since names are frequently changing and new associations often spring up.

71 The first attempt to amalgamate the numerous associations into an overarching organisation was made in 1986, when the then Minister of Law and Order encouraged the establishment of the South African Security Federation (SASFED) to function as a representative of the various existing associations. By 1989, 15 different associations were represented under this umbrella organisation (Grant 1989: 102). In August 2003, another overarching body was established: the Security Industry Alliance (SIA). SIA has established a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with government departments and structures, such as PSIRA, the Ministry of Safety and Security, the Ministry of Intelligence, and the Safety and Security Sector Education and Training Authority (SASSETA).

72 One chairman of a black association with whom I spoke bemoaned this continuing exclusion, claiming that the white-based associations were still "running the show" (Interview: 23 April 2009).

and established alliances with the private security industry as supplementary means to protect white privilege. The post-apartheid state also envisioned a “multi-agency approach” (Singh 2008: 14), yet one that was organised with transparent and democratic intentions. The post-apartheid state was initially suspicious of the industry, but today it is increasingly seen as a cooperating party. This shows that the relation between public and private policing cannot be adequately understood with recourse to simple dichotomies.

Furthermore, although South Africa may no longer be referred to as a society in transition, I argue that the public dispute over policing strategies and goals shows that South African policing is “at a crossroads” due to divergent attitudes about “who the police should be” (Marks and Wood 2010: 312). Tackling the “crime problem” may be a common objective, but the means to achieve this provokes contestation, particularly concerning the use of violence. The South African case shows the tribulations endured by transitional societies. It shows how in attempts to reconfigure the security sector, old structures and practices persevere and shape the “new”. And when the “new” fails to deliver the expected changes and crime statistics remain high, elements of the “old” are often brought back. I am not implying that apartheid state policing is universally venerated, yet its “efficiency” has not been forgotten and is something that is perceived to be lacking in contemporary policing.

Contemporary South African policing is filled with contesting policing practices, elements of the “old” and “new” that are marked by and reinforce uncertainty and contestation. And since the fight against crime has become increasingly pluralised, both state and non-state bodies experience this uncertainty. As I will show in the following chapters, twilight policing emerges from these contesting discourses, particularly regarding standpoints on the use of violence. As Jonny Steinberg, a South African academic and journalist, writes in his impressive account of the public police, “In the realm of security, the transition from apartheid has both gone a long way, and has barely begun” (2008: 68).

PART II

**SETTING
THE STAGE**

4

“The Promising Horse”: The Armed Response Sector

Introduction

August 2010

A team of four black armed reaction officers in company uniform are standing in a huddle, preparing themselves for the next test of their fitness. They’ve already completed the shooting competition, in which they had to shoot targets from five different positions, as well as the multiple-choice test on armed response theory. Their white manager is giving them a pep talk; he is telling them that they “must do well” and gives them tips on how to get through the obstacle course as fast as possible. Then, one by one, the officers set off along the course, which is dotted with tyres, tracks, and walls, forcing them to run, jump, and climb. Their manager observes each man closely while the others cheer him on. At the end of their turns, each one is panting and catching their breath. Once everyone has completed the course, there’s a break before the final test, the driving competition, where they’ll have to demonstrate their skills in “precision and skid driving”. Ultimately, each of them wants to earn the prestigious title of “Best Armed Reaction Man”.



This vignette describes a scene from the Armed Reaction Man Competition, an annual event held in Johannesburg, where companies from across South Africa compete against each other with their teams of armed reaction officers.¹ In 2010, 17 four-member teams competed for the prestigious title of “Best Armed Reaction Man” outside Pretoria at Zwartkops Raceway. Throughout the day, I observed the different competitions and spoke to reaction officers, the organisers of the event from the South African Intruder Detection Services Association (SAIDSA), and owners and managers of the companies. When I left that evening to catch my flight back to Durban, I realised that this event served as a looking glass through which to examine the most prominent features of the occupational culture of the armed response sector.

¹ In 2010, reaction companies from outside Johannesburg were invited to participate for the first time. However, the majority of the companies still originated from the Johannesburg areas. There was only one company from Durban, and this was an internationally owned company operating throughout South Africa that had a “Durban team”.

The first such feature is the division between management and operations (i.e. the armed reaction officers). Throughout this event, they operated as two distinct fields and hierarchy defined the minimal amount of interaction. On the one hand, the owners expressed pity towards the armed reaction officers, citing their poor labour conditions and the dangers they faced in the line of duty. On the other hand, they used a rather condescending tone, frequently complained about the officers' recklessness, and highlighted the social and economic gap between themselves and their employees. This divide was further defined by race, the second key feature of the armed response sector. The vast majority of the owners in the sector (and perhaps the industry at large) are white, while the vast majority of the armed reaction officers are non-white. A third noticeable feature was the sexual composition of the participants: this was an armed reaction *man* competition, and women were an absolute minority. The male dominance of the sector leads to the (re)production of a macho subculture in which particular masculinities are cultivated and praised. In fact, these masculine attributes are used to measure and define what it means to be a "good" armed reaction officer.

These three building blocks (hierarchy, race, and gender) are the cornerstones of the occupational culture of the armed reaction sector and the performance of twilight policing. Various studies of private security have pointed to the existence of a private security occupational culture.² Similar to concepts developed in the field of public police studies (Bittner 1967; Chan 1997; Punch 1985; Reiner 2000; Westley 1970), this notion implies that particular practices, rules, justifications, and structures determine how policing is performed within and among policing bodies. However, given the variation between officers, policing bodies, and contexts, it is problematic to speak of an occupational culture for the entire industry.³ Therefore, following O'Neill et al., I use the term "occupational culture" in a broad sense to refer to "the way things are done around here" (2007: 2). In South Africa, there are many different types of private security officers, including security guards, national key point protection officers, cash-in-transit officers, private investigators, and bodyguards. Thus, to speak of a private policing occupational culture in South Africa ignores the diversity of the industry.

The aim of the following two chapters is to describe and analyse the numerous structures, processes, and practices that shape the armed response sector in Durban, South Africa. My first claim is that the armed reaction sector constitutes a specific niche of policing with its own distinct occupational culture, which I will demonstrate with reference to the industry at large. My second claim is that the occupational culture in which armed response officers operate is more similar to that of the state police than to

2 See Berg (2010), Button (2003, 2007), Hobbs et al. (2002), Lister et al. (2000), Livingstone and Hart (2003), Loyens (2009), Manzo (2004, 2006, 2009), Micucci (1998), Mopas and Stenning (2001), Rigakos (2002), Singh and Kempa (2007), Stenning (2000), van Steden (2007), and Wakefield (2003).

3 The literature on the occupational culture of the state police highlights the existence of various sub-cultures that reflect differences between ranks and units. See O'Neill et al. (2007) for further discussion.

that of other types of private security officers. Like Loyens (2009) and Rigakos (2002), I argue that these two policing bodies exhibit more similarities than differences. When reading Andrew Faull's (2010) stories about members of South Africa's state police, I was struck by the similarities with my own informants. However, I will not structure this chapter according to the similarities and differences between the two policing bodies, as Loyens (2009) does, but I will make reference to the public police throughout. The correspondence to the public police is a core factor in the performance of twilight policing, as it shows how and why armed response officers are entering the public realm. By incorporating "languages of stateness" (Hansen and Stepputat 2001: 5), armed response officers are increasingly acting like the state police and finding themselves in the twilight zone.

This chapter analyses how the occupational culture of the armed response sector cultivates particular traits that encourage armed response officers to enter the public sphere. It also looks at the companies and particular structures and practices of the sector that shape this occupational culture. The first section examines the different companies and the various factors that define how they operate. The second section focuses on the forms of discipline, control, and surveillance that companies exert over armed response officers. Such mechanisms divide the sector into distinct hierarchical categories, most notably those of management and operations. The third section analyses how gender and race shape the armed response sector, arguing that while the predominance of masculinities has a unifying effect, race accentuates the division between management and operations.

The next chapter, chapter five, delves more deeply into the lives, perspectives, and experiences of the armed response officers and discusses their motivations, a typical day "on the road", the different tools they can employ on duty, and the occupational hazards they face. Although chapter four primarily focuses on the perspectives of the companies and management, and the next chapter on those of the armed response officers, the perceptions of these groups influence each other and will therefore be discussed in both chapters. Taken together, these two chapters aim to provide an encompassing analysis of the occupational culture of armed response, out of which emerges the performance of twilight policing.

The Companies

As discussed in chapter one, I chose to study the armed reaction sector for several reasons. Figure 3 shows the amount of registered security businesses in the three main sectors of the industry, namely guarding, armed reaction, and cash-in-transit, between 2005 and 2011. A cursory glance reveals that all sectors have experienced continuous annual growth and that guarding is the largest sector, followed by armed response and

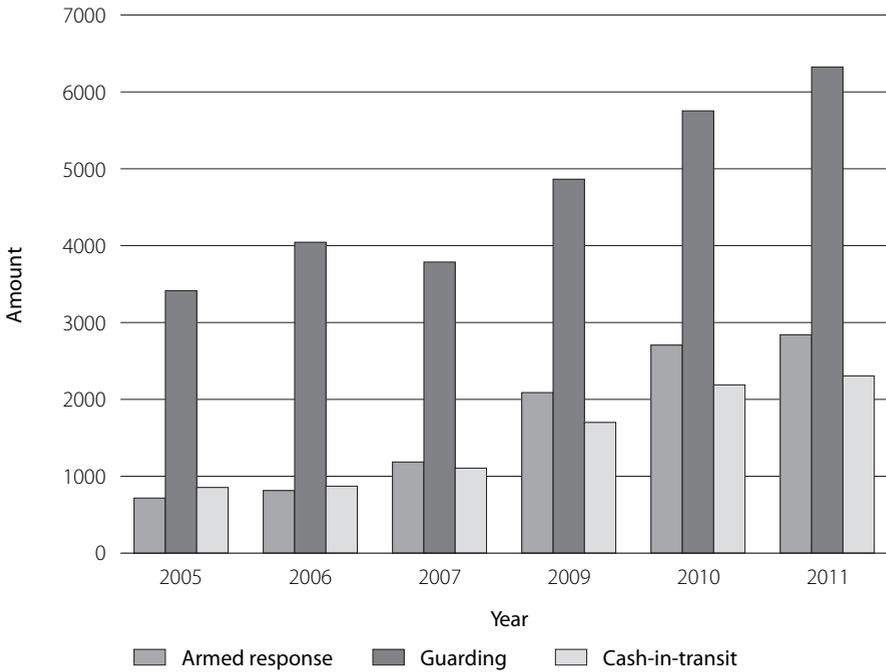


Figure 3: Registered Security Businesses per Sector, 2005-2011

Source: PSIRA Annual Reports

cash-in-transit.⁴ Although Figure 3 shows a larger growth in the guarding sector than in either armed response or cash-in-transit between 2010 and 2011, members of the industry predict that the armed response sector will experience the greatest growth rates over the next few years. The armed reaction sector is, as one key informant stated, “the promising horse” of the industry.⁵ These expected growth rates are based on continuous technological progress, a steady demand for armed response, and an increase in both formal and informal partnerships with police officers (chapter six) and community initiatives (chapter seven).

Unfortunately, PSIRA does not provide provincial and sectorial breakdowns in their annual reports, which would tell us, for example, how many armed response companies are operating in each province or city. With the available data, I have calculated some rough estimates of the number of companies and officers working in the armed response sector in KwaZulu-Natal. In Figure 4, the non-italicised figures are from PSIRA’s annual reports and the italicised figures are my own calculations.

4 Between 2009 and 2010, armed reaction grew by 29.57 per cent, guarding by 18.31, and cash-in-transit by 28.87. Between 2010 and 2011, armed reaction grew by 4.23 per cent, guarding by 9.34 per cent, and cash-in-transit by 4.36 per cent (PSIRA Annual reports).

5 Interview: 28 August 2010.

Figure 4: The Armed Reaction Sector in 2010⁶

	Registered Security Providers	Armed reaction providers	Registered active security officers	Armed reaction officers
South Africa	7,459	2,701	387,273	140,193
KwaZulu-Natal	1,199	432	65,323	23,646

Source: PSIRA reports and author's calculations

Let me explain how I arrived at these estimates. According to PSIRA, KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) is home to 16 per cent of all security businesses (1,199 of 7,459). If we apply the same ratio to the armed reaction sector (i.e. 16 per cent of 2701), we can estimate that there are 432 armed reaction businesses in KwaZulu-Natal. The second calculation allows us to estimate the number of armed reaction officers. According to PSIRA, the armed reaction sector makes up 36.2 per cent of the industry. Given that there are 387,273 registered security officers in South Africa, we can suppose that there are somewhere in the region of 140,193 armed reaction officers in South Africa (i.e. 36.2 per cent of 387,273). And if we apply the same ratio (i.e. 36.2 per cent) to the 65,323 registered active security officers in KwaZulu-Natal, we can estimate there are 23,646 armed reaction officers registered in the province.

When I discussed these results with my informants from different parts of the industry, all of them claimed that the figures were much too low. They estimated that there were between 600 and 900 companies providing armed response in KwaZulu-Natal. This disparity in our estimates, they argued, was due to the existence of unregistered companies. In the industry at large, such companies are referred to as “fly-by-nights”: these are unregistered companies that appear and quickly disappear.⁷ In 2010-2011, 176 security service providers were labelled “untraceable” by PSIRA, and in the following year (2011-2012), 122 providers were identified as such.⁸

Though prominent in the guarding sector, “fly-by-nights” are relatively rare in the armed response sector, primarily due to the start-up capital needed for this kind of company. More common, however, are “bush companies” (i.e. companies that are not registered and that therefore operate in the “bush” to evade detection by PSIRA). “Bush companies” are similar to the “one-man shows” of the 1980s (i.e. companies operated by a single individual using his own vehicle and firearms to provide “security”); they operate in confined areas, often defined by a few street corners, and engage in violent

6 Although figures are available from 2011, I have chosen to use the 2010 data to aid comparison with Figure 5, which also uses data from 2010.

7 Some “fly-by-nights” are also registered, but have frequent changes in company name and ownership, making it difficult to regulate and monitor their operations.

8 In the previous year (2009-2010), there were 112 untraceable security service providers (PSIRA 2009-2010). Unfortunately, PSIRA does not provide any details about these “untraceable” companies, such as the type of security they offer.

“turf wars” with competing companies, commonly other “bush companies”. For the purpose of this analysis, I will ignore the “bush companies” and focus instead on the 400 known companies that we can assume exist.

Many in the industry regard the continued existence of “bush companies” as a nuisance, particularly members of the South African Intruder Detection Services Association (SAIDSA), the leading employers’ association in the armed reaction sector.⁹ SAIDSA serves as the watchdog of the armed reaction sector; it regulates the section through various by-laws and regulations.¹⁰ Although SAIDSA is not legally mandated to impose these regulations, members who do not comply are “kicked out” of the association and any form of misconduct is reported to PSIRA.¹¹ In fact, many employees in the sector ascribe more authority to SAIDSA than to PSIRA, as one white company owner explained:

SAIDSA really looks after our sector. Together, all of us, we create the rules and regulations and determine what is needed for this sector to work efficiently and by the law. The inspections are thorough, so if you’re not being inspected by them, then your company is probably not meeting all the standards that it should. SAIDSA membership is actually the way to see if a company is really legit or not. PSIRA is too much, not focused; it’s a mess.¹²

Figure 5 presents basic information about 11 different armed reaction companies. The previous chapter discussed how the armed response sector emerged in the late 1980s through the work of “techies” and “one-man shows”. In the intervening years, these two components have gradually merged, such that current armed response companies generally provide both technical installation and armed reaction. Although there are still some “pure” techies (i.e. companies that operate solely in the technical domain), this research is primarily concerned with the provision of security through armed response.¹³

9 SAIDSA was founded in 1970 as the South African Burglar Alarm Services Association (SABASA) and initially focused on the technical side of the sector.

10 Although SAIDSA members state that the association represents approximately 85 per cent of the industry, this figure is questionable. According to the SAIDSA website (www.saidsa.co.za), 28 members operate in KwaZulu-Natal. (There are actually 32 members listed for KwaZulu-Natal, but three are simply regional branches of the same company.) However, as Figure 4 shows, there are at least 400 armed response companies operating in the province.

11 Interview: SAIDSA administrator, 18 August 2010.

12 Interview: 6 July 2010

13 These “pure” techies use a system of sub-contracting, whereby one company installs the alarms and other technical products while another provides the armed reaction service. The monthly premium received from clients is split between the companies accordingly. Some companies, especially the larger ones, have permanent contracts with particular “techies”, and all of their clients are automatically linked up to the latter’s control rooms.

The data from Figure 5 are derived from a self-completion questionnaire that I gave to 11 companies in the Durban area. Although much of the information provided to me appeared to be inaccurate (see chapter two), the data in figure 5 has been crosschecked several times and appears to be valid. Figure 5 is arranged according to company size, with each company referred to by a letter for anonymity purposes. For example, the largest company, company A, has 33,000 clients, while the smallest company, company K, has just 390 clients. I will distinguish between large companies (20,000 or more clients), medium-sized companies (2000 or more clients), and small companies (less than 2000 clients). Figure 5 thus includes three large companies, four medium-sized companies, and four small companies.

Figure 5: Armed Reaction Details for 11 Companies in Durban in 2010

Company	Number of clients	Number of vehicles	Vehicle/client ratio	Monthly premium ¹⁴
A	33,000	60	550	250
B	25,000	48	520	260
C	20,000	35	571	220
D	5,000	7	714	209
E	4,000	7	571	205
F	2,200	7	314	280
G	2,100	6	350	178
H	1,600	5	320	250
I	1,500	4	375	200
J	500	4	125	300
K	390	2	195	285

Source: Questionnaire completed by company owners/managers and compiled by the author

A standard “call-out”

Although each company has their own unique operating procedure, all companies undertake three main tasks: alarm installation and maintenance (including technicians and sales agents); the reception and coding of signals received from these devices (the entire operations of the control room); and the provision of armed response (the armed reaction officers). So how does this process actually work? Let me provide basic overview. Client A pays company A to install an alarm monitoring system in his/her house; this may consist of anything from a single alarm to an elaborate system of multiple alarms, beams, and panic buttons. When this system is triggered, a signal is sent to the control room of company A, which is the hub of armed reaction: the place where signals are received and coordinated. For large companies, a control room generally consists of 20 or more computers that are monitored by controllers, who in turn are

14 These prices include VAT. Monthly premiums are higher for commercial clients, but these figures are not shown here since this study is solely concerned with residential security.

managed by a control room manager. For smaller companies, there are usually between one and three controllers in the control room.

When an alarm or panic button is activated, a controller receives notifications concerning the specificities of the signal (such as the location and time) on his/her computer. Due to the prevalence of false alarms, the controller will first contact the client to inquire why a notification was received. If the client answers the phone and informs the control room that everything is fine and that the alarm or panic button was activated by accident, the notification is recorded and no further action is needed. However, if the client cannot be reached or there is any cause for concern, the controller will radio the armed response officer who is patrolling the area of the client's premises. For example, if a controller receives a panic button signal and cannot reach the client, there is reason to believe that the client is in danger. Additionally, if a false code was typed into the alarm device and the client cannot be reached, it is likely that someone else has entered the client's premises. The controller will provide the officer with all relevant available details, such as the address of the client and the type of alarm notification. All communication is based on the NATO phonetic alphabet code, with each company using different codes to refer to different alarms and signals. The armed reaction officer then proceeds to the residence of the client to provide armed response.

The course of action that an armed reaction officer takes upon arrival at a client's premises depends on various factors, such as the rules of the company, the wishes of the client, the type of alarm, and the specificities of the crime scene. Generally, the officer enters the premises either by using a remote control or a key or by climbing over a gate/fence. He then conducts a perimeter check and examines the windows, doors, and fences for signs of forced entry. Armed response officers are never allowed to enter a property without the property's owner (i.e. the client) in question. If the armed reaction officer believes that there has been a "positive" (i.e. some form of criminal activity, such as a break-in), the client is informed immediately. In such cases, a higher-ranking officer will often attend the site to oversee the situation. If the armed response officer arrives to find a crime in progress, he is (officially) supposed to stand back and call for backup from the nearest armed reaction officer. In reality, however, this does not always happen.

If the armed reaction officer does not observe any form of activity, he will provide the client with a call slip to notify him or her that an officer was on site and conducted a check. Call slips are also used to note down all observations, such as an open window or unlocked door. The armed reaction officer then leaves the site and is ready to attend the next alarm notification. Throughout this entire process, which is referred to as a "call-out", the control room is continuously updated via radio communication. With some companies, particularly the larger ones, telephonic communication is also used.

This brief overview describes a standard call-out where the notification was a false alarm (i.e. there was no evidence of any criminal activity) and where the client was not on site. However, when clients are on site, or when a crime has been committed, the call-

out can assume a number of different forms, as will become clear throughout the rest of this book. The important thing to note here is that the provision of armed response is based on collaboration between the three different departments.

"The big players make the rules"

If we look at Figure 5, it is interesting to note that there are no companies with 5,000 to 20,000 clients operating in Durban. This is primarily the result of the numerous take-overs and mergers that have taken place since 1994, which were promoted by the government as a means to counter the potential threat posed by the industry (see chapter three). In 1999, for example, Fidelity Services Group purchased Khulani Springbok Patrols, a deal valued at approximately 100 million rand (Irish 1999). Large holding companies such as Klipton and Paramed also emerged as security service providers around this time. In 1993, Klipton bought out Sentry Security, South Africa's first armed response company (Irish 2000: 24).¹⁵

However, it was around the turn of the millennium, also known as the "take-over period", that foreign investment began to transform the industry. During this period, international security companies became aware of the potential of the South African market and started to buy out or merge with various local companies. A considerable amount of foreign investment flowed into the country's private security industry, primarily through the local subsidiaries of foreign companies such as ADT and Group 4 Securicor. The prevalence of mergers and take-overs during this period is evident in industry statistics; according to Irish (1999), there were 673 armed reaction companies in 1999 and 450 in 2000.

The contraction of the industry also brought together different sectors, such as guarding and armed reaction, under the same owners. As a consequence, companies began to provide both guarding and armed reaction services. As the manager of a large armed response company and former owner of a guarding company told me, many in the industry saw this as a logical next step:

We were doing it because we needed to grow the business, and the only way to do it was to join somebody else and unite the different parts. And the same was for everyone, so companies started to come together to buy each other out. The number of companies went down, but the industry continued to grow. Clients kept coming, but less companies were on the road.¹⁶

15 This holding then continued to buy out other, smaller armed response companies across the country. The latter initially retained their names, but eventually they were brought under the Sentry brand. In May 2001, ADT purchased Sentry Security Services (Abrahamsen and Williams 2011: 96).

16 Interview: 24 September 2009.

Due to these take-overs and mergers, the market structure of the industry has become a type of oligopoly, in which a few large companies dominate the industry. In 2006, approximately 20 of the 4,721 companies employed more than 1,000 security officers each, while roughly 2,000 companies employed five or less (Shearing and Berg 2006: 203). The same applies to the armed response sector. In Durban, there are three so called big players, namely ADT, Chubb, and BLUE.¹⁷ They “make the rules” for the sector, particularly with regards to wages, security training, and service delivery. One of the means by which they maintain this position is the continuous acquisition of smaller companies.¹⁸

The “infrastructure base”

As discussed in chapter three, the industry is currently described as “cut-throat” due to its fiercely competitive nature,¹⁹ itself a product of market saturation. Like the rest of the services provided by the industry, armed response is no longer seen as a luxury good reserved for the elite, but is instead widely regarded as a necessity and is found across all areas except the lowest socio-economic domain. This expansion of armed response occurred due to an increase in both supply and demand, but also because companies specifically targeted the lower-income sectors of society to acquire new clients during the 1990s. The white marketing manager of a large company explained this to me as follows:

Around this time, we specifically addressed lower-income areas – not townships, but areas with a middle class, a growing one, that could afford the monthly premium. In this industry, there are two main costs for the clients: the alarm installation fee – somewhere between 1000 to 2000 rand, depending on the client – and the monthly premium. Now, many people can afford the 200-300 rand a month, but don’t have the disposable income for that once-off fee. So what we did, we took that away and offered them a “free alarm”, and we specifically went to these areas, like the Bluff and Chatsworth, to get new clients. And it worked; we got in thousands of them through this system.²⁰

17 Chubb operates throughout South Africa and is owned by United Technologies Fire and Security, which is part of United Technologies Corporation (see www.chubb.co.za and www.utcfireandsecurity.com). ADT operates throughout South Africa and is part of Tyco International, a company operating in 50 different countries (see www.adt.co.za and www.tyco.com). BLUE Security is a South African-owned company that only operates in the Durban Metropolitan Area (see www.bluesecurity.co.za).

18 For example, in 2009, BLUE Security bought Swarm, a small company operating in Queensburgh.

19 Chapter seven will delve into the marketing strategies implemented by the industry.

20 Interview: 7 July 2010.

Furthermore, within the structure of an oligopoly, the price of armed response (i.e. the monthly premium paid by clients) is fairly similar across the sector, as can be seen in Figure 5. The monthly premiums range from R 178 to R 300, with an average of R 240. Although clients complained about this monthly expense, their issue was not so much with the amount as with the very fact that they had to *pay* for security in the first place. Security is widely regarded as a "grudge purchase" (Goold et al. 2010), an unwelcome yet necessary acquisition. All clients expressed agitation about the annual 10 per cent increase implemented by companies. This form of recurring and increasing payment, which will see a monthly premium of R 250 rising to R 366 between 2011 and 2015, is the core profit generator of the armed reaction sector.

According to my informants, the profit margins of the armed reaction sector are between 5 and 15 per cent. Although the monthly premiums from clients play an important role in the profit margins, it is the "infrastructure base" (i.e. the ability of a company to serve all of its clients with its vehicles) that is the decisive factor. Figure 5 shows that companies have a vehicle-to-client ratio of between 1:125 and 1:714, with an average of 418.6. In other words, one vehicle (and thus one armed response officer) serves an average of over four hundred clients. This vehicle-to-client ratio determines the financial success of a company. For example, the owner of company H informed me that one armed reaction vehicle costs approximately R 13,400 to operate per month, regardless of the amount of clients. With clients paying a minimum monthly premium of 250 rand per month, this means that at least 53.6 clients are needed to cover the costs of one vehicle. However, company H has 320 clients per vehicle, which means that the company receives R 80,000 per month for that vehicle, resulting in a net profit of R 66,600 for one vehicle and R 333,000 for five vehicles.²¹ Thus, the more clients served per vehicle, the greater the profit. However, the vehicle-to-client ratio must not become too high: if one vehicle serves too many clients, the reaction time of the vehicle will be slower, which will lead to poorer service delivery and a potential loss of clients. Maintaining the right infrastructure base is key to a company's success.

Given the importance of balancing the vehicle-to-client ratio, when a company expands into another geographical area, it needs a guarantee that it will attract a certain amount of clients in order for this expansion to be feasible. This also explains why companies need both start-up capital and a handful of clients when they enter the sector. In fact, starting an armed response company from scratch is rare; the majority stem from guarding companies that branch out into providing armed response for their existing clients. In 2009, I interviewed a businessman who had owned a guarding company for eight years and had recently expanded his business to include armed reaction with two operating vehicles. When I met him again in 2010, however, he told me that he had had

21 This profit estimate of R 66,000 obviously excludes the company's other overhead costs, such as marketing, office rent, and office equipment.

to shut down his armed response section due to the financial difficulties of upholding the infrastructure base.

The infrastructure base explains why community-based companies are able to flourish: they are confined to a smaller geographical area and have more clients per vehicle. It is for this reason, combined with their local appeal, that community-based companies continue to operate despite the ever-present threat of takeovers. As the manager of one large company explained, “They’re like white ants: you don’t see them or maybe feel them right away, but they’re there, slowly eating away [at] your clients.”²²

“Strongholds” and “way out there”

When I first came to Durban in October 2007, I was particularly fascinated by the scattered nature of the security industry: every street displays the logos of numerous different companies,²³ and it is normal for several firms to operate in the same area.

However, companies do have geographic strongholds where they seek to create clusters of clients in order to support their infrastructure base. For example, ENFORCE security has a stronghold in Ballito, a coastal town just outside Durban, and BLUE Security has many clients in the Umbilo and Musgrave area. Company employees often talk quite possessively about certain areas, using phrases such as “My Umhlanga Rocks” or “Our part of Kloof.”²⁴ Community-based companies also dominate particular areas. For example, Securelink only operates in a confined part of the Upper Highway Area, Park Patrol primarily operates in the Bluff and Yellowwood Park, and Marshall Security operates solely in Durban North. Although other companies also work in these areas, the latter remain strongholds for the aforementioned companies. Moreover, it is likely that geographical monopolies will increase in the future. Recent years have seen a growth in collective clients (see chapter seven), whereby citizens club together to arrange armed security provision for a specific area, such as a street or neighbourhood. Although “turf war” is perhaps too strong a word, growing competition between companies in pursuing lucrative deals with collective clients will likely lead to more geographical strongholds.

There is, however, one geographical area of neglect, namely the townships. When I first asked informants about companies working in the townships, my question was often brushed aside or ridiculed: one simply did not work “way out there”. For many companies, these areas pose too many dangers for their armed reaction officers. Their neglect does not reflect a lack of prospective clients, therefore, but rather a security concern. Some companies use the subcontracting system to work around this; they

22 Interview: 2 July 2010.

23 When I present my findings abroad, I realise that people assume that private security companies operate with clear geographical demarcations, where one company will serve a particular street or area and another company will serve the next.

24 Umhlanga Rocks and Kloof are two suburbs of Durban.

install the alarms for clients in the townships and then subcontract another company to provide the armed reaction service, thereby avoiding the risk to their own officers.²⁵

Not all companies shun the townships, however. In March 2009, I visited a friend who lives in a black township in the north of Durban. Upon arriving at his house, I noticed that he had installed an alarm system since my last visit in 2007, and that the provider was a large internationally owned company.²⁶ He was surprised by my observation and explained that it was quite normal for him to have such a system; many of his neighbours were also installing alarms. Towards the end of my fieldwork, I was able to interview the owners of three companies that specifically, or primarily, work in the townships. Two of the owners felt that other companies exaggerated the risk in the townships, whilst the third claimed that the townships were indeed far more dangerous than other areas, but that they were worth the risk. Nevertheless, it became clear that these companies' operational style and financial models, such as their pricing structures, fit the standards of the sector. It is not necessarily the case, therefore, that clients in the townships pay lower monthly premiums than those in other areas. Furthermore, all three owners highlighted how the townships were "untapped markets" and gloated about the growth their companies had experienced by working there.

"The foreigners" and "the locals"

When I started conducting my first interviews with company managers in 2007, several of them posed the same question: "Are you going to focus on the foreigners or also include the locals?" Although I was aware of this distinction, I did not yet realise how great a role it played in the way that companies define and differentiate themselves. In this crude binary, "the foreigners" refers to any internationally owned company, while "the locals" denotes nationally owned companies of any size.²⁷ The former, which include global brands such as Chubb and ADT, purposely profile themselves as companies that adhere to international standards. The latter, meanwhile, project their local connection – "*local is lekker*"²⁸ – and emphasise their direct accessibility and being "one of them"; a part of the community. This is particularly true for community-based companies.

This difference in ownership also results in different operational styles. Local companies have a reputation for being more active and policing oriented, while international companies are perceived to focus more on customer service, something that I observed firsthand while out on patrol with officers from one such company. Although all companies engage in customer-based practices, this company employed a

25 Interview: white marketing manager of a large company, 7 July 2010.

26 This is an example of an internationally owned company subcontracting to another partner.

27 This distinction had particular significance during the "take-over" period, when international companies entered the South African market. Many South African owners felt that the latter were "taking over" the industry and were worried that their companies would not be able to compete and survive.

28 Lekker means good/delicious in Afrikaans.

high-ranking armed reaction officer specifically to visit new clients or those who had recently experienced some form of crime. Furthermore, international companies are known to adhere to rules more strictly than their local counterparts. An example that was often given by my interlocutors concerned the rules about entering the premises of a client. Armed reaction officers from international companies are instructed not to attempt to climb over a fence if it is more than one metre taller than them. In contrast, owners of local companies are known for employing a bolder rule of thumb: “If I can get over that gate, so can you!” Local companies are thereby seen as “go-getters” that encourage their armed reaction officers to chase suspects, while international companies instruct their officers to focus on the client and avoid risky situations.

The background of the managers and/or owners also shapes these differences in operational styles. Those with a policing background who have “been in the trenches”²⁹ tend to implement operational styles that encourage their armed reaction officers to be proactive, to vigorously look out for suspicious vehicles and persons, and to chase suspects when the opportunity arises. Managers with a financial background, meanwhile, focus more on “numbers”, and international companies are often associated with this approach. In fact, many local company owners complained that both the sector and the industry as a whole were becoming too “financial” and that the “heart of it” was being lost, which resonates with the description of the industry as “cut-throat”. According to a white company owner who had been working in security since the 1980s, there has been a transformation from a “personalised, hands-on sheriff living in the suburb to an industry where accountants make the decisions”.³⁰ Like several other interviewees, he claimed that this started during the “take-over” period, when international companies entered the market and recruited managers with financial backgrounds rather than former police officers.

Although I do not mean to suggest that *all* international companies employ managers with financial expertise and discourage their armed reaction officers from taking risks, or that local companies always recruit individuals with a policing background and encourage their officers to chase suspects, this division is clearly apparent in both reputation and practice. The distinction is an important one, for it influences the way an armed reaction officer operates on the ground. Although the expansion of armed response into the public domain – a core element of twilight policing – has occurred across the entire sector, it is more common among local companies that not only are more likely to have established social networks in the community, but also generally employ a more proactive approach to policing the streets. This does not mean that an armed reaction officer working for an internationally owned

29 Interview: operations manager, 22 April 2010.

30 Interview: 1 September 2010.

company will never chase a suspect or approach one in a public space, but only that this is unlikely.

Branding the policing style

The cultivation of different policing styles by companies is also reflected in their marketing strategies and the design of the company’s image. Picture 1 shows three armed response officers from BLUE Security standing in front of a vehicle. Marketing employees from BLUE Security told me how they had invested a lot of time in choosing imagery and symbols from American cop shows to represent their company. Rather than associating themselves with the South African state police, the company employed popular images of state policing elsewhere to obtain a sense of authority and professionalism. Both the vehicle and the uniforms are intended to resemble those of police officers. In fact, when a colleague came to visit me in 2008 and saw one of their vehicles drive by, she initially thought that it was a state police car. Furthermore, BLUE wanted to portray itself as a “community-policing” company, with the “boys from BLUE” seen as part of that community.³¹ The uniforms are thus designed to project “professionalism” and “assistance”.



Picture 1: Three armed response officers from BLUE Security (photo by the author)

31 Interview: 2 July 2010.



Picture 2: Three armed response officers from Reaction Unit South Africa (photo by the author)

Picture 2 shows three armed response officers from Reaction Unit South Africa (RUSA), a community-based company. In choosing the aesthetics for their company, the owners sought to project a militaristic image of a “tough force” of men. As can be seen from the photo, the armed reaction officers are dressed head to toe in black. In addition to the standard equipment (radio, firearm, and bulletproof vest), they are required to wear army chains, kneepads, bandannas, and black sunglasses.

Picture 1 and 2 show two examples of how companies brand themselves in specific ways in order to project a particular policing style. Although this is clearly a marketing strategy, it is also an important means of ensuring public compliance and exerting

authority. Companies take the physical appearance and attire of their armed response officers very seriously. In fact, armed response officers are penalised when they do not adhere to the brand image.

Managers across the industry repeatedly highlighted how important it was for security officers to "look professional" or "tough", since officers are the public face of their companies: they are what clients and other citizens see on the streets. According to Singh, companies started to profile security officers "as individuals rather than as an undifferentiated mass" (Singh 2005: 163) in the late 1990s. Since then, security officers have increasingly been at the forefront of advertising campaigns and today they are publicly rewarded for their good performance in newspapers and magazines. The white owner of a guarding company referred to private security officers as "ambassadors of the industry",³² offering the following explication of this term:

The guards are the first thing a customer sees, so he has to look professional, neat, and smart. We have to invest in that, because it's what clients see first. Of course we want to help him economically, but it's in our own interest to invest in his wellbeing for marketing purposes.³³

Discipline, Control, and Surveillance

Company owners regard strictness with regards to uniforms and physical attire to be important in order to maintain their companies' reputation and client approval, but it also serves to instil a strong sense of bodily discipline, authority, and hierarchy. Singh (2005) argues that such mechanisms of control and supervision function to keep the officers on a tight leash and to ensure that they display maximum performance. Rigakos describes the surveillance techniques exerted over officers as "an obsession for security firms" (2002: 101).

The instilment of discipline through control and surveillance is a recurrent feature of the private security industry, occurring during training, registration, and recruitment as well as "on the road". The process begins at the training facilities, where students are moulded into docile, obedient, and utilisable employees who do not "exercise independent judgement" (Singh 2005: 167). When I participated in the security training, I witnessed how students who arrived late to class were punished with various strenuous tasks, such as push-ups or running laps. Another example of the routine inculcation of respect for authority was the parade that was conducted daily at 11:00 a.m. sharp, which

32 Hobbs et al. (2002: 357) highlight how this process is also taking place for bouncers, who are increasingly referred to as "door supervisors" or "stewards" in order to evade the violent connotations of the term "bouncer".

33 Interview: owner of a guarding company, 19 September 2008.



Picture 3: Start of the parade (photo by the author)

required the students to stand in three evenly spaced lines and follow commands issued by the training instructor³⁴ (see Picture 3).

Employing the “good” ones

The recruitment procedure is the next phase of surveillance and control. In addition to satisfying the formal requirements of the job, all security officers undergo some form of psychological testing, for which companies use a range of techniques, including panel interviews, aptitude tests, integrity checks, polygraph tests, and psychometric evaluation. These are used to assess officers’ capabilities, to understand their distinctiveness, to compare them to “the norm”, and to focus on their “moral habits” (Singh 2008: 54). The importance of screening potential employees is emphasised in the following quote from the manager of a large company:

We gotta make sure the guys coming in are good guys, that they know what they’re doing. We check the training, run it by the SAPS, you know, the standard, the usual stuff. But besides all that, I want to speak to the guy – make sure he’s

34 The commands used were typical of police and military forces worldwide and included “attention”, “halt”, and “two steps forward”.

really qualified. I wanna know I'm not dealing with an alcoholic who's gonna be late for work everyday and has to support five girlfriends. I don't need to know everything, but I want to get a sense of the calibre of these men. I always trust my own instinct; if it doesn't feel good, no matter what it says on paper, he's out. Now you see, this is just with the guards. But with armed reaction, it's very important you know what you're hiring. You have to know that these guys are not messing around and meet the standards. So that's why we have these long interviews, make them fill in extra forms, do a few written tests, stuff like that. The more the job requires, the more important it is that we trust the guy. I mean, people's lives are on the line.³⁵

Recruiting armed reaction officers is seen as problematic for operational managers. This is in stark contrast to the situation in the guarding sector, where, as one Indian guarding supervisor said to me, "If you fire one, you know you have dozens of guys waiting in line to get the job. There's always more where that came from. In reaction, it's different."³⁶ The recruitment pool for the armed response sector is relatively small, which means that finding high-calibre officers can be an arduous process, as a white armed reaction manager of a medium-sized company explained:

Companies working in armed reaction are always in need of more officers. If you have the expertise, training, and skills as an armed reaction officer, it's easy for you to find a job, because there is always a company who will need you. We don't have a lot of choice in the matter; there are a few good guys and that's it.³⁷

The recruitment of armed reaction officers sometimes occurs through traditional means, such as advertisements in newspapers, but the most common method is "poaching", whereby officers are recruited directly from other companies.³⁸ Although poaching occurs at all levels, managers often instruct their higher-ranking officers to act as "scouts" and "snoop around" for good reaction officers from other companies.³⁹ The main targets are small security companies, which often spend many months training officers only for them to be poached by a larger company that can offer higher wages. The white owner of a small company offered the following account of this process:

I train the guys, make them understand the trade, the ins and outs, and then here comes [name of company], offers them more money, and they're gone.

35 Interview: 20 February 2009.

36 Interview: 3 April 2009.

37 Interview: 31 March 2009.

38 In chapter six, "poaching" refers to the recruitment of police officers to work in the industry.

39 Interview: operations manager, 9 December 2008.

I'd like to pay them more, but I just can't. And people even make jokes about it at meetings, other owners, you know – I'll just go and steal some of [name of owner]'s guys.⁴⁰

The result of this poaching is a high turnover of staff, a trait observed throughout the security industry worldwide.⁴¹ The guarding sector experiences the highest turnover, as amounting to 200 per cent per year in 1994 in South Africa (Ibbotson 1994, in Singh 2005: 164). In the armed reaction sector, too, there is a high turnover of employees, but most remain within the same circles, switching between companies like a form of musical chairs. I knew of a handful of reaction officers who worked for several different companies during my three years in Durban; I would meet them working for one company one day, and then, months later, would meet them again working for another company. Therefore, although various forms of testing and control are used during the recruitment process, the limited number of available armed response officers confines these procedures.

A crucial part of the recruitment process is the criminal record check. Although PSIRA's approval of a candidate's registration implies that the officer does not have a criminal background, numerous companies perform additional police checks, often through their own contacts within the SAPS. In the armed reaction sector, pre-employment polygraph testing is common among companies that have the financial capacity. During these tests, recruits are questioned about their past behaviour to determine their credentials and suitability for the job. Similarly, some company owners check applicants' financial backgrounds for evidence of previous irregularities, which might suggest corrupt practices.

Disciplinary codes and surveillance

Upon joining a company, security officers are informed of their employer's disciplinary codes, which outline professional offences and corresponding penalties.⁴² Penalties include a hearing, a written warning, a final written warning, and dismissal and are categorised along first-, second-, and third-time offences. There is some variation between the companies in this regard; for example, sleeping on duty as a first offence was punished with dismissal by one company and with a written warning by another. However, certain forms of misconduct, such as engagement in criminal activity whilst on duty, assault (physical and verbal) against another reaction officer or a client,

40 Interview: 6 July 2010.

41 See Button (2007), Micucci (1998), Rigakos (2002), South (1988), van Steden (2007), and Wakefield (2003).

42 In fact, employee contracts stipulate that the security officers are aware of and have understood the disciplinary codes.

desertion of one's post, and being under the influence of intoxicating substances whilst on duty, result in immediate dismissal in all companies.

During my fieldwork, I attended numerous disciplinary hearings for reaction officers who had committed offences. Minor matters, such as arriving late on duty, were often dealt with by higher-ranking security officers, but more serious forms of misconduct, such as failing to perform a call-out, were brought directly to management. However, much of the misconduct that I witnessed went unreported, including numerous incidents of alcohol consumption and sleeping whilst on duty, visits to prostitutes, and use of reaction vehicle as taxis.⁴³

One of the most common measures to prevent or detect misconduct is electronic surveillance. Besides cameras, various types of equipment are used to monitor the productivity of a security officer. During one of my strolls around the Securex convention in Johannesburg in June 2008, I arrived at the stand of a company specialising in the sale of such devices.⁴⁴ Their main product was an electronic appliance that obliged guards to "check in" at certain spots along their patrol route to ensure that they were working efficiently. I struck up a conversation with the two white salesmen and politely inquired about their product. The first, younger man told me how the product was designed to counteract "the bad and lazy nature" of the guards, to ensure that "you keep control, that you're getting your money's worth". The second salesman corroborated his colleague's claims and elaborated further:

You see, these guards, these black guys, they need 20 hours sleep in a 24-hour day. They're lazy. They don't want to work, they just want to earn money so they can go home and drink. But the companies pay them to stay awake. What's the point of paying someone to sleep? Now this system helps you with that. You know exactly what the guard is doing. You can check his patrols, how long he takes, anything. So you can catch him. If you need to fire him, you have proof, on paper, that he isn't doing his job properly. It gives managers more power, more power to fire those lazy ones.

Discussing Performer Guard Patrol Systems, a similar electronic surveillance system, Singh (2005, 2008) argues that such mechanisms aim to control the guards' behaviour, eliminate any form of "creative or independent decision making", and "exercises a constant pressure to conform" (Singh 2005: 169).

43 On 25 June 2010, there was an article in the *HighWay Mail*, a regional mailing service covering the Upper Highway area, entitled "Guards run late night taxis-claim". The article discusses a local taxi owner's claim that armed response officers from three different companies were using their vehicles to provide a taxi service R 10 per person. The companies in questions denied the allegation. However, the article does not confirm or refute the taxi owner's claim.

44 Securex is an annual private security convention.

Armed reaction officers are also exposed to numerous forms of surveillance whilst on duty. For example, they are required to use an occurrence book (OB) to record their activities, such as their mileage details, the exact times they receive call-outs and attend the sites, and the number of call slips they leave. Companies with the financial capacity have installed satellite-tracking systems in their vehicles, and a few now boast that they have “live tracking” facilities, which allows them to monitor the location and movement of vehicles in real time. Managers and owners claim that such surveillance methods are intended to help the officers, particularly when clients accuse them of misconduct. For example, if a client asserts that the armed reaction officer was late reaching the premises, the data from the tracking systems can be used to verify or refute this claim. One company owner demands that its reaction officers take photos of the premises they attend in order to prove that they have conducted a perimeter check should accusations be made to the contrary. Managers thus contend that surveillance processes exist to ensure accountability and transparency, to deliver maximum performance to customers, and to protect the reaction officers from clients that make unreasonable claims.

For most private security officers, however, these various forms of surveillance instil a sense that they are untrustworthy and in need of constant monitoring. A black security guard working at a shopping centre described this feeling as follows:

When we start this job, we know that we have to do our best. We know that we are being watched, that the managers are controlling us. Everything we do, we have to write down. There are cameras all around us. I feel that they are watching me all the time, like a dog, like they cannot trust me.⁴⁵

In March 2011, I heard rumours that a few companies were considering installing small cameras inside their vehicles to monitor the armed reaction officers. Several armed reaction officers expressed outrage on this matter. One of them said to me:

They [the companies] doing this because they don't trust us. They want control over us. We already have to keep track of every flippin' thing we do, and now this? So now I can't eat in privacy, talk to my wife on the phone in privacy? I don't think its even legal, something like this. If they do this, I'm out, gone!

Hierarchy and ranking

Hierarchical structures and ranking are also used to cultivate obedience and discipline (Button 2007; Singh 2008; van Steden 2007; Wakefield 2003). According to Rigakos, hierarchical structure in a company establishes “a role model system” and a “distribution system in which officers are ranked by skills, aptitudes, and experience” (2002: 104).

45 Interview: 5 November 2008.

Creating a hierarchy displays to the "lower levels" what is needed to reach the "higher levels", providing the former with goals and incentives.

Although each armed reaction company has a different hierarchical system, they are generally based on dividing up geographical areas that are patrolled by armed reaction officers and managed by area supervisors, who are also referred to as sergeants, lieutenants, or area managers. Managers argue that hierarchy is a normal part of policing and that it determines the quality of the officers' performance. As one white manager stated to me, "You need low-level supervision and low-level command",⁴⁶ implying that a hierarchical structure ensures that everyone is supervised.

Giving award to officers also instils discipline. Singh and Kempa argue that having a system of rewards embedded in a company's modus operandi "helps solidify the self identity/image of the guards as both skilled and compliant" (2007: 308). In most companies, particular acts such as making an arrest are rewarded with prizes, pay increases, and possible promotions, while good performances are also recognised in company newsletters. In one of the companies that I encountered during my fieldwork, the armed reaction officers are evaluated annually to determine their appraisals (additional bonus money). Every year, the "best" armed reaction officers receive an award for their performance at the annual Christmas party. The white armed reaction manager of a large company referred to these rewards as "morale-boosting" mechanisms:

[The aim is] to motivate the guys to keep them here and ensure that they do the job well. You need Christmas parties, awards, and bonuses to ensure high performance, keep them at your company, and boost morale. You've got guys that go the extra mile, that have real passion, but you also have those that just do what the job requires and that's it. I can't punish them for it, but it is my job to motivate them to go that extra mile, keep them on their feet.⁴⁷

The white manager of a medium-sized company told me how his armed reaction officers were financially rewarded for "hard work". The value of these rewards depends on the act:

If the guy goes and arrests a shoplifter, it's not quite the same as a guy that goes out there and saves a woman from being raped. If he does that, he'll probably get a bonus of anything between 800 to 1000 rand... It's to make sure that they see it is a privilege, that hard work pays off.⁴⁸

46 Interview: 17 March 2009.

47 Interview: 9 December 2008.

48 Interview: 22 April 2010.

By being rewarded for these types of activities, officers are encouraged to perform in a particular way (Rigakos 2002). I argue that rewarding arrests encourages a proactive operational style, while not doing so serves to discourage officers from taking certain risks, such as chasing a suspect. Methods of instilling discipline and obedience thus favour certain policing styles over others. But more importantly, disciplinary measures create and consolidate a division between management and operations that influences the occupational culture of the sector, particularly on the ground.

Race and Gender

This section will discuss the influence of gender and race on the divide between management and operations. I argue that the entire armed response sector (re)produces particular masculinities, which unites those working within it. In contrast, issues of race exacerbate the divide.

“A man’s world”

Studies on the occupational culture of the state police have identified a “cult of masculinity” (Brown 2007: 206) as one of its most prominent characteristics. Notions of masculinity and masculine attributes are generally equated with police work and largely influence the identity construction of police officers. Activities associated with policing and security automatically imply a sense of protection and a need to provide safety. This contains a gendered bias, as particular characteristics, such as physical strength, courage, and aggression, are widely regarded as masculine (Brown 2007; Reiner 2000; Westmarland 2001a, 2001b).

This predominance of males and masculinities also plays a large role in shaping the occupational culture of private security. Women are a minority in the private security industry around the world and attributes perceived to be feminine are restrained, discouraged, or even penalised.⁴⁹ Although masculinity is a socially constructed concept (Joachim and Schneiker 2012), it plays a large role in the way the industry portrays itself both to the public and among its constituents. In one of the few specific studies on female employment in the world of private security, Erickson et al. state that 11.7 per cent of the employees in Toronto’s security industry were women, of which 6.5 per cent were involved in the “hard security work” (i.e. non-clerical work) (2000: 300). Additionally, females were more likely to be employed on sites where clients were females or where many females were present, such as hospitals (Erickson et al. 2000). In general, sites

49 See Button (2007), Micucci (1998), Monaghan (2002), Rigakos (2002), Sanders (2005), van Steden (2007), and Wakefield (2003).

perceived to be dangerous are believed to be unfit for women (Erickson et al. 2000; Rigakos 2002).

In South Africa, the security industry is regarded as a "man's world": females are a minority and are completely absent in certain sectors. As was the case at the Armed Reaction Man Competition, I was surrounded by men for most of my fieldwork, and only a few women were included in my research. Whenever I attended events involving management, such as company meetings and gatherings of employers' associations, there were rarely any women present. Women who do work in the industry primarily do so in areas regarded as "safe", such as sales, marketing, training, and the control room.

Among private security officers, females are also a minority. In 2010, there were 67,517 active female registered security officers compared to 319,756 active registered male security officers (i.e. 17.43 per cent).⁵⁰ As security officers, females predominantly work in low-risk divisions, such as retail, special events, and the hotel industry, and they rarely work night shifts. This gender distinction starts at the training schools, where girls are persuaded to select "suitable" courses. During a focus group discussion with training instructors, one of the males said to me:

We don't encourage girls to take armed reaction or cash-in-transit, because they won't find a job. Nobody will hire them. So it's a waste of their time and money. It's too dangerous. Even doing night shift guarding on industrial sites is too risky. Do you think that girls can handle that type of pressure and danger? So we tell them to do retail or control room.⁵¹

During my research, I did not encounter a single female armed reaction officer. Managers repeatedly stated that they have a strict policy of not employing women for such positions. One white company owner informed me that he had employed a female armed reaction officer in the past, but that he had had to let her go as he had felt that he could not guarantee her safety.⁵² As armed reaction officers operate alone in a vehicle, female officers are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence. This distinguishes private from public policing: although females are also a minority in the state police, they routinely operate with a male partner and are therefore less at risk.

When I asked my informants about female armed reaction officers, they laughed and joked about the prospect of women doing their line of work. The informants in Rigakos's (2002: 83) research shared these sentiments and expressed a lack of confidence in the ability of women to do the job, especially when providing backup during dangerous situations. A few of my informants recalled two women who had worked

50 Interview: PSIRA employee, 17 August 2010.

51 Interview: 29 September 2009.

52 Interview: 18 September 2008.

as armed reaction officers in the past, but this pair were not regarded as “real women” because they were “butch”, lesbian, and possessed certain male characteristics. Thus, for many informants, the mere notion of “female” armed reaction officers upsets gender categories, as women should not perform security-related duties, such as climbing over fences, handling firearms, and chasing suspects. These jobs are firmly established in the domain of men.

My male informants’ perception of women as unfit for security work was also extended to me. Gayle, an Indian armed response officer in his early 40s, once asked me, “Tessa, you have the heart of a man – how can you do this and still be a real woman?” For many of my informants, I confounded gender categories and represented an unsolvable mystery: I possessed female characteristics and fulfilled their idea of what it entails to be a woman, yet I also displayed male characteristics simply by doing this research. As a foreigner and never a full participant, I could assume this in-between role and escape local gender categorisations (see chapter two).

The armed reaction sector, and perhaps the industry as a whole, is characterised by a dominant macho sub-culture where masculine attributes are glorified and rewarded. There is an ongoing process of “masculinisation”, which is a “strategy to affirm superiority...by drawing on what are considered accepted and desirable male attributes” (Joachim and Schneiker 2012: 498). If armed response officers possess and display particular masculine attributes, they are praised and rewarded, as was evident during the Armed Reaction Man Competition.⁵³

Furthermore, for many of my informants it seemed that armed response work provided a space in which to exert and emphasise masculine attributes that might need to be minimised or concealed in their private lives. When I asked them what they enjoyed about this line of work, common responses included “here I can be a man” and “here there are no women telling me what to do”. On duty, armed reaction officers continuously compete among each other to demonstrate their “strength” and “toughness”. Cars, guns, and women were the main topics of social conversation. Discussions about sexual performance, sexual encounters, and girlfriends were also very common, with many officers boasting about their performance and capability to “get so many women”. Although some may have initially restrained themselves, many informants openly discussed their sexual experiences either directly with me or in my presence. Additionally, as discussed in chapter two, I feel that my female presence triggered and perhaps heightened the performance of this macho culture and the exhibition of their masculinity.

I therefore argue that the armed response sector is one that applauds masculine attributes. Although women work in this sector, they are a minority and operate in areas

53 Joachim and Schneiker (2012) discuss how private military companies engage in various strategies of masculinisation to differentiate themselves from competitors, mercenaries, and state security forces.

that are perceived as "soft" and "feminine". The dominance of males and the glorification of male qualities strongly shape the occupational culture of the entire armed response world. Companies often operate as "masculinity multipliers" (Joachim and Schneider 2012: 507), in which both managers and operations reproduce masculinities.

"Whites on top and Blacks at the bottom"

Although management and operations are both dominated by males, they are starkly divided by race. This was palpable at the Armed Reaction Man Competition, where management was predominantly white and operations was predominantly non-white. As discussed in chapter three, efforts have been made to address the racial imbalances in the private security industry (particularly around the time of the political transition) in order to increase the amount of non-whites in management. Despite the changes of the past two decades, however, whites continue to occupy the majority of the higher positions and security officers are still predominantly non-white (Abrahamsen and Williams 2007; Singh 2008; Singh and Kempa 2007).⁵⁴ As one white company owner explained, the hierarchy in the industry can be summed up with a simple phrase: "Whites on top and Blacks at the bottom".⁵⁵

Although many armed response officers aim to reach management level, this rarely happens. The highest positions that most of them can attain are those of guarding supervisor or higher-ranking armed reaction officers, such as area managers. In fact, some owners explained how race affected their decisions to promote certain individuals to certain ranks, as the following quote from one white owner reveals:

Only black guys are supervisors, because only they can understand the cultural things. For example, a guard needs time off to go back to his village to slaughter a goat for a ritual, or something like that. See, I don't agree with all that and I don't understand it. But a black guy will understand the importance and work with it. That's why they're in charge for stuff like that. You need to put people in positions that suit them. And a white *oak* isn't gonna fit that position. So I think when there's black guards, you need a black supervisor, and another company with Indian guards will need an Indian supervisor, 'cos they understand each other's ways.⁵⁶

The dominance of non-whites as security officers is most conspicuous at the training schools. During my four weeks of private security training, I was the only white participant. There were no Indians and only one Coloured person; everyone else was

54 Several members of the industry claimed that the majority of black owners are found in the guarding sector and focus on government tenders as opposed to armed response.

55 Interview: 1 September 2010.

56 Interview: 19 September 2008.

Black. A large part of each lesson was taught in isiZulu, and every morning the students gathered for a morning prayer, also in isiZulu. As a white individual, I felt very out of place. This may explain why many whites choose the self-study option, as the following statement from a white security guard reveals:

I first followed a week of training, but I changed to self-study. I didn't want to follow the training. You see, there's only black people at those schools, speaking Zulu all the time, talking about *muthi* and going to *inyangas*,⁵⁷ you know. It's not my world, I don't understand that kind of stuff. It's a different culture. And... the other students, they saw me as this white *larnie*.⁵⁸ They didn't understand why I was doing the training... It didn't feel good, I wasn't a part of it, you know? So I decided to do it on my own.⁵⁹

Within the private security industry, armed reaction is regarded as the most racially diverse sector. Although the majority of armed reaction officers are non-white, one is more likely to encounter a white armed reaction officer than a white security guard. This is primarily because there were very few non-white armed actions officers prior to 1994. As discussed in chapter three, many police officers left the force in the late 1980s and early 1990s to work as reaction officers or to set up "one-man shows", and these men were all white. The armed reaction sector was thus initially a completely white domain in terms of both management and operations. This changed in the mid-1990s, when, as one white company owner explained, it became:

...difficult to find good white guys. Before, they were coming from the police, but now, with armed reaction earning less, this wasn't happening. And we just couldn't find good white guys anymore. So around then, you saw blacks and Indians coming in, particularly blacks. It was a problem, big problem at first, with clients, they didn't want it, but it happened, because we didn't have a choice – it was difficult to find a good white reaction guy. And it still is. They're an absolute minority. It's turned around.⁶⁰

In Durban, where there is a large Indian community, many armed reaction officers are Indian. In 2009, the racial composition of the armed reaction officers of company B, a large company, was 51 per cent Indian, 33 per cent black, 8.3 per cent coloured, and 7.7

57 *Muthi* is a word for traditional medicine used throughout Southern Africa, but the term is often used when referring to spells and forms of witchcraft in general. An *inyanga* is an herbalist or traditional healer.

58 *Larnie* is slang for boss or rich person.

59 Interview: 4 March 2009.

60 Interview: 18 September 2008.

per cent white. Most members of the industry would regard this as very racially diverse; the majority of companies have armed response personnel that are 90-95 per cent black or Indian.

When I asked my informants about the racial composition of armed response officers, some argued that it was random, while others emphasised the word of mouth among certain communities. However, there are some companies that adhere to strict racial recruitment policies. In Johannesburg, I met a white owner who only employed white armed reaction officers in accordance with his clients' demands. In Durban, I interviewed Indian owners who specifically recruited Indians. Similarly, the black owner of a company working primarily in the black townships stated that he only recruited black officers for security reasons, claiming that white and Indian officers would be targeted because they didn't understand "the township ways".⁶¹ Race-based recruitment for this occupation therefore occurs for all races, and although many managers do not openly admit it, clients' racial preferences for armed reaction officers also play a role.

Inter-racial stereotyping by both management and reaction officers is common throughout the industry. It is normal for employees to assume that members of their race are more suited to the risky nature of the job than their colleagues from different backgrounds. White officers claim they are better due to their toughness and the military training many received during apartheid, while black officers assert that the violence in the townships and the struggle against apartheid makes them more capable. Stereotypical comments from white officers, such as "Indian guys can't get the job done – they're too scared", contrast with those of their Indian counterparts, such as "Only Indians can handle this type of pressure; Whites are too weak". This inter-racial stereotyping raises two interesting points. The first is that most officers assume that certain skills and attributes are directly related to race. The second is that all reaction officers, regardless of their race, value the same characteristics and are unified in their understandings of what it means to be a "good" armed reaction officer, namely the link to violence, danger, toughness, and other masculine attributes.

In the armed reaction sector, race plays a key role in distinguishing management from operations. When an armed reaction officer is promoted to a higher rank, such as that of supervisor or area manager, the "race card" is readily played. If a white officer is promoted, for example, it is interpreted by others as evidence of racism, as an attempt to maintain white dominance, and if a black officer is promoted, it is interpreted as a sign of positive discrimination. However, these forms of racial stereotyping do not necessarily influence how they conduct their work alongside each other on the ground. Race does play a large role in their profiling of criminals and how they police the public (see chapter eight), but it does not necessarily affect how they police the streets *together*, as a policing body. Although armed response officers may be socially stratified along

61 Interview: 26 August 2010.

racial lines – Indians socialise with Indians, Blacks with Blacks, and so on – the security they provide is steered by crime, danger, and the need to police efficiently, not by race.

Concluding Remarks

The aim of this chapter has been to analyse the occupational culture of the armed response sector, one of the largest of its kind in the industry, which is widely regarded as “the promising horse”. Like the rest of the industry, the armed response sector operates as an oligopoly in which the “big players” determine rules and standards, particularly with regard to payment and service delivery. Nevertheless, smaller companies, particularly community-based ones, continue to flourish due to their local appeal and ability to maintain a viable “infrastructure base”. Thus, while there is a standard *modus operandi* for delivering armed response, there is also diversity within the sector, with companies working and portraying themselves differently depending on their marketing strategies and policing ideologies.

Yet despite these differences between companies, there are three core issues that define the sector at large. The first is the predominance of males: like the industry as a whole, armed response is regarded as a “man’s world” in which attributes deemed to be feminine are considered unsuitable. The industry (re)produces masculinisation processes that profile the sector as a collective of masculinities. This gives rise to a particular style of policing that cultivates and rewards masculine qualities. And, as will become clear in the following chapter, this places pressure on armed response officers to exhibit particular masculine attributes.

The second key issue is the division between management and operations. Although this distinction may be less stark within community-based companies, where owners tend to be more involved in the operations, hierarchical relations are nonetheless a ubiquitous feature of the sector. The division is generally marked by race, with management being predominantly white and operations predominantly non-white. Once again, this rule does not necessarily apply to community-based companies, as evidenced by the Indian-owned firm whose owners, managers, and armed reaction officers were all Indian. Even in this company, however, most of the security guards, who were “managed” by the armed reaction officers, were black. The security industry is structured according to apartheid-like racial hierarchies. These racial distinctions are obviously a legacy of the apartheid past and the maintenance of this hierarchy reproduces particular understandings of race and often incites feelings of envy, oppression, and mistreatment. “Race cards” are frequently played and influence interactions within a company. However, although race plays a fundamental role in how armed response officers police the public, as is discussed further in chapter eight, it does not influence how armed reaction officers police the streets as a company, together.

In addition to race, the armed response sector is defined by various mechanisms of surveillance for instilling obedience. Companies employ numerous strategies to ensure that armed response officers are "good" and "do as they're told". This reveals a degree of suspicion on the part of the company owners, who feel they need to control their employees' behaviour. For management, then, surveillance measures are conceived as "a part of the policing game". For operations, however, they are perceived as coercive and oppressive, and the racial differences between management and operations deepen their difference of opinion.

These three features of the sector cultivate an occupational culture that encourages armed response officers to operate in public spaces. Given the diversity of the sector, I do not claim that all reaction officers always engage in twilight policing practices. However, I contend that, as a sector, particular attributes are collectively cultivated that promote punitive, disciplinary, and exclusionary policing practices. Although the performance of twilight policing primarily emerges through local security networks comprising other actors, such as clients and state police officers, the occupational culture of the armed response sector plays a significant role in determining how armed response officers police the streets.

More importantly, the occupational culture encourages practices whereby the sector at large mimics the state police both operationally and symbolically. Although there are many similarities between the private security industry and the state police as a whole, as discussed by Loyens (2009), I argue that these similarities are more prevalent in the armed response sector. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, response officers are armed men who patrol communities; they are not security guards who stand outside shopping malls. With firearms and vehicles resembling those of the state police, they are reproducing particular notions of statehood and transmitting these to the public. Secondly, the sector was founded by former police officers who operated "one-man shows" inspired by the mentality and strategies of the state police. Although the movement of state police personnel into the sector is diminishing and the industry is increasingly "cut-throat", in which competition and profit-making have come to overshadow policing methods, I claim that reproducing particular notions of statehood still dominates the armed reaction sector and will perhaps be accentuated in the near future as demands for a return to "old school" policing tactics become more vociferous.

5

“Wanna-be Policemen”:

Being an Armed Response Officer

Introduction

December 2008

I was visiting Thomas, a dear friend of mine, in one of Durban’s townships. We were standing against his car outside his mother’s house, listening to some tunes and shooting the breeze over a few *Black Labels*¹. As the night progressed, more and more of Thomas’s friends joined us and talked turned to how my research was coming along. Thomas and his friends readily disclosed their opinions about private security, namely, that it was for rich people or those that couldn’t look after themselves properly. However, their views also contained an underlying sense of contempt and envy, because, as they eventually admitted, if they had the financial means, they would install alarms and employ security guards in a heartbeat.

As the conversation proceeded and I started to analyse their words, it became evident that their ideas about and experiences of private security were in absolute contrast to those of my friends in the suburbs. The stories coming out of suburbia were of sleeping guards, irritating car guards, and armed reaction officers who arrived too late after they’d been robbed at gunpoint. Although such accounts and sentiments were not foreign to my township acquaintances, they were not the first things that came to minds when they thought about private security. It was not the stories of the consumers that they converse; rather, it was the stories of the workers, the men on the ground who perform security. It was in the townships that the experiences of the security officers were narrated, because it was here that the majority of them resided.

We talked all night about being a security officer: the training, the long hours, the poor pay, the suspicious clients, the dangerous sites, and the professional hierarchies. The vicious and underhand aspects of the industry permeated their accounts: not being paid after months of hard work; working for “fly-by-nights”, companies that simply vanish into thin air after only a few weeks; criminals offering bribes to look the other way; and managers yelling at them after falling asleep on duty. They told me that for many, it was a shameful job – not one to be proud of, but one with prospects. I then asked the most obvious question: so why do you do it? As I had expected, there was one common answer: “I needed a job”.



¹ Black Label is a brand of beer in South Africa.

In South Africa, security officers do not have a great reputation. As will become clear throughout the remaining chapters, they are often distrusted and suspected of misconduct. When I told people about my research, they frequently made condescending remarks about private security officers and voiced concern that I was placing myself in constant danger by working with such “useless idiots” and “criminals”. Other studies present similar findings, with the occupation commonly “depicted as unappealing and so marginally paid that it fails to attract the cleverest workers” (van Steden 2007: 94).²

The aim of this chapter is to provide a description of the lives of armed reaction officers and the main issues that play a role in their line of work. The previous chapter looked at the different companies that comprise the armed response sector, their various policing styles, the forms of discipline and surveillance they implement, and the part played by race and gender in shaping the occupational cultural of this line of work. In this chapter, I will look more closely at the lives, motivations, backgrounds, and perspectives of the reaction officers.

The first objective of this chapter is to examine how reaction officers view the social, cultural, and organisational aspects of their work and their position within the sector and the industry as a whole. The second aim is to show how armed response officers define themselves in relation to other security officers and the state police. I will demonstrate that armed response officers strongly differentiate themselves from other types of security officers based on different training levels, wages, and the nature of their work. But more importantly, I will show how armed response officers associate themselves with the state police, which further explains why and how armed response officers are increasingly policing the public realm.

“Just a Job” and “Criminals in Uniform”

The literature on private security officers has suggested various categorisations of such workers based on their motivations and the type of security they provide.³ Livingstone and Hart (2003), for example, distinguish between the Watchman, the Gangster, and the Hired Gun. Michael (2002, in Button 2007: 168) makes reference to the casual, the time server, the uniformed pensioner, and the police wannabe. McLeod’s (2002) typology comprises the nightwatchman, the guards with blazers, and the parapolicers, while Miccui (1998) speaks of the crime fighters, the guards, and the bureaucratic cops. Each classification is different, and none can be applied directly to South Africa. Nevertheless,

2 See Button (2007), Rigakos (2002), Thumala et al. (2011), van Steden (2007), and Wakefield (2003).

3 See Franke and van Boemcken (2011) for an analysis of the motivations of individuals working for private military companies.

they all point to a particular spectrum of security officers, which ranges from low-skilled employees who are in the industry because they have few (or no) other options at one end, to skilled and dedicated security officers at the other.

In South Africa, the public and members of the industry tend to use three main labels to describe private security officers: the “just a job” officer, the “criminal in uniform”, and the “wannabe policemen”. Given the diversity of private security officers in South Africa, applying one label would be reductive. For many of my friends in the townships, security work is “just a job”. The demand is always there, and as the following sections will demonstrate, it is a low-level entry occupation. Yet it is not an occupation that generally commands respect.⁴ As a white guarding manager once said to me, “The people in security, they are the drakes of society, people who can’t seem to find a job end up in the private security industry. It’s the last option... And this is all over the world, not just South Africa.”⁵

There are five general types of security officers in South Africa: car guards, security guards, national key point protection officers, armed reaction officers, and cash-in-transit officers.⁶ These five types constitute a security officer hierarchy, with car guards at the bottom and cash-in-transit officers at the top. The strata of this hierarchy reflect different types and levels of motivations, training, and wages. Armed reaction officers occupy the second highest position on the ladder; they are higher than security guards but fall behind cash-in-transit officers on account of the greater risk associated with this form of work.

The “just a job” reputation is common among car guards and security guards. During my security training, the majority of my classmates were completing the process simply to be able to get a job and did not see it as the start of a career. Becoming a security guard was for them an end in itself; only a very few aimed to move further up the ladder to the level of armed response or cash-in-transit. This mentality was confirmed during my interviews with car guards and security guards, for whom their work was simply a means of “getting by” and “paying the bills”. Although there are also armed reaction officers who started with the mentality of “just getting a job”, entering the armed reaction sector is a more time-consuming and costly affair, as it demands more skills and training, such as firearm competency. A likely scenario is that an individual starts as a security guard and slowly works his way up to armed reaction.

The second and perhaps more ubiquitous reputation of security officers is that they are “criminals in uniform”. Whenever a crime takes place, security officers are the first to be blamed. Although such suspicion applies to all private security officers, its degree and

4 See Button (2007), Kakalik and Wildhorn (1971), South (1988), Thumala et al. (2011), and Wakefield (2003).

5 Interview: 31 March 2009.

6 This thus excludes other security officers, such as bodyguards, bouncers, and private investigators, who are often seen as separate since they undergo different types of security training.

intensity is dependent on the officer's position in the security hierarchy; car guards, for example, are mistrusted substantially more than cash-in-transit officers. In South Africa, this suspicion is not entirely unfounded – security officers are regularly convicted of engaging in criminal activity, both on and off duty. It is for this reason that PSIRA conducts a criminal record check for each prospective employee.

When a security officer has completed his/her training, the next step is to register with PSIRA, who will ascertain whether the individual meets the necessary requirements,⁷ a process that takes between six and eight weeks. Once the registration is complete and a registration number given to the security officer, he/she is viable for employment.⁸ During the criminal record check, a distinction is made between the types of crime committed; less serious crimes are sometimes overlooked, while those convicted of Schedule One offences are immediately disqualified.⁹ In 2010-2011, PSIRA refused almost 12,000 applications from individuals who were guilty of a “disqualifiable criminal offence” (31).¹⁰ Refused applications can be appealed, however; in 2010-2011, 1,348 appeals were made against the Authority's refusal to register or withdraw a security service provider.¹¹ For example, a female controller I knew had originally had her application denied because of her criminal record: as a teenager, she had broken into her parents' house, and to teach her a lesson, they had laid a criminal charge against her. However, the applicant was able to gather recommendation letters and references to support her claim that she had changed. PSIRA eventually granted her registration.

Despite PSIRA's evaluation and additional police checks conducted by the companies, there are some security officers with a criminal past who are able to enter the industry undetected and commit certain crimes after registration. Between 2010 and 2011, 168 registrations were withdrawn due to the individual concerned being convicted of a criminal offence after registration. If we compare this to the 12,000 dismissals prior to

7 The individual must have permanent resident status in South Africa, be mentally sound, be at least 18 years old, have completed the necessary training requirements, have not been found guilty of an offence within a period of 10 years before the submission of the application, and have not been found guilty of improper conduct in terms of the Private Security Industry Regulation Act within a period of five years prior to the submission of the application. In order to register with PSIRA, the prospective officer must fill out an application form at a PSIRA office and send this, together with an authenticated copy of an official identity document, a photograph, a complete set of fingerprints, an official clearance certificate from the police, and the necessary training certificates, to the head office in Pretoria, where the checks are performed and the applications processed. The registration fee in 2009 was R 84.58.

8 The sequence in which this occurs differs. For example, a security officer may first complete his grade D training and find employment, and then complete the training for grade C after a few months. He will then have to reregister his new certificate and training level with PSIRA.

9 Examples of Schedule One offences are sabotage, arson, malicious damage to property, fraud, murder, rape, robbery, kidnapping, and extortion.

10 The PSIRA Annual Reports do not provide further information on the exact amount and types of crimes that lead to the refusal of applications.

11 Of these 1,348 appeals, 851 were dismissed and 497 were upheld.

registration, we can conclude that dismissal for criminal activity after registration is uncommon. In several cases, companies turn a blind eye to past criminal activities. In February 2009, I crewed with Barry, an Indian reaction officer in his late 20s, who told me about his criminal past as a (unconvicted) drug dealer. Apparently he had informed his employers about his past, but they had been willing to give him a fresh start. Towards the end of my fieldwork, however, Barry, who was still working as an armed reaction officer, had started dealing drugs again. Several other reaction officers admitted to being involved in drug dealing, illegal gambling, fraud, theft, and other crimes. This criminal activity was generally conducted outside their work and was not connected to their occupation.

The reputation of private security officers as “criminals in uniform” is based less on their own involvement in crime than on their possible connections to criminals whom they meet while on duty. When certain crimes take place in South Africa, particular those closely related to the work of private security such as theft, most people’s initial suspicion is that it was an “inside job”.¹² All employees are considered potential insiders, but security officers are the first to be suspected, since their low wages are perceived to make them more susceptible to bribes and corruption. Since most of the security officers live in the townships, areas widely regarded to be home to criminals; collaborative efforts are seen as eminently feasible (see chapter eight). Although members of the industry and the wider public generally condemn this, it is not unusual to hear statements such as “The guy earns nothing – I can understand why he would accept a few extra R100”.

Collaborating with criminals is more difficult in the armed reaction sector, since this would require the coordination of numerous individuals (e.g. controllers, technicians, officers) from the three departments that make up a company. I heard a few stories of armed response officers working with criminals to stage an armed robbery or some other type of crime, but I did not see any evidence of this during my fieldwork. However, I did know of seven reaction officers who were dismissed for engaging in criminal activity, most commonly stealing from clients or the company.

“Wanna-be Policemen”

As should now be apparent, the “just a job” and “criminals in uniform” labels are not entirely unfounded. Although I identified these labels in the armed response sector, I

12 The term “inside job” refers to any criminal act that occurs with the assistance of someone on the “inside”, such as a security officer or domestic worker. This entails that they are working on the “inside”, have particular connections to the site or building. Inside jobs are quite common in South Africa and tend to be the first line of enquiry for many crimes, particularly robberies. Although all inside jobs involve some level of insider information (e.g. how to gain access to a building), this may be provided unintentionally. For example, a domestic worker may innocently tell her neighbours and friends that her boss is out of town, not knowing that this information may be passed on to others.

argue that armed response officers can best be described as “wanna-be policemen”. This description is assigned to them by the general public and is a means in which armed response officers describe themselves.

Many studies have shown how working as a security officer is an opportunity to gain the experience and expertise necessary for eventual employment in a public law enforcement division (Button 2003; Manzo 2009; Rigakos 2002; Wakefield 2003). Indeed, the majority of the armed reaction officers I met during my time in Durban initially wanted to be policemen. Kenny’s experience was fairly typical:

Every since I was a child, I wanted to be a police officer. I always loved the action, you know, fighting and catching the bad guys. I tried to enter the force, but it didn’t work, ’cos they didn’t want Indians back then.¹³ So I became armed reaction. It’s not the same, but it’s close. It was the closest thing at the time. I still feel like I’m experiencing that thrill, you know. And that I’m helping people, that I’m doing my part to fight crime and protecting people from the bad guys. And eventually, I’m quite happy about it really. I would never become a policeman now, hell no.¹⁴

Many reaction officers describe fighting crime as a passion and a “lifestyle”. Michael left the industry to work in a call centre, where he earned double the money for half the hours. Yet within six months he was back working in armed response, which he explained as follows: “It is my dream to fight crime, to catch the criminals...so although I was earning more and living more of a normal life back there, I wasn’t happy. This work, it kept calling me back. This here, this is what I must do with my life.”¹⁵ This passion to fight crime is particularly prevalent among those who have experienced cases of violent crime themselves. Frank, a senior Indian armed response officer in his late 40s, was one example:

About ten years ago, I was running a taxi for a while, and one day, four guys came in as passengers, but as soon as I drove off, they pulled out their guns and held up all of us, the passengers and me. They put a gun to my head, robbed all the passengers of their possessions and started throwing them out of the taxi while I was driving, even a pregnant woman... When all the passengers were out, they made me stop by the road. They forced me out of the taxi, beat me

13 The reasons given by armed reaction officers for their not being accepted into the public police are often racially tinted. Non-whites allege that they were not allowed to join the force during apartheid on account of their race. Non-blacks (Indians, Coloured, and Whites), meanwhile, claim that affirmative action policies introduced during the post-apartheid era have dented their chances of joining the force.

14 Interview: 20 November 2008.

15 Interview: 11 May 2010.

all over, and tied me up. For a long time, they discussed about whether to kill me or not. They decided no, because of the noise... So they poured petrol over me, dumped me into a garbage bin and set it on fire. And they drove off, left me there to die. The bin was moist and wet, so I escaped and survived. But you can see the scars [he points out the numerous scars on his body]. The next week I started the security training. I decided then: this country is going to hell with the crime, and it is my role, as a citizen, to do something about it.¹⁶

As discussed in the previous chapter, many private security companies encourage a proactive policing style, and this, I argue, promotes a “wanna-be policemen” mentality among reaction officers. In order to understand this process, one must consider the historical background of the armed response sector. The “one-man shows” of the 1980s, of which the vast majority were operated by ex-policemen, portrayed themselves as men who wanted to fight crime and protect their community. Others described them as men who went “out of their way” to go “the extra mile”. This description is linked to a policing style that is often referred to as “old school”, a more oppressive form of policing steered by the “*skop, skiet en donder*” attitude that prevailed under apartheid rule (see chapter three). Since its practitioners were white reaction officers, “old school” policing also contained a racial dimension. According to a white female controller who had been in the industry for many years, the situation was better in the past:

I don't mean to be racist, but it was more fun with the white guys. They used to chase cars on the highway, really go after it. Now they don't do that anymore. When their shift is up, they stop, no matter what's going on at that time. It's just different. No heart, no passion. The old school style has gone, which is sad.¹⁷

“Old school” therefore refers to particular policing practices and due to its association with apartheid, it also refers to the racial identities of the individuals engaged in these practices.

Since the term “old school” policing refers to a period some 20 years ago, many of those involved in it are now at least in their early 40s. As elsewhere, the majority of security officers in South Africa are between 20 and 40 years old (Button 2007; Rigakos 2002; van Steden 2007; Wakefield 2003). According to PSIRA regulations, all private security officers must be at least 18 years old. In the armed response sector, the minimum age for officers is 21 on account of certain legal stipulations regarding the use of firearms in South Africa, as outlined in the Firearms Control Act 60 of 2000 (Berg 2003: 190).

16 Interview: 22 July 2010. This armed reaction officer also works voluntarily as a police reservist.

17 Interview: 21 November 2008.

Young and inexperienced officers are called *rookies*, and those above a certain age who lack the requisite physical stamina are referred to as an *ouman*.¹⁸

Armed response officers in their early 40s or older, who experienced “old school” policing practices, are therefore a minority. Brian, who had been working in the sector since the early 1990s, explained this difference of age and time period during one of our conversations in November 2008:

Brian: The old school guys, we have passion for this work. We saw how it was back then: this work was more intense; gun laws were different... Everybody knew each other; we were friends, no matter which company you worked for. But now it's different, these new guys are different.

Me: Are there other differences between the new and old guys?

Brian: Hell yeah! Man, the new guys, they are lazy. Lazy. For them, this job is classy, they just like to drive around and look cool, like they got game. They lack the passion, that drive to go further...

Me: And why do you think that is?

Brian: Because the industry has just changed. Back in the day, there weren't many of us, so we really had to fight for it. There was more crime, and well, the streets were different then, they were rougher, and security, we could do more. But now it's like, we drive a car, we cool, you know? It's more about money and looking good than wanting to catch criminals... So when the shit goes down, I rely on the old schoolers, 'cos I know they're good back-up.

Brian's explanation highlights how “old school” policing practices are no longer deemed to be as important by those in the armed response sector. At the same time, there is also evidence that the public is increasingly demanding a return to “old school” policing practices. I therefore argue that the legacies of “old school” policing continue to shape the armed response sector. For most armed response officers, then, it is not “just a job”; rather, their main motivation for entering the sector is fighting crime.

“A Doctor and a Dentist”

The armed response officers' passion for fighting crime further explains why most of them associate themselves with state police officers rather than other types of security personnel, as Nick explained to me:

18 *Ouman* is an Afrikaans term meaning “old man”.

A lot of people see us like they see policemen: someone that puts his life on the line for you; someone you treat with respect. Someone you should take seriously. But a security guard doesn't get that. People see him as someone that just stands there at a place and doesn't really do anything. He's useless. We are not security guards; there is a really big difference.¹⁹

In fact, many armed reaction officers are insulted when people refer to them as security guards. The South African term *umantshingelani* (isiZulu for "marching the line") is a derogatory word for security officers that is used to express disrespect and contempt.²⁰ Armed response officers are especially insulted by this term, as they feel that they are "worlds apart" from security guards.

This distinction between armed response officers and other types of security workers is made not only by the reaction officers themselves but also by the industry as a whole. According to several of my informants, guarding and armed response have always been two separate worlds: they are like "a doctor and a dentist".²¹ The white former owner of an armed reaction company described this division as follows:

The industry is pretty much split. It has always been like that. I mean, the security guards guard property, are paid a pittance, but the reaction guys, they have guns, drive around in vehicles, and they earn much better. There is a difference in calibre, with the reaction guy having more training, more skills... Armed reaction and guarding were always separate things. Now you've got companies that are doing both, so it seems connected, but they're not.²²

The following sections will discuss two important factors that distinguish armed reaction from guarding, namely, training and wages.

"We can do much more"

Across the industry, members complained about the poor quality of the security training and claimed that this was the main reason for the negative reputation of security officers. Similar low standards of training have been reported in other studies of security work (Button 2007; Manzo 2004; van Steden 2007; Wakefield 2003). For example, Hobbs et

19 Interview: 19 November 2008.

20 Although several informants confirmed this spelling of *umantshingelani*, the term may be spelt differently elsewhere.

21 Interview: white owner of an armed response and guarding company, 1 September 2010.

22 Interview: 30 June 2010. This interviewee further argued that this difference between guarding and armed response is most palpable when security guards strike in protest at labour conditions, such as wages. During these strikes, guards sometimes attack reaction officers, since the latter do not protest alongside them.

al. assert that the training for bouncers in the United Kingdom is a “short, awareness-raising programme rather than comprehensive occupational training”, and that due to fierce competition, the schools (and companies) are forced to stick to a “minimum standard of learning” (2002: 365).

After completing the training in October 2008 and visiting other training facilities throughout my fieldwork, I believe that the poor standards identified by other scholars also applies to South Africa. Despite the differences between the 530 accredited training centres (PSIRA 2010-2011), the quality of the security training is generally poor. In addition, cheating among students is widespread, instructors readily accept bribes from students, certificates are often falsified, and it seemed that many participants had simply memorised what was taught to them without actually understanding it.²³ Yet perhaps this is not so surprising. There are few formal requirements for those wishing to undergo training, and these are often not checked. The training is inexpensive (completing grades E, D, and C cost approximately R 700 rand in 2009) and thus attracts many individuals who fit the “just a job” profile.²⁴

Originally, the Security Officers’ Board (SOB) Training Regulations formulated the training standards of the private security industry (Berg 2003). When the SOB transformed into PSIRA in 2001, the training standards were also transferred, but PSIRA was increasingly criticised by security employees for failing to inspect the training schools in an efficient manner. PSIRA officials also expressed disdain towards the schools where false certificates, inadequate training facilities, and unaccredited instructors were recurring problems. As one senior inspector put it, “The training centres, they are a nightmare!”²⁵ The tribulations were so enormous that regulating the training sector came to overshadow the regulation of the entire industry.

On 4 July 2005, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between PSIRA and the Safety and Security Sector Education and Training Authority (SASSETA) stating that the latter would take over regulation of security training.²⁶ Since then,

23 When asked to comment about the poor quality of the security training, many informants cited the session on “personal hygiene”, in which students are informed to wash their hands before meals and to brush their teeth on a daily basis.

24 Throughout my research period, the training standards, qualifications, and regulations were under transformation. This section thus concerns the conditions from 2008-2010 and excludes changes that were implemented after 2010.

25 Interview: 18 August 2008.

26 SASSETA is a branch of the South African Qualification Authority (SAQA), a government body responsible for determining the standards for all qualifications. Under SAQA, there are several different SETAs (Sector Education Training Authority), each of which focuses on a different industry or trade. SASSETA is the Safety and Security SETA, encompassing the police services, the correctional services, the national defence force, the legal services, intelligence, and the private security industry. SASSETA is the result of the amalgamation of the POLSEC SETA (Police, Private Security, Correctional Services, Legal and Justice Sector Education and Training Authority) and the DIDTETA (Diplomacy, Intelligence, Defence and Trade Education and Training Authority).

SASSETA has been responsible for inspecting and accrediting the training schools and instructors, ensuring the legitimacy of the certifications, and recognising prior learning to those who have already had the training.²⁷ PSIRA's sole involvement is to ensure that individuals registering to work in the industry possess the correct certificates (Taljaard 2008: 91).²⁸ The transfer of the training regulation from PSIRA to SASSETA has been welcomed throughout the industry. Nevertheless, the inadequacy of the security training continues to attract criticism and is therefore currently being redesigned. In 2008, when I went through the training, it was divided into five different skill levels, from "grade E", the lowest, to "grade A", the highest.²⁹ The training for each level comprised a week of schooling and the acquisition of further skills. The ranking system creates a series of unified strata within the industry, such that a grade E security officer in company A possesses the same skills as a grade E security officer in company B, and so on.³⁰ For armed reaction officers, the minimum entry requirement is a grade C certificate combined with additional armed reaction training.³¹ The additional training introduces the essentials of armed reaction: crime scene management, dealing with "strangers" on clients' premises, handling victims, issuing statements, and participating in court procedures. Additionally, armed reaction officers must have a driver's license and a firearm license.³²

On top of the instruction provided at the training centres, many companies provide their own supplementary in-house training, which primarily focuses on the guidelines of that specific company.³³ Several companies also have their own courses. BLUE Security, for example, runs an additional biannual armed response training session

27 This refers to individuals who transfer to private security companies from a related field, such as state policing.

28 The plan for the near future is to attach a unique chip or sticker into each certificate to eliminate the problem of photocopied certificates (Interview: member of the board of the Security Industry Alliance (SIA), 8 April 2009, Johannesburg).

29 Grade E was jettisoned in September 2010 as part of a new Sectorial Wage Determination Act. However, as Grade E existed when I underwent security training, it is included in this analysis.

30 Grade E is the starting level, and a grade E security officer is a "patrol officer". Grade D is the next level and bestows the title of "access control officer". Grade C, the third level, provides the title "asset protection officer". Although it is also possible to undertake grades B and A, which confer the titles of "security first line supervisor" and "security supervisor", respectively, the majority of students finish their training after attaining grade C. Grades A and B are needed if one wishes to work as a supervisor or to establish one's own company.

31 SAIDSA provides training manuals for its members and many informants regard these manuals to be the most professional in the country.

32 At the time of my research, the firearm training took between one and two weeks and cost R 800-1500.

33 In-house security training is the precursor of security training as it exists today. Some larger companies still operate their own training centres, which are accredited by SASSETA. One example is ENFORCE, one of the largest guarding companies in Durban. Although ENFORCE hires security officers who have completed training elsewhere, these individuals must undergo a three-day company induction to refresh their general security skills and to familiarise themselves with the rules and regulations of the company (Interview: former training manager at ENFORCE Security, 15 November 2007).

called Hellgate, which includes shooting exercises, vehicle chase/driving courses, obstacles courses, and house protection and entering exercises. Participants are also given additional legal training and take part in an array of teambuilding exercises. Furthermore, most companies implement a type of “peer training”. When armed reaction officers are first recruited, they must undergo a trial period by riding along with senior personnel before being allowed to operate their own vehicles. During this trial period, the officers get a firsthand perspective of the occupation and are taught about the rules and requirements of the company in question.

The structure of private security training is based on, and further creates, a hierarchy of security officers in which armed response officers and security guards are placed in different categories. This reinforces the prevailing mentality among reaction officers that “we can do much more”.

“We’re not graphing for the money”³⁴

Training levels also determine wage rates. Figure 6 presents the monthly salary rates of security officers from 2009 and 2012, as stipulated by the Department of Labour.³⁵ The poor reputation of security officers is largely driven by the low wages (Button 2007; Manzo 2006; Micucci 1998; Rigakos 2002; van Steden 2007). Let us compare these wages rate to those of other sectors in South Africa. In 2012, domestic workers (i.e. housekeepers, gardeners, and drivers) working more than 27 hours per week had a minimum hourly rate of R 8.95, resulting in a monthly salary of at least R 1,746.³⁶ That same year, employees in the hospitality sector had an hourly rate of R 11.49 and a monthly rate of R 2240.6.³⁷ Low-level security officers (grades E and D) therefore earn more than domestic workers but less than those in the hospitality sector, yet security officers also work longer hours.

Figure 6 does not show the wage rates for armed reaction officers, since these are determined not by the Department of Labour but by the companies themselves.³⁸ However, as reaction officers are required to have completed the grade C level of training, their monthly wage must be at least R 2,691. Considering that they would also have completed the armed response and firearm training, they have additional skills that are likely reflected in their wages, which further distinguishes them from other security officers.

34 “Graph” is slang for work.

35 This chapter uses the 2009 rates, since these were in effect during my fieldwork.

36 Source: <http://m.mywage.co.za/main/salary/minimum-wages/domestic-workers-wages>.

37 This applies to employers with 10 or less employees.

See: <http://www.mywage.co.za/main/salary/minimum-wages/hospitality>.

38 I repeatedly asked informants why this was the case, but nobody was able to provide an explanation. “That’s just how it is” was the recurrent answer.

Figure 6: Monthly Salary Rates for Security Officers in South Africa³⁹

Grade Level	Monthly rate 2009	Hourly rate 2009	Monthly rate 2012	Hourly rate 2012
Car guards	R 2,024	R 10.38	NA	NA
Grade E	R 2,101	R 10.10	NA	NA
Grade D	R 2,195	R 10.55	R 2,519	R 12.11
Grade C	R 2,367	R 11.38	R 2,691	R 12.94
Grade B	R 2,887	R 13.88	R 3,211	R 15.44
Grade A	R 3,334	R 16.03	R 3,658	R 17.59

Source: PSIRA website (www.psira.co.za)

Armed reaction officers generally earn between R 3,000 and 8,000 per month, depending on their rank and employer. Each company has an entry-level wage of around R 3,000-4,000 per month. Monthly wages increase the longer one works for a company and when one is promoted to a higher rank. The lowest monthly salary I encountered was R 3,000, while the highest (earned by a higher-ranking officer with 18 years of experience) was R 8,100.⁴⁰ These monthly salaries contain a “bonus incentive” of between R 200 and 600 that armed response officers receive if they perform well. However, if they perform poorly, such as by arriving late on duty, an amount is deducted from this bonus as a penalty. If a company owner states that the reaction officers earn R 6,000, this means that they earn about R 5,600 per month with a R 400 bonus incentive that they may or may not receive. The wages of armed response officers have decreased substantially since the 1980s and early 1990s, when armed response officers earned more than their counterparts in the state police. As the sector expanded and the demand for reaction officers grew, however, salaries fell rapidly.⁴¹

Since the armed response sector is effectively an oligopoly, wages are generally the same for all companies, and if one of the “big players” increases their wages, the rest tend to follow. Where there is divergence, though, even a slight difference in wages can motivate a reaction officer to move from one company to another. In some rare cases, however, officers choose to work for a lower wage in a small company where they feel more appreciated, as was true for Kenny:

39 In the wage determination, there is a geographical demarcation of four different areas, with rates being higher in the urban areas. These rates refer to Area 1, which covers the Magisterial District where Durban is situated. The rates for 2012 were in effect from 1 September 2011 to 31 August 2012. Figure 6 also shows that grade E was non-existent in 2012.

40 As mentioned in chapter two, many managers lied about the wages they paid to their armed reaction officers in the forms I had requested them to fill in. I realised this after seeing the payslips of numerous reaction officers.

41 Many claim that this is a reason why most Whites left the industry.

I can go and work for one of those big companies; they've asked me to come over before. But I like it here. I'm not a number. I know the boss, the big man, personally. If I need something, I just ask him, and don't have to talk to four levels of management before I get there. Yes, we *graph* more here, money is less, fewer days off, but it's the personal connection that does it.⁴²

Although reaction officers earn substantially more than other security officers, the wages are not their main motivation to work in this sector. Many continually complained about their salaries and several stated that, "we're not graphing for the money". This dissatisfaction with their salaries is exacerbated by additional financial difficulties associated with their occupation. The first concerns the equipment. Although PSIRA stipulates that companies must provide uniforms and necessary gear, the reality is that many reaction officers are forced to buy their own equipment, such as batons, jackets, and bulletproof vests. These are generally paid for in instalments deducted from the officers' salaries. The second financial setback concerns the lack of overtime pay and the need to attend work-related events, such as court appearances and company meetings, on their days off.

The third and largest setback concerns the costs that "come with the job", such as speeding tickets and bail money, which most armed response officers feel should be paid by the companies, not by them. For example, if an officer receives notification that a client may be in danger, he will race over to the client's premises and will thus risk getting a speeding ticket. Officers claim that this is a Catch-22, for if they fail to arrive at this premises promptly they are likely to be penalised for not assisting the client properly. In turn, owners and managers claim that reaction officers are too reckless and "behave like idiots on the road". Indeed, during the driving section of the Armed Reaction Man Competition, several managers mocked them for operating the vehicle like "Driving Miss Daisy", which, they emphasised, was not what happened on the ground, where they "race away in those cars". In fact, several managers cited vehicle costs as their largest financial strain. One Indian manager of a medium-sized company claimed to have spent R 1.8 million on vehicle repairs in 2008-2009.⁴³ Managers argue that insurance policies cover such costs if a reaction officer is not at fault, but this is disputed by reaction officers, who claim that the costs are always deducted from their salaries.⁴⁴ For many reaction officers, the situation is so dire that they are in major debt to their employers. I met several officers who had debts of between R 10,000 and 30,000,

42 Interview: 26 May 2010.

43 Interview: 9 March 2009.

44 In most employee contracts, it is stipulated that reaction officers must pay costs incurred through their negligence.

which would take them the rest of their lives to pay off. Some jokingly stated that they had become "silent partners" in the company.⁴⁵

It is primarily for this reason that many reaction officers actively seek additional sources of income. In November 2008, I went on a day shift with Gayle that began with a visit to a business client who had been robbed during the night. Having only been on duty for a couple of weeks, I was surprised to see Gayle transform into a sales agent and technical expert. He started by explaining to the client why the criminals had been able to rob his business and what was lacking in terms of security appliances, and he then outlined an array of extra equipment the client *needed* to ensure this wouldn't happen again. Gayle was convincing: the client listened intently and eventually purchased some of the equipment that Gayle had recommended. When we got back into the car, Gayle had a massive grin on his face. Initially I thought he was just happy about his performance, but then he explained that if the client went through with the purchase, he would get a percentage of the payment.

Receiving commission from the acquisition of new clients or the installation of additional equipment is one of the most common ways for armed response officers to earn supplementary income while on duty.⁴⁶ For some reaction officers, this source of income is crucial, and they will go to great lengths to try to win over new clients. This is increasingly so with collective clients, where reaction officers actively encourage other community members to switch over (see chapter seven). Another source of income stems from informal ties with other businesses, such as tow trucking companies and vehicle repair shops. Armed reaction officers strike deals with such companies in order to receive a margin of their earnings. However, the larger the security company, the more likely it is to have established its own contractual agreements with particular service providers.

The most common way for reaction officers to earn additional income is by moonlighting.⁴⁷ "Moonlighting" is a generic term; some in the industry use it to refer to any form of work that officers engage in outside their working hours, while others apply it only to security-related work conducted off duty. Many of the armed reaction officers

45 Focus group discussion: 13 August 2010.

46 Each company has a different policy with regard to the level of commissions. One large company gave its reaction officers the amount of one monthly premium if they signed up a new client, while another, small company offered a percentage of the technical instalment package. Many companies also allow sales reps to make their own deals with reaction officers. Although an attractive source of income, I witnessed several cases where reaction officers claimed to have been cheated by sales reps. In February 2009, I ran into Keith, an Indian armed response officer in his 30s. He was furious at a sales rep for not paying him the right commission; he even threatened to resign from the company. He felt used by the sales rep and described the situation as management versus operations; from his viewpoint, sales reps were on the side of the management and took advantage of the reaction officers.

47 In chapter six, moonlighting refers to police officers who are engaged in security practices off duty. Here, however, it refers to armed reaction officers who are engaged in security work.

I knew were involved in other businesses, often with family members. Matthew, an Indian officer in his 40s, worked with his family selling food products at local markets, while William assisted his wife in her retail business. Manual labour, such as tiling, was another common source of income. The general rule employed by most companies is that reaction officers must report any off-duty work activities to their managers, who will then decide whether these are permissible, as the following statement from a white operations manager of a medium-sized company highlights:

If a guy helps his wife on a Sunday selling fruits and vegetable, or is doing some construction work, I've got no problem with that. If it doesn't interfere with his work here and he tells me about it, I'm fine. The problem is when it does affect their work for us, when he's got clients that are our clients, or when he's showing up to work exhausted. And the big problem comes when he's doing security work. That is not tolerated, at all.⁴⁸

Despite this alleged lack of tolerance, numerous armed reaction officers are engaged in other security-related activities. In addition to his drug dealing, Barry also sporadically worked as a bouncer for a nightclub in his area and as a bodyguard for a relative's company. Dirk, a white reaction officer in his 40s, was regularly involved in VIP protection, and David, another white reaction officer in his 40s, was frequently recruited as a debt collector. Several armed response officers were police reservists or were engaged in security-based community initiatives in their own neighbourhoods. Most did not believe that security-related moonlighting affects their main work and many feel entitled to "outsource" themselves for extra money.

However, there were also cases of security-related work that emerged from encounters on duty. Tim, a white reaction officer in his late 40s, worked as a bouncer on his off days for a bar that happened to be a client of his employer. Although he stated that he never worked as a reaction officer and a bouncer simultaneously, he obviously gave preferential treatment to this client. Everybody at the company knew about this, even the managers, so it seemed that the situation was tolerated. The same applied to Sanjeev, an Indian armed response officer in his early 30s, who did "extra chores" for certain commercial clients in the area that he had patrolled, such as providing security when opening and closing their businesses.

Thus, whether it's by signing up new clients, networking with related businesses, or moonlighting, many armed reaction officers actively seek extra income to improve their financial circumstances. Though they do not become reaction officers for the wages, they know that they are paid better than other security officers, a fact that they habitually use to differentiate themselves, as evidenced by statements such as "we can do more" and

48 Interview: 21 April 2010.

“we earn more”. Yet armed response officers primarily define themselves (particularly in relation to others) according to the nature of their work: they patrol the streets, possess a firearm and vehicle, and in their eyes, “actually fight crime”.

On the Road

December 2008

Gayle, an area supervisor, picked me up at 5:30 am to start the day shift. He was a little late, since he had had to wait for a client to attend a site that had been broken into during the night. Not a lot had been stolen, but they had had to get all the paperwork sorted before the police could take over. We started the shift by monitoring the openings and closings of several businesses of one of their “special projects”,⁴⁹ and then headed to a petrol station frequented by other officers from Gayle’s company to grab a coffee. Gayle told me the night shift was quiet – mainly false alarms and two minor break-ins. We then received a call-out about an alarm activation nearby. We went to the site in question: the client wasn’t there, we conducted a perimeter check, realised it was a false alarm, left behind a call slip, and then departed. Over the next few hours, we attended two more call-outs, both false alarms. We patrolled particular areas where a lot of clients are based or where there had recently been more incidents of crime. Every so often, Gayle pulled up next to one of the other officers working in “his area”: he inquired whether everything was fine, controlled their records of the day, and picked up the necessary paperwork, which included the statement written by Mark, another Indian armed response officer in his late 20s, about yesterday’s break-in. We had lunch with Mark at a tuck shop while we waited for the next call-out.

After lunch, Gayle sighed and said we had to see Leonard, a white armed reaction officer in his early 50s, who had been late to work several times in recent weeks and was known to have an alcohol problem. Gayle needed to give him a written warning and to “have a talk” with him about his tardiness. When we saw Leonard, he acted rather cool about the whole situation. He admitted that he had been late, and didn’t really give any explanation. He did seem concerned about the written warning, but then just shrugged and accepted the letter without any resistance. Gayle and I then headed over to the company office to deliver all of the paperwork to the armed response manager. Afterwards, we conducted two more call-outs – both false alarms – before finishing up for the day. Gayle dropped me off at home and then headed out to pick up his replacement for the night shift.



49 “Special project” is a term used by certain companies when referring to collective clients (discussed further in chapter seven).

The preceding account, which is a summarised version of my field notes, describes one of my day shifts with a large company. It excludes various details and observations, such as the numerous conversations I had with Gayle and the other reaction officers. While I argue that there is much diversity within and between companies, the intent here is to illustrate a typical day on duty as an armed response officer. It should be noted, though, that Gayle is a senior armed reaction officer – an “area manager” – and therefore has particular tasks, such as checking up on his colleagues working in his area, which other armed reaction officers of lower rank do not have.

This section will discuss several activities that define a typical day on the road. The first is that the majority of call-outs are false alarms. The second is that armed response officers spend most of their day sitting alone in their vehicle. With most companies, “positives” (i.e. incidents of crime) do not happen on a daily basis, and when they do occur, they tend to be break-ins that took place before the reaction officer arrived on site. Arriving at a scene while a crime is in progress is uncommon. Yet some companies face more “positives” than others, and certain periods, such as weekends after payday and Christmas, are particularly busy.

One of the main complaints that armed response officers have about their job concerns the working hours, an issue identified in other research on security officers (Button 2007; Manzo 2006; Micucci 1998; Rigakos 2002; van Steden 2007). Like other policing bodies in South Africa, armed reaction officers operate using a system of day and night shifts. Most companies employ a “3 day, 3 night, and 3 off system”, which means that officers work three day shifts and three night shifts before having three days off. Each shift lasts for 12 hours, and officers are generally expected to report in approximately thirty minutes beforehand.

Each company has their own system for rotating armed reaction officers, but many place their officers in a certain geographical area for a substantial amount of time. This allows the reaction officer to get to know the specificities of the area, such as the road names and client details. Each area has its own rules and guidelines that are primarily determined by the clients. Companies work with “standing-down” points, which are particular locations where a vehicle must stand still, often during stipulated time slots. Managers claim that these points are chosen for strategic reasons, yet they are clearly also selected for marketing purposes, since they are found at busy intersections with high visibility rather than in the remote corners of residential areas. Some companies demand that officers actively patrol areas, while others encourage them to remain at an easily accessible point.⁵⁰ Some firms expect that the vehicles are washed on a daily basis. Certain companies demand that certain clients are monitored regularly. Therefore, when a reaction officer is stationed in a new area, he is provided with rough guidelines

50 This policy on patrolling is linked to petrol costs. Some companies, particularly small ones, discourage their armed response officers from patrolling in order to save money on fuel.

regarding standard protocol in that locality. Reaction officers also have preferences for certain areas. For example, Gayle loved working in quieter residential areas while Mark preferred the busy centre.

After working in an area for a certain period of time, reaction officers often establish close relationships with clients, an issue discussed further in chapter seven. Managers both encourage and restrict this. In December 2008, I met up with the community manager of a large company to talk about collective clients (see chapter seven). We started talking about Keith, one of the armed reaction officers working for that company, and his popularity in the area of one of their collective clients. When I mentioned how clients were enthusiastic and appreciative about his performance, she tensed up and made a pained expression. "Well, he's popular," she mumbled, "but we can't let him get too friendly." When I asked her what she meant by this, she explained that she didn't want the community to get too attached to Keith, because "anything can change in the near future". Evidently, she was worried he might leave the company and work directly for the community initiative. This would mean that the client (i.e. the community initiative) would no longer require the services of company. She was also apprehensive that he would perform favours for clients and that he might engage in some form of moonlighting, or find other work, in the area. In the eyes of the companies, the more time an armed response officer is stationed in an area, the more susceptible he is to moonlighting. To prevent this, companies have a rotation system whereby officers are regularly reassigned to new localities. However, armed response officers generally prefer to stay in one area so they can build up relationships with clients as they provide them with social interactions and "shape up" their shifts.

The daily routine of a reaction officer is thus highly dependant on the rules of his employer and the area he works in. Yet all reaction officers regarded their work as lonely and boring. If there are no incidents for an entire day, reaction officers will spend the entire 12-hour shift alone in their vehicle. The risk of danger is ever present, but boredom and mundane routine work are a large part of this occupation, as they are for the public police (Reiner 2000). For this reason, social interaction with colleagues stationed nearby is highly valued. Reaction officers often develop friendships with one another and hang out together on their off days, especially if they reside in the same area and work the same shifts. However, arguments between reaction officers are not uncommon. I knew many reaction officers who disliked some of their colleagues. However, I only witnessed three cases of colleagues coming to blows over work-related issues.

One aspect of the armed response sector that particularly stood out was the lack of interaction and cooperation between armed response officers from different companies. It seemed that the competition between companies had trickled down to the ground level, since reaction officers were discouraged from engaging with those working for other companies, something that had not always been the case, as Brian explained:

Before, we always used to park off together and chill. Many times, there'd be a few vehicles, all different companies, parked off at the same place, catching up. We were friends, we made jokes. We worked for different guys, but we were the same at the end of the day. And we helped each other, told each other about things going on, any crime updates, it was good. But now, it's not allowed. Management says we shouldn't do it. It's not good for the company image, or something like that. So now it happens less. And the new guys, they don't know better. So there's more distance, more competition...and it makes it even quieter in the vehicle. But us old schoolers, we still do it, 'cos it's in our system.⁵¹

This minimal level of social interaction also leads officers to badmouth other companies. Many reaction officers were quick to belittle the policing practices of their competitors and frequently made comments to the effect that “we are better” or “you don't want to be one of their clients”.

However, despite the decreased camaraderie and increased competition between employees of different companies, there is still a general sense of unity among reaction officers. This became evident when I talked with my informants about the risks and dangers involved in armed response work. Everyone referred to the recent death (during the time of research) of Dick van Eyck, an armed reaction officer from BLUE Security. Although they worked for different companies, my informants described Dick as “one of us” and the majority knew the exact details of his death. These elements of group loyalty and social inclusion are also deeply rooted among police officers (Loyens 2009).

Although this sense of unity among armed response officers has diminished over the years, group cohesion still occurs when a “they” emerges. The “they” in question is any group from which armed response officers look to distinguish themselves, such as management. This cohesion is particularly apparent when other armed reaction officers are guilty of misconduct, such as coming on shift late or drinking alcohol on duty. Although such behaviour is generally frowned upon and armed response officers gossip about such activities among themselves, it is very rare that misconduct is reported to management. For example, in December 2008, rumours reached the management of one company that three of their reaction officers were repeatedly getting drunk together while on duty. The managers questioned all of the reaction officers about these allegations, but all of them denied them, despite some of them knowing the rumours to be true.⁵² Loyalty among reaction officers is even stronger when they are friends and work the same shift. If armed reaction officers do tell on each other, this will generally be

51 Interview: 19 November 2008. This reference to “old schoolers” once again highlights how “old school” policing is associated to a particular time period.

52 The men in question were eventually dismissed when a manager caught them in the act.

done to the reaction officer(s) of higher rank, who can then choose whether to inform management.

This sense of cohesion highlights how reaction officers collectively feel that they form a distinct group that operates independently of management. Similar to the scenario I observed at the Armed Reaction Man Competition in 2010, there is very little interaction between management and operations in their daily routines. The following example attests to this separation. When I returned to Durban in April 2010, I visited one of the large companies that I had worked with the year before. I was immediately introduced to the new assistant armed reaction manager who had been hired a few months earlier. When I joined some of the reaction officers in their vehicles, I asked them what they thought of their new manager, but to my surprise, it turned out that only two of them – both of higher rank – had actually met him. With many companies, particularly the large ones, management and operations only meet in the office, as reaction officers conduct their shift changes on the road. With small companies, in contrast, shift changes often take place at the company office and managers are more involved in day-to-day matters.

The division between management and operations is also evident when reaction officers are promoted to higher-ranking or management positions. On the rare occasions when this happens, the relationship with the other armed response officers changes, as he is now “closer” to management. In 2008, I frequently went on patrol with Nick, an Indian senior officer at a large company, who had very a close relationship with several of the reaction officers. When I returned to the company in 2010, however, I found that Nick had been promoted to assistant armed response manager and was now working from the office. Unfortunately for Nick, his close relationship(s) had turned sour and many reaction officers felt that he had changed, since he was now “on the other side” and working against them, not alongside them.

“Tools of the Trade”

This section will discuss the various “tools of the trade” (Mopas and Stenning 2001) that armed response officers use to perform their daily tasks and to acquire authority and legitimacy. In the literature on private security, one of main points of discussion is the legal rights and powers of private security officers (Boghosian 2005; Button 2007; Joh 2005; Thorburn 2008, 2010).⁵³ With a few notable exceptions, such as the national key point protection officers in South Africa and prison custody officers and railway

53 This discussion is also prominent in the literature on private military companies and their rights under international and national law; see Avant (2005a, 2005b), Cleaver (2000), Schreier and Caparini (2005), and Zarate (1998).

detectives elsewhere (Braun and Lee 1970-1971; Button 2007), security officers worldwide do not generally possess powers beyond those of ordinary citizens. This is the case in South Africa, where the Criminal Procedure Act 51 of 1977 compels individuals in the security industry to operate within the parameters of state law. Thus, security officers may only utilise powers granted to “private persons”. Singh has neatly summarised the powers of security officers under the Criminal Procedure Act (51 of 1977) in South Africa:

[Security officers are] empowered to arrest, without a warrant, anyone seen to be engaged in an affray and anyone ‘reasonably’ believed to have committed *any* offence and who is fleeing a pursuing individual who ‘reasonably’ appears to be authorized to effect an arrest for that particular offence. The term ‘reasonable’ is open to wide interpretation. Private security may also, without a warrant, arrest and pursue any person who commits, attempts to commit or is reasonably suspected of committing any Schedule 1 offence. [Discussion of Schedule 1 offence] Further still, as agents of the owner, occupier or manager of property, private security may arrest without a warrant any person found committing *any* offence on or in respect of that property. In order to effect an arrest in any of the above circumstances, security personnel are authorized to break open, enter and search any premises on which the person to be arrested is known of reasonably suspected to be. Furthermore, they are empowered to use reasonable force, and lethal force in relation to Schedule 1 offences, where an arrest can not be effected by other means and where resistance occurs, or where the suspect flees. (2008: 50, italics in original)

According to Singh, the rights bestowed upon citizens in South Africa are “far-reaching” when compared to international standards since these rights were conceived during the apartheid era, when citizens were granted powers “to defend the state against threats to its sovereignty” (Singh 2008: 50).

Numerous other studies have also highlighted the significant powers enjoyed by security officers.⁵⁴ Braun and Lee, for instance, argue that the “private police enjoy extensive powers which enable them to perform functions analogous to public police activity” (1970-1971: 582). This claim is based on two premises. The first is that the legal rights of private security officers cannot be compared to those of citizens due to differences in access to and possession of this legal knowledge. As Joh (2005) argues, citizens are often unaware of their rights to arrest suspects, whereas security officers are trained in this knowledge and regularly invoke it. Button (2007: 14) refers to this access

54 See Button (2007), Rigakos (2002), Sarre and Prenzler (1999), South (1988), and Stenning (2000).

of information as "knowledge tools" and notes how effective use of these tools provides security officers with more confidence and ability to obtain authority.

The second premise is that the authority and legal rights of private security officers are bestowed through private relationships and contracts. By entering into contractual agreements with clients, private security officers have the right to search people and property, carry out various surveillance techniques, enforce sanctions, determine access, and evict individuals from private premises (Button 2007; Mopas and Stenning 2001; Stenning 2000). By restricting the accesses of particular individuals into certain spaces, security officers are exercising a power that lies "beyond those universal rights all citizens possess" (Button 2003: 230). The legal powers of the private police thus stem from a "legal relationship they have both with those who employ them (the property owners) and with those whom they police (persons using the property)" (Stenning 2000: 332).⁵⁵ Thus, when a citizen or business subscribes to an armed response company, he or she enters into a contractual agreement that bestows certain rights of access and conduct upon armed reaction officers on their premises.⁵⁶

The legal rights of security officers are therefore fairly wide ranging (although unquestionably less so than those of the state police). There are also several other "tools of the trade" that private security officers can employ, including institutional, physical, personal, and symbolic.⁵⁷ Based on the work of Bourdieu (1991), Mopas and Stenning (2001) emphasise how symbolic power is essential in ensuring the public's compliance. Much like the public police (Loader 1997a), private security officers obtain authority by utilising symbolic devices such as uniforms and equipment. In fact, Stenning argues, private security officers make more use of symbolic power than the public police, as they "are much less closely oriented towards, and reliant upon, the formal criminal justice system" (2000: 334). By driving in marked vehicles, wearing customised badges and

55 In South Africa, this falls under Section 42(3) of the Criminal Procedure Act 51 of 1977, which states that "the owner, lawful occupier or person in charge of land' may arrest a person believed to have committed any offence or who is in the process of committing an offence" (Berg 2003: 193).

56 Although formulated slightly differently by each company, contracts with clients always contain a segment that stipulates the exact details of the agreement. For example, one company's contract included the following clause: "The Armed Response Unit will respond to emergency calls with due speed and diligence but [company name] will not be liable to the Purchaser or any other party for any loss or damage to any property or any injury, including death, to any person arising out of any act or omission on the part of [company name] or its employees, howsoever arising and including but not limited to wilful/deliberate act or omission, and the Purchaser hereby indemnifies and holds [company name] harmless against any such claim brought against it by any other party. In responding to such call-outs the Armed Response Unit will use force as may be necessary to secure the premises and to apprehend any intruders but the Purchaser indemnifies [company name] against any claim made by any person arising out of death or injury on the Purchaser's property which death or injury may have arisen during the Armed Response Unit's Investigation."

57 See Button (2007), Loyens (2009), Mopas and Stenning (1999), Stenning (2000), and Thumala et al. (2011).

uniforms, and possessing a firearm, officers exhibit a symbolic authority that ensures compliance. It is the possession of firearms, in particular, that signals people to this authority and the powers that accompany it (Button 2007: 11).

In their study on the powers of bouncers, Hobbs et al. (2002) employ the term “bodily capital” to analyse how these individuals display their ability to use force to deny access. Based on the work of Goffman (1959), these authors discuss how bouncers cultivate an intimidating and authoritative appearance to perform their duties. Rigakos (2002) also highlights how companies place emphasis on the physical appearance of private security officers, who are instructed to be clean-shaven and to wear an ironed uniform and shiny boots in order to command respect. This is clearly the case for armed reaction officers, whose entire appearance was contrived to exude influence and authority.

It is generally argued that, in comparison to the public police, private security officers rely less on coercive tools and use less physical force (Mopas and Stenning 2001). Stenning argues that private security officers are more reluctant to enforce their legal powers through coercion due to a “legal regime which treats them less favourably than it treats public police” (2000: 335). Stenning further argues that the prominent role of technological hardware in the private security sector leads to less direct human contact, making coercive confrontations far less likely than in state policing. In contrast, I argue that coercion and violence are essential parts of the occupational culture of armed response: it is a “culture created around violence and violent expectation” (Winlow et al. 2001: 537). This does not mean that one encounters or employs violence on a daily basis – quite the contrary. However, armed response officers possess a firearm and are trained to use force when necessary. Like the state police, their entire appearance is intended to convey a willingness and ability to employ coercive tools. Martin (2013) refers to this as “force capital”, which is the “ability to deploy or threaten to deploy force across space” (153). Force capital includes both physical resources, such as personnel and weaponry, and non-physical resources, such as training and reputation, and is employed directly, such as through the use of physical force, and indirectly, such as through intimidation. The combination of bodily and force capital is essential in “the cultivation of an authoritatively intimidating appearance and demeanour” that accentuates an individual’s ability to commit violence and underlines their position of “authority and dominance within the milieu” (Hobbs et al. 2002: 357). I concur with Hobbs et al. (2002) that the ability to fight is the most crucial attribute for armed response officers.

As discussed in the previous chapter, different companies promote different policing styles and therefore instruct their armed reaction officers in different ways, particularly concerning the use of force. While some companies encourage their armed reaction officers to avoid situations that may lead to physical confrontation, other companies actively press their officers to chase suspects. Although such companies do not promote violence as a policy, the use of violence in “getting the job done” is generally encouraged. As one white owner of a small company explained to me, “I encourage my guys to shoot.

If they're being threatened or their lives are in any form of danger, they must shoot. It's an order."⁵⁸ Paul, an Indian owner, openly admitted that he recruited men based on their ability to fight and shoot:

I employ these guys based on the fact that they're fucked up, that they're screwed up somehow. It makes them good and hard workers. And you have to be kind of messed up to do this work. And you gotta know how to fight, how to hit hard. You can't be fragile, too kind or sensitive. They won't survive. No matter what their past or background is – if they have passion and are ready to do the hard work, I'll employ them.⁵⁹

The cultivation of force and bodily capital therefore plays a prominent role in the armed response sector and is closely linked to the masculinisation processes. This does not mean that force is always used, but simply that policing practices are fostered that centres on the *ability* to use force.

Although the use of violence will be explored in more detail in chapter eight, I want to point out here that armed reaction officers frequently use intimidation and coercion to ensure complicity and authority. In fact, the threat of force is inherent in their policing practices. As I have argued that violence is the source of sovereign power (chapter 1), I want to reiterate here how the ability to impose punishment and inflict violence on other bodies is cultivated by the occupational culture of the armed response sector.

Occupational Hazards

When I returned to Durban for my second period of fieldwork in April 2010, my first meeting with one of my informants proved to be a grim reminder of what I had been missing. Although I had expected some things to have changed in my absence, I was not prepared to hear that some of my informants had died. And while none of these deaths had occurred in the line of duty, several were indirectly associated with the occupation. This section addresses some of the occupational hazards associated with armed response work.

"Cannon fodder" and "thrill-seekers"

The most recent armed response officer to die on duty at the time of writing was Dick van Eyck from BLUE Security, who was killed in December 2007. The death was mourned by all in Durban's private security industry, in particular the armed response

58 Interview: 6 August 2010.

59 Interview: 15 May 2010.

officers, who all knew the exact details of the fateful call-out that cost him his life. In December 2008, Brian explained the impact of Dick's death during one of our patrols:

Me: Are you ever scared about a call-out?

Brian: I used to be, but not anymore. When we know something is definitely going down, you feel adrenaline, but not like it used to be, when I first started doing this work. But it's good to be a little bit scared – it keeps the edge on. You have to treat every call-out seriously. Although the majority are false alarms, you never know when there can be a positive.

Me: And what about the other guys?

Brian: Hell yeah, especially the new guys. You can tell that many are just too chicken shit, but those guys won't stay in the industry too long. At one point they won't be able to take the pressure. When Dick died, many of us got worried. We all started to think: shit, this is serious, what's gonna happen to our families if something happens to me? His death really made us realise that this is a very dangerous job, no jokes. When the shit goes down, it goes down, for real he. But now that time has passed, the guys are more relaxed again; nobody has been seriously hurt in a long time. As soon as that happens again, which it will, you'll see them tightening up again, getting that look on their face.

Me: What look?

Brian: That look of shit: this job is dangerous and I'm doing it.

Although Dick is the only officer to have been killed on duty since 2007 (at the time of writing), the risk of danger is ever present for armed response officers, as it is for the state police (Reiner 2000). Although this threat is generally regarded as being less pervasive in the private security sector, studies increasingly show that violence, verbal abuse, and intimidation are frequent occurrences (Button 2007; Loyens 2009; Rigakos 2002). As the "first line of duty", reaction officers are usually the first persons to attend a crime scene. A police reservist once mentioned to me that armed reaction officers were the "cannon fodder" of the policing business, and many informants supported this description.⁶⁰ The main risk for reaction officers is becoming victims of crime themselves, particularly since they possess firearms, which are in high demand among criminals and makes them an attractive target. During my fieldwork I heard of numerous cases where firearms were stolen from reaction officers.

The danger is heightened by the fact that reaction officers operate alone in their vehicles. This stands in stark contrast to police officers, who usually operate in teams. As one operations manager said to me, "These guys are like the police except they're all

60 Interview: 3 February 2009.

on their own".⁶¹ Although I know of two companies in South Africa that operate with two armed reaction officers per vehicle, this does not occur in Durban. When I asked my informants what aspect of their work was most in need of improvement, they all stated that working with another officer would be not only more enjoyable but also safer and more efficient. Numerous reaction officers provided examples of instances where they were together in a vehicle by chance (such as during a shift change) and were more successful at apprehending suspects, because they were able to operate as a team. Just like the "canteen talk" (Waddington 1999) among the public police, for whom storytelling and reminiscing about certain incidents is a core part of the job, reaction officers habitually recollect violent incidents. These recollections primarily occur due to the mundanity of their work, which affords plenty of time to "just hang around". However, retelling these stories reinforces the perception that danger is imminent.

Besides the potential risk to the lives of armed response officers, injuries on duty are also common. I did not encounter a single reaction officer who had not experienced some form of work-related injury, which ranged from small cuts to gunshot wounds. One large company had experienced 167 "serious" on-duty injuries that required hospitalisation between 2007 and 2009. Such serious injuries generally occur while chasing suspects on foot or by car, climbing over high walls or fences, or during car accidents.⁶²

In their own social environments, reaction officers are sometimes threatened, pressured to engage in crime, and confronted by acquaintances who are "on the other side". In November 2008, Craig, a black technician working for a small company, told me about his experiences while working as a reaction officer.

Me: Why did you stop with armed response?

Craig: *Eish*,⁶³ the danger! When I was an armed response officer, there was an incident, a nasty one. There was an armed robbery and two of my colleagues, armed response guys, shot two of the suspects. And I knew these guys, the suspects.

Me: How did you know them?

Craig: They also come from my township. See, about a month later, while I was working, I was called out to that same house, where that armed robbery was before. I did a check, the window was broken, but nobody was on site, so I assumed that all was fine. That same day, when I got home, these two guys [the

61 Interview: 9 December 2008.

62 Another frequently discussed risk is the presence of "vicious dogs" on clients' premises. Several companies include a record of dog ownership in a client's profile, so that reaction officers are warned beforehand. In fact, one small company does not permit its reaction officers to attend any site where there is a dog that is deemed to be vicious after a reaction officer was severely attacked.

63 *Eish* is a slang expression that conveys one's surprise or confusion. It is similar to "gosh" or "oh my God".

suspects] came up to me and said, “Hey, we didn’t know you are working for that company”. The thing is that my car didn’t have the name of the company on it, so they didn’t know. So I asked them, “How did you find out, what do you mean?” And they said, “We saw you today. We were at that house. We were waiting for those two guys that shot our friends. We wanted to shoot them, we were ready for it. But then we saw it was you.” The next day I resigned. I thought, *ish*, this is too much. Too much danger. Just too much.

Me: And what did you tell the manager? Did you tell him this story?

Craig: No! I told them I wasn’t happy about my salary, which was true.

Me: But do things like this happen often?

Craig: What do you mean?

Me: Well, that you’re confronted with suspects that you know while you’re at work?

Craig: *Eish*, many times. Because the truth is: the intruders do come from the same place as us, the guards, the security guys. You see, anybody can become a guard. It’s easy. And we live in the same area as the guys who rob these houses, who jack the cars, you know? So this suspicion – I hate it, but it’s true.

Me: Have you had any other similar problems?

Craig: So many. Let me tell you another one. When I was a guard, I arrested a guy for shoplifting and the police came and picked him up, sorted it out. But he was let go very quickly.

Me: How come?

Craig: I don’t know, they probably paid him; *ish*, that happens all the time. Guys are always let go. Anyways, when I arrested him, I thought he looked familiar, but I wasn’t sure. I thought I knew him through other people. So a few weeks later, I heard from some other guys that this guy that I arrested and his friends were looking for me. Everyday I tried to avoid them, but one day I just couldn’t. I saw them in the same taxi and I knew they were gonna jump me, jump me hard. When I got out of the taxi, they started following me, but I kept my back turned and just kept walking, relaxed, acting like I didn’t know. Then all of a sudden, one of the guys grabbed me from behind and the three of them started beating me, beating me hard. Luckily the police just happened to show up in their vehicle, so they stopped and I ran away. But the police car left quickly, so they started running after me again. One guy picked up a brick and he was about to throw it at me, but then the police came back. I was able to get away.

Me: And what happened after that?

Craig: The next week I heard that the guy I arrested was shot by the police and he died. His friends gave up on me.

Me: So it stopped?

Craig: Yeah, it stopped, but it happens so often. To these guys, criminals, we are the enemy! Really, the enemy, like the police.

Another black armed reaction officer, Themba, described to me in detail how some men from his neighbourhood had approached him on the street and threatened him with a knife, because, as a security officer, he was associated with working for the police/the authority/the government. These associations force individuals such as Themba to lie about their occupation. They are also the cause of the "criminals in uniform" stigma. Most reaction officers experienced such encounters as threats to their lives or those of their family members and acquaintances living in the same community.

Another common cause for concern among reaction officers and some owners is retaliation by criminals. This is particularly problematic for community-based companies with closer ties to local citizens. I spoke with two owners of community-based companies who told numerous stories of how they and their reaction officers were habitually threatened by criminals living in or close to the same areas. One of the owners, Paul, had been threatened on countless occasions and had experienced several attacks on his life, such as when his home was looted and set on fire a few years before. For safety purposes, he now hid the details of his personal residence from his employees and did not walk around the area with his wife and children. Michael, an armed reaction officer working for the same company, was targeted while driving his personal car. He was dragged out of the car and attacked with beer bottles. In fact, retaliations against this company were so common that all employees, including the controllers, were instructed not to wear their uniforms when coming to and leaving work. Retaliation is not the norm for the armed response sector, however, and many of my informants claimed that only companies working on the fringes of the black townships or that actively encouraged the use of force experienced such incidents.

Officers working for companies that actively encourage the use of force are often described as being "trigger-happy" and "thrill-seekers". Although not applicable to all armed reaction officers, this reputation is not entirely unwarranted. Like the public police (Chan 2007), armed reaction officers often see danger as a perk of the job. Many become addicted to the action and adrenaline and regret missing out if a crime occurs during their days off. Indeed, it seemed that some of my informants had an overt passion for physically apprehending and reprimanding suspects. Many were not shy about expressing their enthusiasm for getting into fights. In fact, it appeared that armed reaction officers sometimes provoked violence in order to have some "action for the day". Comments such as "I want some fresh meat today", "Today can't be another hit-free day", and "Let's go loiter and stir so we can hit someone" were not uncommon.

I often asked my informants why they claimed to take so much pleasure in violence, and a few responded by referring to their own broken backgrounds and abusive pasts. One example was Michael, one of the most violent and trigger-happy armed reaction

officers I encountered during my time in Durban. When Michael was 13, his father was hijacked and murdered. Shortly afterwards, his mother got remarried to an alcoholic who repeatedly physically abused Michael and his brother. When Michael was 16, a group of armed men robbed his family's house and assaulted his mother in front of him. After that, Michael became caught into a spiral of drug use and crime and his dream of becoming a police officer slipped away. When he was 19, he saw an advertisement in the local newspaper for a private security company that was recruiting reaction officers; he applied for a job, was accepted, and never looked back. For him, this work was his saviour. Although Michael was a rather extreme case, many armed reaction officers had similar stories.

Michael also claimed that "violence is the answer" to fighting crime. Many other reaction officers shared this opinion, many often talked about violence as if it were "no big deal" and a normal part of life. Gayle, Michael, David, and Barry, among others, explained to me how violence had always been a part of their lives and was "all they knew". David's view was typical:

You see, where I come from, the way of the fist is how the job is done. My father taught me to fight, literally, fight for what I need and want. It's what I know how to do. It might not always be the right thing, but it's what I know and it's what I can. And I have to feed my family at the end of the day.⁶⁴

The notion of a "culture of violence" (Altbeker 2007; Kynoch 2005; Scheper-Hughes 1997) is often used to describe South African society, where violence has become normalised, tolerated, and even accepted as an everyday part of life. Although I find this concept highly problematic, I do concur that individuals repeatedly exposed to violence in numerous spheres of life start to experience such violence as normal. Many of my informants grew up in violent homes, and some, such as David, were taught that violence was a means to achieve one's goals. This unquestionably influenced how they policed the streets.

"It's part of the job"

While the risk and danger inherent in armed response work are for many a source of excitement, they also give rise to physical and mental scars. Most companies, particularly the large ones, have direct contact with counselling agencies, such as the Careline Crisis Centre, which are on hand to assist clients. Although some managers state that these counselling services are also available to armed reaction officers, I did not know of any officers who had actually made use of them. Discussing traumatic experiences is not common among armed reaction officers. When I inquired about particular traumatic

64 Interview: 28 May 2010.

episodes, common responses included: "I can handle it", "It's part of the job", and "I've toughened up". In fact, the ability to "just deal with it" was seen as an essential attribute for an armed response officer. Once again, these abilities were conceived of as masculine, whereas "getting emotional" and "talking about feelings" were perceived as feminine and therefore ridiculed and condemned.

As time passed, however, several armed reaction officers opened up to me about their difficulties in dealing with the stress of the job. In chapter two, I discussed how this happened due to my having established rapport with my informants, but also because I purposely discussed my own emotions and experiences, which created space for them to share theirs. For example, in May 2010, I was hanging out at the office of one of the companies during the night shift when we heard that Michael's cousin had just died of an asthma attack. Out of compassion for Michael, Paul, the owner of the company, suggested we visit the cousin's residence. When we arrived, the whole family was present and extremely upset. Feeling like an intruder in this private matter, I remained outside in the garden. We had been told that Michael's cousin was already dead, so I was surprised to see that several family members were calling an ambulance in the hope of reviving her. On my last trip to the Netherlands following my first phase of fieldwork, I had completed a basic first aid course that had included instruction in mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, so when Michael asked the crowd for help in resuscitating his cousin and nobody responded, I stepped forward.

With my heart racing and wracked with nerves, I approached the victim. She was lying on the floor in the middle of the living room surrounded by approximately twenty family members, who were all staring at me and begging me to save her. When I knelt down beside her, I felt that her body was ice cold and that she had no pulse. My training told me that she was already dead, but my lack of medical qualifications and the pressure of the family members forced me to perform mouth-to-mouth. As soon as I placed my mouth on top of hers, it was like I had tasted death; a horribly foul and rotten taste slipped from her mouth into mine, and a wave of vomiting reflexes engulfed me. Although I was guided by a qualified person on speakerphone and assisted by a family member, I was outright petrified about aggravating the situation. My urge to vomit and concerns about expressing my revulsion were eventually overpowered by the mechanical act of resuscitation. When the paramedics arrived after what felt like hours, I felt I could finally breathe, as if I myself had just been resuscitated.

After the paramedics took the girl, I resumed the night shift, but I could not shake off what had happened and continued to retch uncontrollably. I also became angry with Paul and the other officers on the scene for not being able to perform mouth-to-mouth themselves, and I started demanding (rather rudely) that Paul provide such training for all of his employees. Similar to incidents described by Campbell (2002) and Punch (1986), when I got home early in the morning after the shift, I went straight to sleep but woke up a few hours later, drenched in sweat, to vomit. For weeks I had recurring

nightmares of the woman's face floating out of a bathtub and coming towards me, on the verge of vomiting over my body.

While on a night shift a few days after this incident with Brian, who works for another company, I told him about the incident, how I vomited afterwards, and my recurring nightmares. He initially expressed awkwardness about my openness; he avoided eye contact, was continuously shifting in his seat, and changed the topic at the first opportunity. But a few hours later, while we were parked up by a gas station, he took the initiative and shared what he called "the heaviest shit" he had seen:

The most hectic thing I saw, it was a case of attempted suicide. So it wasn't dangerous, but it was disgusting. The guy had shot himself, a client, and bits and pieces of his brain were lying everywhere. I almost had to vomit. I had nightmares of that image for weeks and weeks. I didn't sleep properly for a long time. I will never forget that image. It fucked me up, it fucked me up, it fucked me up.

There was a long silence. He looked at me, shrugged, and then continued:

But hey... then you see something new and it just softens. Every time comes something new, and it goes on and on. Your nightmares are replaced, or something like that.

Something similar happened during my interactions with Gayle. It was during a day shift in February 2009, and we had just left the house of a female client who had been robbed. She was very shaken up by the incident and Gayle had repeatedly tried to convince her to seek the assistance of the company's counsellors. She refused, and this irritated Gayle; he knew she was going to suffer. Gayle felt that she needed help to deal with what she had seen, because "flashbacks" would start to haunt her, as they had done to him:

You see, flashbacks of these traumatic incidents, they only come after a few days. The first few days, you're still in a state of shock; maybe you're a bit more alert or nervous. Some people start rambling a bit, others just stop talking... But later, they come, the images, and you can't sleep. I had it after a call-out where a woman was raped and badly beaten, I mean bad. There was blood, she had bite marks, all that sort of stuff. I was shocked when I saw it, but I didn't feel so bad then. But a few days later, that image of her... I didn't want to come to work. I was tired, depressed. I had no idea who this woman was, but I kept seeing her face, her bloody body... But slowly, it went away. And the more often you

experience shit like this, the faster they come, but the faster they disappear. Your system, your body, builds a system to deal with this shit.

In July 2010, Anthony, a white reaction officer in his late 20s, resigned after receiving several written warnings from management about his performance; he had been acting rather turbulently. His behaviour was linked to an incident that had occurred a few weeks beforehand, when a citizen had threatened him with a gun. When I spoke to him a few weeks later, he explained that he couldn't handle the pressure anymore:

I became paranoid. That incident with the gun, I couldn't shake it off. Anyone who moved their arm up or made any movement, I started to think they were grabbing their firearm and wanted to shoot me. To me, they were all criminals. I just can't see clearly between who is a suspect and who is just walking down the street. It's affecting my life at home, I'm starting to think everyone is out to get me. I'm just done, done.

Bringing the work home

Anthony's description of how his work affected his life at home was not unusual; many informants had similar tales to tell about the impact of "bringing the work home". One day in May 2010, David picked me up for the night shift seeming very irritated. At first he acted like nothing was wrong, but after I repeatedly asked him what was wrong, he admitted that he had just had a big fight with his wife but said that he didn't want to talk about it. We continued on with the shift, and a few hours later, when it was quieter and we were parked up drinking coffee, he told me about the fight. Although he made some mention of the content of the argument, David seemed most upset about his wife's lack of understanding and the exhaustion he experienced from this work. When I asked him whether this happened often, he told me the following story:

One day, I came home and I was finished. It had been a very, very long day, two armed robberies, running around like crazy... I finally got home at ten and all I wanted to do was bath, eat, and sleep, but she [his wife] wouldn't have it. She was screaming at me for being home late, for not being a good husband... And I just jilted. I went off... I took the plate with hot food and threw it right at her face. I punched in her face, she was bruised for days. The next day, I was sorry and felt bad about it, but at the same time... I understood why I did it. After such a heavy day, my home is supposed to be a place of rest, of understanding. At work, so much is going on, there's no time to think about it, what you are actually doing, but when you come, it all comes together. And I know that if there's anything I can do, is... I can hit. I'm very good at that. I know that by hitting someone at work, I solve whatever is going on. And it works at home

too... It is horrible to say it, but it's what goes on in my head. I am sure that everyone here has it, everyone has at some point hit their wives or something... if they haven't, I want to know what their secret is. Because you can't just shut off, you stay in this same hunting mode...

Many informants shared similar stories about the difficulties of “turning off” after a day’s work. For most, getting into fights off duty in their own social environment was fairly common, and several suffered from alcoholism. Many discussed being impatient with their wives, not being able to communicate with their families, engaging in various forms of domestic violence, and having extramarital affairs to escape their “failures at home”. Some reaction officers also seemed to be overbearing and overprotective husbands and fathers who imposed strict rules on their family members. Although establishing rapport with the wives and family members of my informants was slightly difficult, some did confide in me how they wished their husbands had a different job, one that could “give him more peace”. Gayle’s wife once told me that she knew not to “nag at him” when he got home and that he only “became himself during his off-days”.

In his research on the state police, Goldstein speaks of the “moral cynicism” that afflicts policemen due to their continuous exposure to crime and violence: “The average officer – especially – in large cities – sees the worst side of humanity. He is exposed to a steady diet of wrongdoing” (1975: 25).⁶⁵ I observed this same cynicism in many reaction officers, who had strict moral frameworks that they applied to their personal lives. Daily encounters with crime had made many informants see morality in fairly black-and-white terms, with criminals conceived as the “bad guys” and them as the “good guys”. Criminals were commonly described as evil people with no compassion who are out there to steal, kill, or hurt others and must be stopped.⁶⁶ For many, exposure to crime on a daily basis had transformed their perspectives on violence, as was the case with Charlie, an Indian armed response officers in his mid-30s:

When I started working, about five years ago, I never got into fights and it was difficult to see; I never hit anyone, anything like that. I didn't like the idea of being violent. And when I would ride out, I'd try to stop the others from hitting. But now, it has changed me. I love to hit. It gives me a rush. After everything I've seen, all the crime...it has changed me.⁶⁷

I was fascinated by how reaction officers often expressed a passionate disdain for violence and crime while at the same time justifying their own use of force and arguing

65 Several scholars, such as Newburn (1999), have looked at how “moral cynicism” is linked to police corruption.

66 Chapter eight explores this issue in more detail.

67 Interview: 16 May 2010.

that "violence solves crime". Whenever I questioned (or criticised) their use of violence (both on and off duty), I was treated to long and ornate answers replete with moral precepts and propositions, as illustrated by the following excerpt from a discussion with Michael in June 2010:

Me: And what makes you so different from the criminals?

Michael: What do you mean?

Me: Well, your view is that criminals are bad, because they rob people, hit people unnecessarily, etcetera, but yesterday you also hit someone.

Michael: But hitting a criminal is different. You see, the criminals hit and rob innocent people, people that haven't done anything wrong. But we're hitting someone that has done something wrong.

Me: But how do you know that for sure? Like yesterday, you don't know for sure if those guys actually did it. You had suspicions, but you weren't sure. What if they hadn't robbed that house? That you were wrong? Then in fact you're also hitting an innocent person, or not?

[Long silence]

Michael: If it were so, then yes. But you see, with *kaffirs*,⁶⁸ you're almost always gonna get a guilty one, because all of them are criminals.

Me: But isn't that up to the court to decide? Who's guilty or not?

Michael: The courts don't do fuck all. There's no point in relying on that – can't trust them.⁶⁹

The conversation then turned to corruption within the police and the judicial system at large, triggered by a case whereby two of Michael's colleagues had been recently arrested for assault:

Michael: You see, those policemen, they are corrupt, jealous, and out to get us. That's why they punish us. But what they're doing is wrong! It's up to the court to decide whether we are guilty or not.

Me: But earlier you said that the courts can't be trusted to decide who is guilty or not, and now you are saying that the courts are the ones to decide.

68 *Kaffir* is a racist word used against Blacks in South Africa. The word derives from an Arabic term meaning "disbeliever". In South Africa, the term is associated with the apartheid past and is regarded as highly offensive.

69 The armed response officers' perceptions of the state police and the state as a whole are discussed in more detail in chapter six. However, it should be noted here that Goldstein's (1975) idea of "moral cynicism" also refers to a cynicism and lack of confidence in state law and legal procedures. It is for this reason that many scholars have posited a link between this and police corruption.

Michael: But it's different, because that was about criminals. They are a different story.

I tried to probe further, but Michael made it clear that he didn't want to continue.

I frequently had conversations like this with armed reaction officers, particularly towards the end of my fieldwork, and it was the closest I came to being able to openly criticise some of their perceptions. As has been suggested by Goldstein's (1975) work on "moral cynicism", I argue that such narrow conceptions of right and wrong appear to be necessary for reaction officers to do their work. When they questioned their own actions, or doubted their moral compasses, which sometimes happened during our conversations, it confused and angered them. This was particularly true for those with a criminal record. Many presented this as "the past" and explained how they had changed from a criminal to a "crime fighter". And ultimately, they all invoked their own work experiences to justify their use of violence, as the following quote from Gayle exemplifies:

I know what you're gonna say: violence is not the answer, blah, blah, blah. But I do believe that violence is, in some way, the answer, the way to deal with it. You see, with the crime and violence in this country, it's completely out of control and people are sick of it. I know, it's difficult at first, so I understand why you think what you think. But if you do this work, after years of this shit, and it really is shit, and you see it day in, day out, you change. Your vision, on beating and hitting and stuff like that, it changes. It just changes. I can't explain it. I will bet on it; if you would do this, what I do, for years, you would start to think like me.

Concluding Remarks

Gayle's description of how his work as an armed reaction officer had shaped his views attests to the centrality of violence in my informants' experiences. The following chapters focus on armed reaction officers' daily interactions with other actors in local security networks and examine the different encounters and activities that make up armed response. The aim of this chapter was to show how armed response officers define and perceive their occupation, particularly in comparison to other forms of security work. Although armed response officers are commonly associated with the "just a job" and "criminals in uniform" labels, I argue that the "wanna-be policemen" tag is more appropriate, particularly as they identify themselves with state police officers. This association is based on the origin of the sector, the officers' motivations for doing the work, and the divergence in training (and thus wage) levels between armed reaction officers and other security personnel. Yet the main reason why reaction officers

distinguish themselves from other security officers concerns the nature of their work: they are armed men who patrol communities in vehicles.

This chapter has presented a general idea of what it means to be an armed response officer. It has discussed false alarms, boredom, loneliness, financial problems, working in different geographical areas, and the importance of social interactions. Furthermore, this chapter has argued that although reaction officers possess few legal powers, the employment of other tools, particularly the cultivation of bodily and force capital, allows them to obtain authority and legitimacy. The constant danger, the element of thrill-seeing, the problems with "taking the work home", and the officers' perceptions of violence all shape their profession. This chapter has shown how armed response officers experience the prominence of masculine attributes in their work and the distinction between operations and management, thereby expanding on the two main claims from the previous chapter.

All of this points towards one main argument, which is that the occupational culture of the armed reaction sector bears more resemblance to the state police than to other forms of private security in South Africa. Although armed reaction officers are private security personnel and occupy a specific position in the private security hierarchy, they feel closer to the state police and regard themselves as semi-policemen. As individuals, they aspire to act like state police officers. This is a major reason why they are increasingly policing the public realm, which is the cornerstone of twilight policing.

6

“It All Comes Down to Them”: Daily Interactions with the “State”

Introduction

May 2010

After a long morning of patrolling the streets, Michael and I arrive back at the office and see a young, black male standing outside in the heat of the sun. He is crying, sweating profusely, and reeks of alcohol. Michael approaches him, and the young man tells us that he was just robbed in a bar by people he knows. He asks Michael if the armed response officers can come to the bar and arrest those responsible. Michael informs him that they can only consider helping him after he lays an official charge at the police station. When the man complains, Michael sternly instructs him to go to the police station. The man eventually leaves.

A few hours later, the man comes back, but with an entirely different demeanour and appearance. His eyes are no longer teary and bloodshot; instead, he smiles and wears a carefree expression. He tells us that the policemen at the station referred him back here for assistance, because they were preoccupied and his case was not “worth it”. I ask him why he’s smiling and he explains that he knows that the company will help him now, as he had originally hoped. Unfortunately for him, the reaction officers are in the process of shift change, so he is asked to wait. He quickly grows impatient and eventually leaves without being assisted.

After the shift change, I discuss this incident with Michael and several other armed response officers. One of them thinks that the police didn’t want to assist him because he was obviously drunk. Another defends the police, claiming that they probably *were* too busy and had more important things to do. Gavin, a senior armed response officer in his mid-30s, then says, “You see, this is the main problem we have with the police. So many people who go to the police are sent to us, by them. Now, if we don’t do anything, then people think we don’t wanna help the community, and the police will milk it and talk nonsense about us only wanting to make money...but if we step up and it gets ugly, you know, then we get the shit, get charged with assault, that we went around the law, you know, those long stories. It’s a big game. And you never win or lose, you don’t know when you start. The rules are different every day. It’s like gambling – you don’t know how much to put in, how much you’re gonna get back.”



In the preceding vignette, Michael's acknowledgement that the police must be informed before he and his colleagues can assist the man points towards a subordinate role for armed response officers in relation to the state police. Yet as the police officers referred the man back to the armed response company, we also see that this role is not firmly established. For many armed response officers, this cultivates what Gavin described as a "gambling" sensation, which refers to the constant sense of uncertainty and unpredictability in their interactions with police officers.

In understanding the relationship between the state and the private security industry, many studies focus on state-centred, national policies, such as state regulation. State regulation of the industry, which is the remit of the Private Security Industry Regulatory Authority (PSIRA) in South Africa, is analysed as a means whereby the state "outsources" its sovereignty and stipulates the (legal) conditions under which the industry must operate. The first section of this chapter will discuss PSIRA's role in regulating the industry and the corresponding legislation, which, though encompassing, is heavily criticised and does not necessarily imply that the state has complete control over the industry. The second section of the chapter discusses the "partnership policing" of the post-apartheid state, a strategy that allocated the industry a "junior" and supportive role in formal partnerships.

The third section, which forms the heart of this chapter, analyses the informal and ad hoc interactions in the local security networks comprising police officers and armed response officers when policing the streets of Durban.¹ Police officers are defined here as state representatives responsible for everyday law enforcement and public policing. With reference to various empirical case studies, I will examine how sharing crime intelligence, divergent policing goals, policing mentalities, perceptions of corruption, moonlighting, social networks (i.e. "old boys' networks" and "old boys' feud"), and the use of violence define these local security networks.

In the course of this analysis, I will make three claims. The first is that the relationships between armed response officers and police officers are multifaceted, context and person dependent, and thus unpredictable, resulting in a sense of "gambling" for most armed response officers. The second claim is that the distinction between "state" and "non-state" is increasingly blurry on the ground. Police officers, as performers of "state" policing, and armed response officers, as performers of "non-state" policing, increasingly encroach on each other's domains through relationships that are simultaneously competitive and collaborative. A twilight zone is created through daily policing practices of both policing bodies in these local security networks. The third

1 In Durban, there are two public police forces: the Durban Metro City Police, responsible for enforcing by-laws, and the South African Police Services (SAPS). Although there are differences between these two bodies, there is not sufficient space to discuss these here. The majority of the incidents discussed in this chapter involved SAPS officers. Furthermore, though armed response officers are aware of the differences between "metro" and "SAPS", they use the term "police" in a rather generic manner.

claim is that police officers play a large role in blurring the distinction between state and non-state policing and thus in creating the twilight zone. They do so by actively entering the private realm and pulling armed response officers into the public realm. This chapter concludes by arguing that police officers are the arbiters of these local security networks. Since it is they who are able to wield state sovereignty, they ultimately determine the nature and outcome of local security networks.

A "Toothless Bulldog": State Regulation of the Industry

In South Africa, state regulation of the industry implies that all personnel in the security industry must be registered with PSIRA. Along with other state bodies, such as the Department of Labour, PSIRA determines how the industry must operate. If a service provider is not registered or does not operate in accordance with PSIRA's legislation, a charge of misconduct is opened, with the penalties differing according to the case. State regulation therefore dictates how the private security industry can operate; it is an "ideological claim about the legitimate place of private security in society and the appropriate form and reach of the state's role in regulating and fencing-in security markets" (Goold et al. 2010: 16). Regulation also instills a higher degree of professionalism and increases accountability (Crawford and Lister 2006: 167) in order to prevent "injustice, corruption, negligence, or incompetence" (Sarre and Prenzler 1999, in O'Connor et al. 2008: 205).

Comparatively speaking, South Africa's regulation system is highly encompassing. George and Button (1997, in Button 2002: 122-123) identify five different regulation models worldwide: non-interventionist, minimum narrow, minimum wide, comprehensive narrow, and comprehensive wide. This categorisation is based on three main characteristics: the width of regulation (i.e. the number of sectors of the industry), the depth of regulation (i.e. the number and scope of regulations to comply with), and the agent(s) responsible for regulation. Though George and Button's study is concerned only with European countries, the authors would likely define South Africa as "comprehensive wide".

PSIRA's broad scope is exemplified in its definition of a security service provider, which is "a person who renders a security service to another for a remuneration, reward, fee or benefit and includes such a person who is not registered as required in terms of this Act". This includes services and activities such as the following: protection of property and persons, giving security-related advice, responding in connection to safeguarding, manufacturing, importing, and advertising devices, security training, installing security equipment, monitoring equipment, and managing

any of these services.² According to this definition, community organisations such as neighbourhood watches must also register, as they are also protecting the property and lives of individuals living in a given area. Particular parts of the Act also attest to the wide scope of regulation. The first is PSIRA's zero-tolerance policy, which dictates that any form of malpractice leads to a charge. The second is the consumer liability clause, which states that any person who knowingly or without the exercise of reasonable care contracts security services and provision that is contrary to the Act is guilty of an offence. Consumers are "legally obliged to ensure that the companies they are using are registered" and operate according to the Act (Berg 2003: 187).

However, despite international acclaim for South Africa's regulation scheme, members of the industry, police officers, and even PSIRA employees are heavily critical of PSIRA. Among my informants, regularly described as a "toothless bulldog" that was incapable of enforcing its wide-ranging legislation. Such criticism centres on five claims: a lack of representation from the industry, inefficiency, a lack of collaboration with other state bodies, corruption, and poor employee vetting procedures. Firstly, state regulation is experienced by many members of the industry as a form of punishment rather than as representation. As discussed in chapter three, the growth of the private security industry was advocated by the apartheid state, for which it functioned as a complementary armed force. The creation of the Security Officers Act of 1987 (SOA) was the result of this alliance, and the Security Officers Board (SOB) consisted of ten members: six officials from the private security industry, a commissioned officer of the SAP, an officer aligned with the Minister, and two other persons assigned by the Minister of Law and Order.

In the eyes of the post-apartheid state, members of the industry overrepresented the SOB. When the SOA became PSIRA, a new council was created that lacked any security industry representation. The current council consists of a chairperson, a vice-chairperson, and three councillors, all of whom are appointed by the Minister of Safety and Security and do not have "direct or indirect financial or personal interests in the private security industry or represent in any way the interests of those within the industry" (PSIRA 2001). Many members of the industry feel that regulation has been "hijacked" by the state, that it does not represent their needs, and that it damages the industry rather than protecting it, as the owner of a company said to me: "PSIRA is taxation, not representation".³ The monthly registration costs further exacerbate this sentiment; many informants voiced statements such as "I pay them every month, but they don't do anything for me".

Secondly, similar to other government bodies, PSIRA is criticised for being understaffed and inefficient. In 2009, PSIRA inspected 6,971 (93.45 per cent) of the 7,459 active security businesses, equivalent to 202 businesses for each of its 37 inspectors. As a

2 For a complete overview of the Act, see www.pkira.co.za.

3 Interview: 6 April 2009.

result of these inspections, 1,568 security providers were charged with misconduct. These figures point towards an active inspection and regulation system. Nonetheless, many of my informants (members of the industry, police personnel, and others) still described PSIRA as ineffective, particularly with regard to inspection. The persistence of "fly-by-nights" was frequently used to substantiate such claims. Furthermore, many respondents claimed that most inspections were based on tip-offs and that PSIRA does not take a proactive approach. Companies also use these tip-offs to "badmouth" other companies. One PSIRA inspector said that she felt PSIRA was "used as a battleground for companies to fight against each other".⁴

Thirdly, criticism is levelled at the relationship between PSIRA and other government bodies, such as the Department of Labour, which determines the wages and employment standards, and SASSETA, which monitors the security training.⁵ Many of my informants claimed that referrals to other departments, particularly the SAPS, were not adequately dealt with.⁶ According to one PSIRA inspector I spoke to, the problem lies chiefly with the police, who do not prioritise their cases.⁷ In 2009, PSIRA filed 177 cases with the SAPS, resulting in a total of 962 pending criminal cases.

Fourthly, many industry personnel accused PSIRA inspectors of corruption, of favouring certain companies over others, and/or of inspecting only the "easy" companies, that is, those that are reputable and easily accessible rather than those that require more effort on account of their geographical remoteness. People also claimed that PSIRA was guilty of "under-inspection", whereby inspectors fine companies for minor matters, such as incorrect attendance registers or posting sheets, while disregarding larger problems, such as unregistered firearms.⁸ Several informants also argued that there was a racial dimension to inspection, claiming that if PSIRA's assessors were to inspect 30 companies, 25 would be white-owned. This racial bias is linked to state efforts to transform the legacy of the white dominance in the industry. Some informants even alleged that the government was unwilling to "straighten PSIRA out" because members of government have interests in the industry and use their political connections to acquire tenders.⁹

Several PSIRA inspectors denied allegations of corruption and favouritism. Without investigating the veracity of such allegations, I do know of several private security companies that are guilty of numerous easily identifiable forms of malpractice, such as underpayment of security officers, which were not detected during the inspections. Various informants discussed cases of inspectors assisting their friends in the industry

4 Interview: 25 March 2009.

5 This is discussed in more detail in chapter five.

6 Interview: 17 August 2010.

7 Interview: 25 March 2009.

8 Interview: owner of a guarding company, 13 March 2009.

9 Interview: former member of PSIRA council, 24 August 2010

while punishing their rivals. Though no managers openly admitted to giving bribes, they hinted at the occurrence of such practices with statements such as “we have friends there” and “just treat them nicely and everything will be fine”.

Fifthly, PSIRA is criticised for the inadequacy of its employee database and criminal record checks. As the *raison d'être* of the industry is fighting crime, criminal activity among employees is seen as a serious problem. When individuals register with PSIRA, a criminal record check is conducted, yet this excludes “unrecorded” criminal activity. Furthermore, checks are not conducted after registration. The fact that I interviewed numerous private security employees – both officers and managers – who were or had been engaged in illegal activity shows that these checks are far from foolproof. Many members of the industry want to impose regular criminal record checks after registration. There are also calls to establish a shared “criminal database” to record “suspected” criminal activity. For example, if a security officer is suspected of theft or some other crime but is not charged or found guilty, he will most likely be dismissed and will seek employment with another company. However, a “criminal database” would include such information and would warn companies against hiring the officer in question.¹⁰

As this discussion makes apparent, the South African state has an encompassing regulation system that enables it to maintain a degree of supervision and control. Yet the criticism directed at PSIRA from across the policing field suggests that much of this regulation exists on paper but not in practice. The reality is that the legislation is not always enacted and illegal practices persist. Furthermore, though armed response officers are registered with PSIRA and pay their monthly fees, many do not feel represented by the Authority and regard it as “just another government body that I must pay for.”¹¹ PSIRA legislation stipulates how armed response officers must operate, yet many of those I spoke to felt that it did not determine how they acted during their shifts. When I asked them how the “state” influenced their occupation, the most of them only referred to the state police. For them, the police was the state body that most defined how they operated.

10 In 2010, the Security Industry Alliance (SIA) outlined a plan called “Project Sanitize”, the aim of which was to regularly screen employees within the industry and to create a database with information regarding the criminal behaviour of workers, especially those who were not reported to the police, or for whom there was insufficient evidence to charge them. To assist private security officers, this database would include a platform for companies to encourage other companies to hire certain security officers (Interview: SIA chief executive officer, 17 August 2010, Johannesburg).

11 Focus group discussion with armed response officers, 10 February 2009.

"Partnership Policing"

This section will focus on how the state envisions the interactions between the state police and the private security industry to occur through a state-led strategy of "partnership policing". In the literature on public-private policing partnering, most studies identify the "junior partner" model. This is characterised by a strict hierarchical structure in which the public police is the "senior" partner and private policing bodies are the "junior" partners, the latter's role being "to give the public police whatever assistance they can to help them do the job of 'real policing'" (Stenning 1989: 180, emphasis in original). Nalla and Hwang (2006) found such a relationship in South Korea, and for the United Kingdom, Wakefield (2003: 193-219), Button (2007), and McManus (1995) identify cooperation through a "junior partner" model. In his study of a private security company in Toronto, Canada, Rigakos discusses "student-mentor relationships" (2002: 131), in which police officers guide private security officers in their daily endeavours and provide knowledge and experience.

This "junior partner" model has also been the doctrine of the post-apartheid South African state. As we saw in chapter three, the post-apartheid state has intended to eliminate the legacy of the police as an instrument of state repression (Hornberger 2011; Marks 2005; Minnaar 2005, 2007; Shaw 2002). The envisioned transformation was primarily outlined in the National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS) of 1996 and the 1998 White Paper on Safety and Security. The NCPS delineated a "multi-agency approach" (Singh 2008: 14) whereby the government would work alongside other partners, such as community members, businesses, and the private security industry, to combat crime. Although the post-apartheid state was initially suspicious of the private security industry due to its alliance with the former regime, it also recognised the need for collaboration.

The "partnership policing" strategy determined the structure for security networks between the state police and other policing bodies. However, this vision for partnership policing was "only to be established on the SAPS' terms, i.e. strongly controlled and directed by police managers at police station level" (Minnaar 2005: 89). Although the police regard private security companies as "their 'natural' allies and partners" (Marks and Wood 2007: 150), partnering implies that "the SAPS 'runs the show'" (Berg 2004a: 113) and that private security firms function as "force-multipliers" that play an "adjunct role" (Manzo 2009: 199). The South African state thus envisioned their multi-agency approach along the lines of the "junior partner" model.

The junior role designated to the private security industry was also defined through outsourcing particular tasks. Within a larger process of liberalising crime management, the SAPS embarked on a "more managerialist approach" (Berg 2004b: 227), as exemplified by its change of name from a police "force" to a police "service". Singh (2008: 17) provides numerous examples of evidence of the transition to a new managerial

approach, such as the appointment of Meyer Kahn, the head of South African Breweries, as the chief executive officer of the SAPS. Two activities were outsourced to the private security industry: the guarding of government buildings, such as police stations, and vehicle tracking. In 1996, the SAPS entered into a national partnership with Tracker, a vehicle-tracking company. Tracker installs Police Tracking Computers (PTCs) in certain SAPS vehicles and aircraft, links them to the SAPS system, sponsors the computers in the SAPS aircraft and vehicles, and provides vehicle-tracking training to police officers (Minnaar 2005: 106).¹² This contractual relationship implies that both parties (i.e. the police officers and the Tracker recovery teams) have an obligation to search for any stolen vehicles.¹³ The partnership has led to “numerous successes in the recovery of stolen vehicles and the apprehension of suspects being achieved” (Minnaar 2005: 106). However, besides the outsourcing of guarding and the Tracker-partnership, there is “no formal national co-operation agreement in existence between the SAPS and the private security industry” (Minnaar and Ngoveni 2004: 55).¹⁴

Local partnering

Due to the lack of a national agreement about formal partnerships between the SAPS and the private security industry, partnership policing primarily occurs through operations established by local municipalities and police stations (Minnaar 2005: 99). One example is Operation Kwano, a joint project between the SAPS and Pretoria City Council that ran from 1996 to 1999, in which private security companies were hired to patrol parts of the central business district (CBD) (Minnaar 2005).¹⁵ In Cape Town, City Improvement Districts (CIDs) have been implemented as part of a larger urban strategy, where private security companies are contracted to provide security (Abrahamsen and Williams 2011; Berg 2004b; Samara 2010). A Durban equivalent of the CIDs is the Urban Improvement Precincts (UIP), a public-private partnership set up by Metro Council,

12 Tracking companies are companies that install tracking systems to aid in the retrieval of stolen equipment, such as cars. The system involves the installation of an in-vehicle device that will send signals to a control room in the event that the vehicle is stolen. Tracking companies are successful. Tracker, for example, boasts 53,756 vehicle recoveries in 13 years (www.tracker.co.za). In 2010, Tracker was the largest tracking company in South Africa, with over 660,000 fitted vehicles (Interview: operations manager KZN Tracker, 1 July 2010).

13 This is the most fundamental part of the obligation, because many companies retrieve vehicles but do not inform the police (Interview: Operations Manager, KZN Tracker, 1 July 2010).

14 There are other official partnerships, such as the National Task Team (set up in 2002) with the mining industry (Interview: SIA chief executive officer, 17 August 2010, Johannesburg). However, since this research focuses on residential security, it will not delve into such collaborations.

15 Security officers from these companies worked alongside the police and participated in joint operation meetings (Minnaar 2005).

whereby property owners in a specific area pool resources to contract companies to provide a variety of services, including security.¹⁶

These formalised public-private partnerships are platforms for police officers and security officers to work together indirectly, but there are also local partnerships that are more direct. In Gauteng, one acclaimed partnership was the Honeydew Project, an initiative facilitated by Business Against Crime (BAC) to enhance communication between the industry and the SAPS.¹⁷ In an MoU signed in October 2008, the Honeydew Project was labelled as an "alliance" between the security industry and the SAPS, comprising five police stations in the Honeydew Police Station Cluster and eleven private security companies.¹⁸ A similar case from Durban is Securinet, described by Minnaar (2005: 104) as a "linked communication and information reporting system" involving various policing agents. Launched in November 1997, the initiative was based on a complex system of communication between various policing bodies, such as police stations, private security companies, and actors within the Durban Protection Services network (e.g. the ambulance services and fire brigades).¹⁹

There are also locally based partnerships that centre on a specific operation or police station. In 2009, a police station in Chatsworth, a former Indian township in Durban, founded an initiative called POLSEC, which was aimed at fostering police efforts with

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- 16 The UIPs in the CBDs of Durban Central and Umhlanga have proven to be highly successful at combatting crime. Within the UIP programme, a section is tendered for a private security company to provide security for certain public open spaces. UIP security, provided by a contracted company, is responsible for public spaces, while owners of private property employ their own private security. For example, in the UIP in the CBD of Umhlanga, ENFORCE Security provides the UIP security (i.e. for public spaces) and other private security companies provide security for businesses in the area, such as hotels and restaurants (Interview: project leader UIP Umhlanga, 28 July 2010).
- 17 Enhanced communication efforts were implemented to improve on-the-ground interactions through a dedicated radio communication system located at Honeydew Police Station. Honeydew was chosen on the grounds that it was the largest police station in the area and dealt with the highest amount of trio offences. Bimonthly meetings were organised to share information and design possible improvements, and local police stations provided crime scene training to many armed response officers (Interview: national project manager for Business Against Crime (BAC) for violent organized crime, 7 April 2009, Johannesburg).
- 18 At the outset, the initiative was highly praised by ministers in the media ("Strategy 'Blurs the Lines'. Concerns over new 'eyes, ears' for police", *The Mercury*, pg. 8, 31 October 2008). In April 2009, 14 companies were included in the initiative, with approximately 86 vehicles (Interview: national project manager for Business Against Crime (BAC) for violent organised crime, 7 April 2009, Johannesburg).
- 19 The communications system consisted of a radio-equipped control room, portable radios, pagers, telephones, and other communication facilities. Although Securinet was expected to be a great success, the project collapsed after a short while. One interviewee claimed that the project became too overloaded and could not cope with the technical capacities (Interview: journalist, 13 November 2008). Others emphasised the lack of police commitment, alleging that "they didn't really put their heart into it" (Interview: individual involved in establishing Securinet, 27 February 2009). Another informant mentioned that the civilian hotline, run by civilians, which was established to receive complaints about government corruption, unleashed hostility between the different participants (Interview: security consultant, 12 August 2010).

numerous companies working in the area. The initiative included weekly meetings and joint operations between the police station and 17 “qualified” companies.²⁰ In the Bluff, a residential area in the south of Durban, the state police requested assistance from several private security companies from the area to assist in two operations in 2008 (Operation Clean Up and Operation November) focused on raiding squatter camps in search of drugs and stolen goods.²¹

“To talk and share”

The abovementioned initiatives are just a few examples of locally based policing partnerships between the private security industry and state police in South Africa. In the course of my fieldwork, the most common form of official cooperation between the state police and the private security industry that I encountered occurred during Ground Operational Co-ordinating Committee (GOCOC) meetings.²² These weekly meetings are organised by local police stations and attended by “outside members” such as representatives of private security companies, ward councillors, and chairpersons of community organisations, who are invited to “talk and share”. I regularly sat in on GOCOC meetings. Although the composition of the participants varied between stations, the general structure and order of events was similar: first, the police officers would present the crime trends of that week, often with specific crime statistics for the area in question, and then outside members would provide relevant information pertaining to crime.²³

These meetings are used to share “security data” (Lippert and O’Connor 2006: 53), discuss problems, and improve joint-policing efforts, as is shown in the following examples. In July 2010, the station commander of a police station complained about the poor notification of crime by several armed response officers, and then jokingly said, “I see these armed response cars speed past me on the road, and now I’m starting to follow them!” He urged the armed response companies to instruct their officers to notify the police when they are proceeding towards a serious crime, such as an armed robbery. During another meeting in July 2010, several state police officers complained about the poor conditions of several guard huts and about guards sleeping on duty. The station commander insisted that the companies in question provide better facilities for

20 The initiative started with 17 companies but the number has since dwindled to 11. At the time of research, only a handful actively participated (Interview: owner of a company involved in the initiative, 30 July 2010).

21 Interview: member of anti-crime community organisation, 1 April 2009.

22 These are also known as Extended Station Crime Combating Forum (ESCCF) meetings or SCCF meetings. They are accepted as a sub-forum of the community-policing forum (CPF), which is a legislative body, and are therefore compulsory. Yet several stations do not organise such meetings.

23 As discussed in chapter three, the release of crime statistics to the public is a highly debated issue. In these meetings, all parties agreed that crime information was not to be shared with other parties except those present.

their guards. "We need to increase our cooperation with the people on the ground," he reiterated, "so please assist us and take care of your guards; take them more seriously and encourage them not to sleep!"

Points of criticism and concerns also transpired in the opposite direction, when outside members asked the police to explain certain inconsistencies. Late arrivals by the police at crime scenes were the most recurrent issue. During a meeting in June 2010, the representative of a private security company stated that the company had received several complaints from both armed response officers and clients about the late arrival of the fingerprints department, which sometimes did not attend a site until several days after a crime had occurred. Community organisations often referred to specific crime incidents at citizens' homes where they believed the police had not dealt with the situation appropriately or efficiently.

GOCOC meetings are thus platforms where various stakeholders, particularly the police and private security companies, share information in order to enhance policing efforts. Throughout these meetings, there is a well-defined hierarchy among the participants: the SAPS are clearly in charge while the outside members were guests. Yet the potential contribution of the guests and their subordinate role did differ per area. In Pinetown, for example, the police officers vastly outnumbered the outside members whose contribution was limited. At Westville police station, the station commander was unquestionably in charge, yet the outside members were not an obvious minority. This resulted in a jovial atmosphere where the guests felt their contributions were appreciated, as a representative of a private security company explained to me after one of these meetings:

In these meetings, we know each other; it's like a small family gathering with a lot of trust and confidence in each other. I know my points will be listened to and taken seriously, while with the meeting last week [other area], we were there just for show. We are asked to speak up, but they don't actually listen to us or do anything with the information we give them. Here, our matters are dealt with.²⁴

A further interesting point is that some companies, often the larger ones, are represented at numerous GOCOC meetings, while some, usually the smaller ones, are not represented at all. In Sydenham, for example, the GOCOC list of outside members for November 2007 included 23 private security companies, but only five attended regularly. Larger companies are vested in more areas and have the financial capacity to employ

24 Interview: 4 August 2010. The jovial atmosphere of Westville's GOCOC meetings is linked to Westville community-policing forum's reputation as the most effective in the city. The Westville CPF also appointed a civilian to act as a liaison officer between the private security companies and the police station. According to this individual, cooperation between the two parties is impeded by the commercial nature of the industry (Interview: liaison officer and board member of Westville CPF, 2 April 2009).

individuals to attend these meetings.²⁵ The result is that a particular group of men hop from one meeting to the next and constitute a small network of knowledge brokers between the SAPS and the industry. Sharing information only takes place with a small segment of the industry and this group is not representative of the entire industry. This means that local security networks between companies and the state police are not uniform, particularly with regard to sharing crime intelligence.

The strategy of “partnership policing” envisioned by the post-apartheid South African state entails a “junior partner” model where the state police is the dominant actor and the private security industry is the “dominated actor”. Although this has not been formulated into a coherent national policy, this division of labour and form of “partnering” occurs through initiatives founded by municipal councils or police stations.

Meeting on the Streets: Informal and Ad Hoc Encounters

This section analyses the informal relationships and ad hoc encounters between armed response officers and police officers. It does not focus on a particular police station or company, therefore, but instead examines local security networks between armed response officers (and companies) and police officers from various companies and stations throughout Durban.

This section shows that these networks are also predominantly framed by a “junior partner” model, but that they are much more multifaceted and function more as “negotiated tactical alliances” (Baker 2010: 35). In agreement with Crawford and Lister (2006: 175), I argue that there is considerable heterogeneity in these local security networks due to divergent and changing circumstances. At times, armed response officers supplement and assist the police, while at other times, they compete and undermine the role of the state police by encroaching on their domain. But more importantly, these processes of collaboration and competition very often occur simultaneously. The networks are therefore not linear and straightforward, but are multifaceted, constantly in flux, and shaped by social networks and individual preferences and personalities. The result is that “clear lines of distinction between the roles and functions of public and private sectors” (Hummer and Nalla 2003: 89) are increasingly blurred, setting the scene for twilight policing practices. The following segments present empirical cases that permit further analysis of several factors that shape the diversity of the networks and the process of blurring between the private and public policing domain.

25 This is linked to the increasing focus on the “community” in the private security industry, an issue that is discussed in more detail in chapter seven.

Sharing information

February 2009

Around 6 a.m., Gayle and I received a call informing us that a client's son had been hijacked as he was driving out of his driveway. Anthony, a white armed response officer and Gayle's colleague, was already at the scene, and we dashed to the premises to assist him. Upon arrival, we encountered a middle-aged couple and their daughter, who provided us with the details of the hijacking. They told us that the son had been kicked out of the car by the side of the road and had fortunately found help to phone them. The father was rushing out to pick up his son while the tracking company continued to look for the vehicle. There was not much that we could do apart from staying with clients and waiting for the police out on the driveway. Gayle and Anthony complained about the long wait for the police, both in front of and with the clients. During this discussion, the clients, Gayle, and Anthony openly criticised the police and the South African government in general, so when the police arrived approximately forty-five minutes later, the situation was rather tense.

The police inquired about what had happened and were shocked to hear that the boy had been hijacked. Apparently, the company's control room had informed the police that this was a case of vehicle theft, not hijacking. The latter implies that the owner or driver of the vehicle is inside when it is stolen and is thus present when the crime occurs, whereas vehicle theft implies that no one is present, and thus, that it is less likely that the victim is hurt. The police therefore prioritise hijackings over vehicle theft. Clearly frustrated by the situation, the police officers began to quarrel with the armed response officers. The armed response officers were accused of being "stupid" and "useless" and for not doing their "job properly". One of the police officers explained to me: "If we would have heard hijacking, we would have run here, been here like now. But we heard vehicle theft, so there was no need to rush."

The police officers then encouraged the client to report the case: "Even though the car will be found, please report the case, so we can keep up our stats". When the police left, annoyed, the armed response officers told the client that the police officers had lied, that the control room was not to blame, and that the police used it as an excuse to justify their late arrival. Additionally, the armed response officers discouraged the client from reporting the case, saying it was "a total waste of time".



Private security companies have a certain degree of control over the flow of information to the police (Hobbs et al. 2002; Shearing et al. 1980: 197-198). Since many companies do not keep statistical records of the crime they encounter, tapping into this information is difficult. As the industry primarily serves clients, "networks may serve to exclude public police from important sources of information about security incidents, concerns, problems and responses to them" (Lippert and O'Connor 2006: 60). According to one

Indian station commander, the private security companies working in his area refused to share their crime records yet demanded that the SAPS share theirs.²⁶

During my research, I knew of many crime incidents that were not reported to the police. Although clients and citizens often made these decisions of their own volition, the hijacking incident discussed above shows how armed response officers also discourage clients from reporting crime because “there is no point” and “the police can’t help you anyways”. For example, in the event of an attempted housebreaking where nothing is stolen and citizens choose not to report the case, private security companies will not report it either. As one owner said to me, “There is a lot of crime that goes on without the SAPS even knowing the slightest thing about it. Completely out of their hands.”²⁷ This implies that the state police do not possess a monopoly on knowledge and expertise on crime, which undermines their dominant and “senior” position.

This hijacking case also serves as an example of miscommunication between the two policing bodies. In the eyes of the police officers, the armed response officers (or the company) had purposely withheld and/or conveyed wrong information. Many police officers accuse armed response officers and others in the industry of purposely providing false information to consolidate the poor reputation of the police. They claim that companies deliberately denigrate the so that clients are reminded of the need for private security. As one police officer told me, “These guys [armed response officers], when they come to a client’s house and there was a break in, something was stolen, or what not, they often tell them not to phone us; they say we’ll never come or that there’s no point. And they keep many clients like this.”²⁸

“Clients over crime”

May 2010

I was accompanying police officers on a day shift when we received a call from another police station asking us to check out an apartment in a nearby block of flats. When we got to the reception, the guard refused to let us in. He stated that the client, the property owners’ association, had instructed him to refuse entry to anyone without direct permission from the resident in question, and this included the police. Hearing this, the two police officers became extremely annoyed and demanded to be let in, repeatedly asserting, “We are the police!” One of the officers then ordered the guard to call his supervisor, and eventually, after a rather intimidating phone call, the guard let us in.²⁹

26 Interview: 3 April 2009.

27 Interview: owner of a company, 26 August 2010.

28 Interview: 8 May 2010.

29 During a chat with the guard a while later, without the presence of the police officers, he told me that the rules are strict because there were criminals living in the block of flats. He recalled an incident from the previous month where stolen vehicles were recovered in the car park of the building and a resident was arrested.

For the police officers, this was a prime example of private security officers obstructing them in their line of work, as one of them said to me afterwards:

The main problem with these guards, or with private security, is that they protect their clients. They only care about the interests of who pays them. I am here to protect the public, I serve the South African people, but he [a guard] serves those that pay... They listen to their clients more than they listen to us. I mean, it's fucking ridiculous! You won't let the police come in because the client says no? Since when do they decide what goes down here?



Although state police officers have far more legal powers than their counterparts in the private security industry, through their contractual agreements with clients, private security officers are permitted to search people and property, carry out various surveillance techniques, enforce sanctions, deny access, and evict individuals from private property (see chapter five). And, as the previous incident at the block of flats shows, these powers can undermine the authority of the state police. Furthermore, the two policing bodies often have different objectives: the security industry operates with a client-defined mandate, while the state police serve the general public. As argued by Dupont, networks do not always consist of a "shared objective or value, but instead a myriad of over-lapping interests brought together by informal, voluntary, contractual or regulatory ties" (2006: 39).

Many armed response companies have a strict policy of first and foremost ensuring the safety of the client and then attending to other matters. Due to this principle, it is often not possible to arrest or chase a suspect, particularly when there is limited manpower. Many in the state police resent this, as one officer explained:

For them, it's all about the client; it's about client over crime. Now if they hear about an armed robbery, or anything like that, and even if they know the client is okay, because he/she phoned in the whole thing, what these guys do, they go straight to the client, but don't think, "hey, these guys could be driving around somewhere, let me see if I can find them". That's how a cop thinks. And this frustrates us. Many guys get away; we never catch them.³⁰

Members of the industry are often not seen as real "crime fighters". Police officers often accuse owners and managers of companies of not putting "their heart into it" and only "listening to the jingle of their pockets". Another frequently heard statement – "They

30 Interview: police officer, 20 April 2010.

make money out of crime; we fight to get rid of crime” – highlights how police officers differentiate themselves from members of the industry.

Police officers often feel that armed response companies cite their relationship with the police to augment sales. A connection to the state is “used as a marketing tool – borrowing, as it were, the symbolic power of the police as a means to enrol customers and boost sales” (Goold et al. 2010: 15). Many police personnel expressed resentment about this, yet this appeared to be directed towards management and did not pertain to on-the-ground interactions between police officers and armed response officers. Although the latter unquestionably played the marketing card, police officers did not accuse them of “making money out of crime”, as they were aware of their poor employment standards. In fact, police officers often expressed pity for private security officers and claimed that their managers abused them.

On the other hand, private security companies also experience targets of resentment about financial issues. Many industry members claimed that the state police initiated relationships with them solely to use their financial resources and that they were threatened if they did not comply. The manager of a guarding company told me about an incident that occurred when his firm won the tender for guarding a new shopping mall. Several police officers from the local station had requested “sponsorship” from him; when he refused, officers from that police station stopped patrolling that area and turned up late whenever a crime was reported. Another black company owner had a similar perspective:

We avoid the police; too many long stories. When they help you, they expect something. I try to operate my business in the way we do it and leave the police out of it, because they either try to take your money or just make everything much more complicated. Police help never comes for free; there’s always a catch, and sometimes it bites.³¹

During a GOCOC meeting in June 2010, the discussion centred on the organisation of a new community-awareness event to increase participation in the local community policing forum (CPF). Throughout this conversation, the police officers repeatedly highlighted their lack of funding and the need for “donations”. When the meeting had come to an end, I spoke to some of the representatives of the private security companies who were clearly irritated by the police officers’ subtle call for financial assistance. One participant summarised their frustration as follows:

This sponsorship talk, these donations – that’s all we’re good for. They don’t give our guys more power, on the road, to actually fight crime, but it’s okay if

31 Interview: 26 August 2010.

we donate cars or computers. There's no problem with that? At these meetings, when we come, they start seeing money signs and sponsors, not partners, people to fight crime with.³²

In the eyes of the police, private security companies can provide crime intelligence and financial resources, but tensions emerge when this does not occur. In turn, private security personnel are willing to share their knowledge and resources, but they become frustrated when they feel that their contributions are abused and unappreciated.

"Getting in on the action"

June 2010

During a night shift with David, the control room informed us that the police had requested our assistance for a "dangerous operation". David and I rushed off to the police station, where we were told that there had been a tip-off that someone in one of the adjacent townships was in possession of a large stash of illegal firearms. The police were planning a raid and would need backup from David and the other armed response officers on duty at the time. For the remainder of the night shift, David was extremely excited and kept driving by the station to see whether there was any progress. He kept repeating that he wanted to "get in on the action". For the rest of the night shift, David narrated several past incidents when the company had assisted the police by providing additional vehicles, manpower, and firearms. Unfortunately for David, the raid never occurred.



David's enthusiasm is not uncommon: many armed response officers are eager to assist the police and to "get in on the action". This predominantly derives from the "wannabe policemen" culture of the armed response sector, as discussed in chapter five. As many armed response officers initially wanted to be policemen, or are managed by former policemen, they thrive on incidents where they are allowed to do more than simply patrol. Statements such as "we are policemen, we just don't do all of the boring paperwork" and "we are policemen, we just do a certain part of it" testify to this mentality. I therefore concur with a common claim in the literature that private security officers are generally supportive of and excited about cooperating with the police (Berg 2004a, 2004b; Manzo 2008; Nalla and Hwang 2006; Wakefield 2003). In fact, as Hummer and Nalla (2003) argue, security professionals are more positive about working with police officers, hold the police in high regard, value ongoing partnerships, and propose more cooperation for the future.

32 Interview: 4 August 2010.

Armed response officers and police officers face many of the same challenges in their respective lines of work, such as a lack of power to combat crime, an inability to please the public, a fear of legal prosecution, and various occupational hazards and risks. These similarities shape a shared policing mindset. In her analysis of the “bandit-catching” mentality of a particular group of private security officers in Cape Town, Berg (2010: 295) argues that these individuals act like the police and employ a similar mentality. The police do not feel threatened, therefore, because both parties are operating with the same mindset. Indeed, police officers can be highly complimentary about armed response officers; although they generally feel that the latter are “below” them in the policing hierarchy, many also regard them as “partners in crime” who face similar problems. It was common to hear police officers claim that “we can use all the help we can get”. But more importantly, as one police officer stated, “We’re fighting the same war: the war on crime!”³³

Yet despite these perceptions, armed response officers often feel unappreciated by the police. They claim that police officers do not realise that their role is indispensable. Common statements such as “we are always on the scene before them” and “we arrest the bad guys for them”, indicate how armed response officers place value upon the work they do for police officers. The “wannabe policemen” mentality can also create friction, as eagerness can lead to armed response officers stepping over the supportive role. One of my key informants, whom I refer to in chapter seven as an “active policer”, explained this problem as follows:

You see, all of them have a different part to play; from the car guard on the street to the national police commissioner, each person plays a different part in combating crime in this country. But there is hierarchy within the food chain of policing, and armed response officers are lower than police officers. They are above the security guards, and for some communities, they are very often the police, but they will never reach the same part of the chain...there is simply not room for both of them there. But when they [armed response officers] try to be there, or maybe when a police officer doesn't look out or slips up and brings one of them there, then there's a problem. Because then they don't know who's boss, who's in charge, who's the big daddy, you see? It is here where personal vendettas start to play; it is here when the manhood is threatened, when men become boys.³⁴

33 Interview: 15 March 2009.

34 Interview: 6 May 2010. The term “active policers” refers to individuals who are involved in policing in various ways.

Conflicts arise when armed response officers do not comply with the junior role envisioned for them. In such cases, police officers may perceive armed response officers as obstructive and disruptive. For example, police officers frequently voiced concern over the poor management of crime scenes, even after several police stations organised crime scene management courses for them.³⁵

"They're a bunch of criminals"

The mutual perceptions of police officers and private security officers are also shaped by events outside their work, a dimension that is often ignored in the literature. This section discusses how both parties characterise the other as "a bunch of criminals".

The SAPS generally has a negative reputation among the South African public, and as citizens, many armed response officers share public perceptions of the police as corrupt, understaffed, and inefficient. On the one hand, their perceptions of the police are more positive than those of the general public, because they do similar work and face comparable challenges. On the other hand, their views are more negative when they witness corruption and other police failings firsthand and experience this as an impediment to their own work. Armed response officers often described the police as exceptionally corrupt. My informants gave numerous examples of cases where they had arrested suspects who were subsequently released by the police and whose statements had "miraculously" disappeared. In November 2008, Gayle shared an incident that had occurred a few years before, when he had arrested a young male for drunk driving and illegal possession of a firearm, only to find out a few days later that the suspect had been released and the charges dropped. Apparently, the young man in question was the son of a police officer from a neighbouring station. Since then, Gayle had purposely taken photos of each suspect he arrested for use as evidence.

During my patrols, interviews, and interactions with the state police, many officers discussed how they did not trust their colleagues, as the following cases illustrate. While I was conducting a roadblock with the state police during a night shift in August 2010, two senior police officers told me of several occasions when they had arrested officers from other stations for drunk driving but that other police officers had not charged them. During a GOCOC meeting in July 2010, several police officers openly discussed the leaking of important information from police stations and the corruption of officials. Another example derives from a residential area where I often patrolled with armed response officers. In this particular area, several police reservists and police officers had established an active neighbourhood watch that included regular patrols. They worked closely with the armed response officers in the area, primarily by sharing information. Interestingly, the members of the neighborhood watch (i.e. police officers and reservists) did not disclose this information to the local police station. One police reservist

35 Interview: Superintendent, 3 April 2009.

explained to me how the police officers working at that station were untrustworthy and corrupt, and claimed that “I trust these guys [i.e. armed response officers] more than those”. In May 2010, I spoke with an Inspector, who explained how the lack of commitment and competence among policemen was one reason why he was supportive of the private security industry, especially armed response:

Go to the police station on a Tuesday night at three; go to the charge office and tell me what you see. Because what you’ll see are a bunch of sleeping policemen. You see, what they’re doing now is this. They train a policeman for a little while and they start him off in a crime prevention unit vehicle as a trainee with a constable. After one month or so he’ll be done, and then they’ll provide him with a trainee. So now this first guy has got no experience whatsoever and is expected to train the new student. It’s like the blind leading the blind. They’re so concerned with numbers and increasing the amount [of officers]...the quality is gone. And the worst part is that they’re putting people out on the streets, because they can’t do paperwork. Now, see, a lot of the guys, especially the Blacks, they are not good at writing statements and general office work. So they are put out on patrol. So now you’ve got the guys that *can* write statements, like ourselves, stuck in the charge office. But what’s more important? Admin work or actually catching the criminals? And this is why we need these guys [armed response officers] to work the ground for us. They can do the work, they can patrol, arrest criminals, even better than some policemen. And many of them, such as these two [two armed response officers present], I trust them more than the guys sitting inside with a uniform.

Unlike this Inspector, however, many police officers regard private security officers as “criminals in uniform” (see chapter five). While this aspersion is most often cast on other types of security officers, such as car guards and security guards, it is also applied to armed reaction officers. For police officers, however, this negative stereotype is associated less with the latter’s professional activities than with their private engagement in illegal activity, as one policeman explained:

The whole inside job thing, that happens with security guards, car guards, that level. For an armed response officer to be directly involved in an inside job, it’s difficult...it happens, but it’s rare and he’s gotta plan it out properly, from control room to the top, you know? So if I say an armed reaction guy is a criminal, I don’t mean in his work, but I mean outside work, back home, in the *location*.³⁶

36 “Location” was the term used for non-white urban areas up until the 1960s, when “township” became more common. The two continue to be used synonymously.

There they are drunks, smoke marihuana, visit prostitutes, have kids all over the place...that kinda thing. That's why they below us.³⁷

Armed response officers also hold disparaging views of one another. Indeed, while an individual officer will be quick to assert that he is not a criminal, he will not be shy about accusing his colleagues. During a focus group discussion with several armed response officers in March 2009, we discussed the possible provision of more legal powers to security officers. They all agreed that this was dangerous and said they understood the government's hesitation in granting these powers, as the following quote from one armed response officer points towards:

The problem is that not all of us are good at our job. You see, I've been doing this for 10 years. I know the law; I understand it. And I'm not stupid. But [name of fellow armed response officer]; he's 19, did his training a year ago, and hardly has any experience. I don't think he even knows what to do with an armed robbery. Now you can't go and give him more power, because he'll fuck it up, completely. Some of these guys are just stupid, and some will abuse [the additional power]. Will use the power for their own sake, you know? For their own games, to help out their friends...many guys can't be trusted.

Allegations of corruption and participation in illegal activities therefore occur in both directions of the local security network; they are fragmented, multifaceted, and often based on personal experiences. Police officers may work closely with some armed response officers but distrust others, and vice versa. Furthermore, both policing bodies direct these accusations towards their own colleagues, trusting some and suspecting others. The willingness of police officers and armed response officers to work together is therefore more often based on social networks and individual preferences than on whether they belong to a "state" or "non-state" policing body. This is also evident in the practice of moonlighting.

Moonlighting

December 2008

At the start of a night shift with Brian, while we were parked up on a busy street, I noticed a white male standing outside a grocery store having a heated argument with someone over the phone. When I pointed this out to Brian, he casually commented that the man was a police detective who guards the store for the owner, who is a friend, "on the side". Brian explained to me that many police officers of all different ranks are

37 Interview: 29 January 2009.

engaged in security-related work to earn extra money. He told me it's what they call "moonlighting".



Moonlighting is a phenomenon that is defined differently across the globe.³⁸ In chapter five, I referred to moonlighting as security-related employment undertaken by armed response officers outside their main job. In this chapter, however, moonlighting refers to *police officers* who are engaged in undocumented policing or security-related activities outside their work,³⁹ such as owning a private security company or working as a bouncer. This does not refer to "user-pays policing" (Ayling and Shearing 2008) or "privately paid public policing" (Gans 2000), which operate with consent from the larger state police apparatus. Rather, moonlighting here implies security-related work that is prohibited and does not appear in official records or occur through official channels.⁴⁰

According to my informants, moonlighting was non-existent in South Africa before the 1970s, when many police officers primarily earned their extra income in other sectors, such as construction work.⁴¹ With the tremendous boom of the private security industry in the 1980s, however, demand for security personnel increased, and those with expertise and high levels of training were preferred. Many police officers left the force to work in the industry, but some stayed with the state police and engaged in moonlighting as an extra source of income. One former police officer explained his reasoning to me:

We were asked to do this, because of our expertise. But also because of the image, the symbolicness, you know? When collecting a debt, a man in a police uniform was more effective; people assumed you would arrest them. We basically used our role as law enforcement officers to persuade people to do things, to enforce our authority in other areas. And people paid us nicely for it. It was good income for us. It was perfect for many of us who didn't wanna leave the police but needed the extra money. I wanted to do both, and I could...so I did.⁴²

38 See Ayling and Shearing (2008: 32-34) for various comparisons between countries and the different rules surrounding the practice of moonlighting. For more information on moonlighting, see Crawford and Lister (2006), Davis (2009), Grabosky (2004), Jones and Newburn (2002), and Reiss (1987).

39 In some cases, moonlighting refers to any income-generating activity performed outside work hours. In this chapter, however, moonlighting refers only to security-related activities.

40 In fact, Reiss (1987) states that "privately paid public policing" aimed to combat moonlighting.

41 The majority of my data regarding moonlighting originates from interviews with former police officers who were willing to discuss the issue. Many of these former officers were working in the private security industry at the time of this research.

42 Interview: 21 April 2010.

Many policemen worked as bouncers, bodyguards, or armed escorts or were engaged in debt collection or the eviction of squatters. Bouncing was the most common entry point to moonlighting; in the 1980s, most doormen were policemen who earned between R80-100 per night. Although bouncers were dressed in civilian clothing, people knew they were policeman. It was not talked about, however; as one former police officer told me, "Back then, all policemen did it; it was a normal part of the job, it's what you did on your off days, but nobody talked about it, explicitly...it remained hush-hush."⁴³

The situation changed in the early 1990s, when moonlighting began to receive a lot of negative publicity. With the explosion in taxi violence at the start of the decade,⁴⁴ news surfaced that many policemen were directly involved in this situation, as numerous police officers, both black and white, owned taxis or had invested in them.⁴⁵ This situation exacerbated when more cases surfaced of policemen using their firearms off duty. The Ministry of Safety and Security intervened by changing the "standing orders" of the Police Act. This amendment stipulates that police officers are allowed to engage in other income-generating activities, but that they must apply for permission from their station commander. Additionally, employment in certain sectors, such as the private security industry, is forbidden.⁴⁶

However, violations of these rules are not severely punished. If a policeman is engaged in security-related activities or in employment that he has not requested permission for, he is departmentally charged with "misconduct" or "failure to disclose other employment".⁴⁷ The punishment is usually a fine; dismissal is very rare and only occurs in the event of a serious crime. One informant told me of a police officer from a specialised unit who had his own private investigations company: he was charged departmentally and instructed to stop with a final written warning.⁴⁸ In addition to the amendment forbidding the employment of police officers in the security industry, PSIRA legislation also prohibits it. If police officers are registered as security providers, the first step is to deregister them. If they continue to operate, they are charged with operating an unregistered company. However, as PSIRA prosecutions are eventually referred to the SAPS, the majority of these cases are never dealt with. As a PSIRA inspector said to me, "eventually it is up to the police to police their police; we police the industry – must we now also include the police?"⁴⁹

43 Interview: former police officer, 26 April 2010.

44 Taxi violence refers to violence between taxi owners over transport routes. In KwaZulu-Natal, taxi violence was closely linked to the political violence between the ANC and IFP (Beinart 2001).

45 Interview: security consultant, 26 April 2010.

46 Interview: police officer, 30 April 2010.

47 Interview: former police officer, 16 August 2010.

48 Interview: police reservist, 6 May 2010.

49 Interview: PSIRA employee, 17 August 2010.

SAPS and PSIRA legislation prohibit moonlighting due to a conflict of interest. Police officers can easily use their authority to acquire clients; they can attend a crime scene as a police officer one day and return the next day as a sales rep to acquire the client. A police reservist provided an example of such a conflict of interest:

Take the case of a bouncer. Where is his loyalty? Let's say the club he works for is raided for whatever reason, such as possession of drugs or under-age drinking, or whatever. Will the police officer work as a policeman and assist the raid or will he lay allegiance to the owner and assist him?⁵⁰

The questions raised in the quote are of even more significance when police firearms are involved. Despite the legislation, many police officers and members of the industry approve of moonlighting. It was regularly described as “a part of the policing game” and as a way of assisting each other. As one owner of a company said, “I ask a lot of policemen to do work for me. I need the expertise, they need the money. It's a great deal, so why not?”⁵¹ Yet many informants were reluctant to talk about moonlighting. During a joint interview with two informants, one of them said to me, “It's not safe to talk about it – they'll have you arrested”.⁵² Whether or not this is true, such claims highlight the clandestine nature of moonlighting.

One police reservist claimed that police officers could earn up to R 5000 per month through moonlighting.⁵³ The most common forms of contemporary moonlighting are body guarding, business visits, bouncing, debt collection, and vehicle tracking. Body guarding pays approximately R 250-1000 per day and bouncing pays between R 300 to R 600 per shift. Guarding, particularly for large events, is also common, where police officers wear company uniforms and are paid approximately R 500 for a few hours' work.⁵⁴ One informant stated that armed escorting a truck to Johannesburg and back to Durban could earn a policeman approximately R 3,000.⁵⁵ Private investigation is another common form of moonlighting; it is often referred to as a system of “lick, stamp, and mail”, which implies that private investigators do the work and then “lick, stamp, and mail” it to the police.⁵⁶ In turn, police officers also provide private investigators with assistance. In fact, many informants claimed that most private investigative work is based on active cooperation between private and public bodies, either as a paid service or through reciprocal exchanges.

50 Interview: police reservist, 6 May 2010.

51 Interview: police reservist, 6 August 2010.

52 Interview: joint interview with two owners of private security companies, 22 April 2010.

53 Interview: police reservist, 31 August 2010.

54 Interview: owner of private security company and ex-police officer, 30 July 2010.

55 Interview: co-owner of a company and police reservist, 6 August 2010.

56 Interview: former police officer, 26 April 2010.

The type of moonlighting that raises most concern concerns police officers who own private security companies. A few ex-police officers provided a list of names of policemen who owned companies at the time of research. I knew several individuals on this list; in fact, two of them were informants whom I spoke to regularly, yet who had denied any engagement in moonlighting. One of them once stated to me, "I am very proud to say that I have never been engaged in any form of moonlighting. I have always been able to keep the two [state policing and private security] completely separate." However, other informants used this same police officer as an example of someone who engages in moonlighting: "He's been doing it for years – everyone knows it. You can see him, driving around in his police vehicle, checking up on his guards."⁵⁷

When police officers own companies, these are usually guarding companies. One ex-police officer once stated; "All policemen have a few guards – it's almost like their uniform."⁵⁸ Police officers who own such businesses generally employ approximately 10-20 guards so that it is not too obvious. Monitoring guards is easy, since this can be done during the company owner's shifts. Due to PSIRA legislation, a company is not registered in the officer's own name but rather in that of a relative, a police informant, or a friend.⁵⁹ As one police officer explained, "You're not allowed to own a company or do the physical work, but you can manage it."⁶⁰ Registering the company in someone else's name is referred to as "fronting" and is claimed to facilitate illegal behaviour.⁶¹ The only way to uncover this is to analyse the flow of money through financial audits. Although PSIRA has the legislation to implement such audits, this is rarely done.⁶²

Although my informants concurred that moonlighting remained a common phenomenon, several stated that it had diminished with the rise of corruption. One police officer explained that extra income was now generated through "spot fines", that is, demanding a fine (i.e. a bribe) on the spot. As he indicated, "Why work as a doorman for R 500 if you can make a *docket* go missing for R 10,000?"⁶³ Other informants noted how "sponsors" have replaced moonlighting. This refers to policemen demanding that private security employees provide "sponsorship", such as a portion of a guarding salary, in exchange for "police assistance".⁶⁴ One police officer framed it as a form of "policeman influence":

57 Interview: security consultant, 26 April 2010.

58 Interview: owner of private security company and ex-police officer, 30 July 2010.

59 It is common to register the company in a family member's name. The income accrued from the company's profits can then be labelled as a "family gift".

60 Interview: 30 April 2010.

61 Interview: former PSIRA council member, 26 August 2008.

62 Interview: former member of PSIRA council, 25 May 2010.

63 Interview: police officer, 30 April 2010. "Docket" refers to a police case/document.

64 Interview: owner of private security company, 2 August 2010.

For example, the owner of a hotel or bar wants to know where the road blocks will be on a certain night, so I'll offer to give him that information every week, as long as he'll have the bouncing and guarding done by a company that I suggest. If he says no, I can play a very dirty game and he knows it... So they almost always do it.⁶⁵

This police officer further narrated how the company he “suggests” will provide him with financial benefits. Policemen tied to certain companies can also exert power over other police officers. On this subject, many informants referred to a high-ranking police officer who was also the owner of a large company and was stated to have

[He] bought out the whole station; all those guys are working for him, protecting his clients and his interests. They're not policemen anymore, although they wear the uniform. They do police and private security work at the same time. That station is filled with corruption, political games, all money. Money from the industry is leading them, not passion.⁶⁶

One of the contemporary claims made regarding moonlighting is thus that police officers no longer earn extra money by conducting security-related work themselves; instead, they use their authority as police officers to arrange financial deals with the private security industry.

For many, the difference between moonlighting and corruption was racially tinted, as one police officer put it, “white policemen do security work, black policemen do spot work.”⁶⁷ Many informants claimed that white policemen were more involved in moonlighting due to their ties to the “old boys’ network”. Additionally, due to Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) standards, white policemen have fewer promotion prospects and are more dependent on extra income generated from moonlighting.⁶⁸ Due to affirmative action policies, their jobs are more at risk, and they perceive moonlighting to be less dangerous than corruption.

Moonlighting is a direct form of “boundary-crossing” (Davis 2009: 240). It is an explicit example of a practice that blurs the boundaries between public and private policing. This makes it increasingly difficult to distinguish between public and private officers, as one police reservist explained:

It's difficult to separate with all this intermixing between the forces; guys from SAPS are connected to the private security, and private security guys are doing

65 Interview: police officer, 30 April 2010.

66 Interview: two owners of private security companies, 22 April 2010.

67 Interview: 30 April 2010.

68 Interview: co-owner of a private security company, 6 August 2010.

police work, it's all mixed up. It doesn't have to be a problem – we are all here to fight crime. But it becomes a problem when there's a conflict of interest, when someone steps on someone else's shoes...uses their position on one side to influence the other. It's a problem when the law no longer matters.⁶⁹

Moonlighting contributes to creating the twilight zone, a sphere of uncertainty about the boundaries of public and private policing. Moonlighting is an explicit example of state police officers engaging in private policing practices, of police officers themselves creating and participating in the twilight zone. The "junior partner" model thereby becomes untenable to maintain in the face of back-door networks and social ties that continuously cross the public and private borders. Moonlighting also shows how personal links and social contacts between individuals from different policing bodies play a crucial role in shaping local security networks. Furthermore, moonlighting includes, and is based on, "hidden" social connections between various individuals that may not be evident at first, but that shape how policing is performed on the ground. I will develop this claim further in the next two sections.

The "old boys' network"

May 2010

I'm on night shift with David and we're on the trail of a suspect who threatened the relative of an important client with a firearm about an hour ago. At one point, we spot the suspect's vehicle coming towards us on a small windy road in a residential area. David drives into the middle of the road to cut the driver off, jumps out of the vehicle, and yells at me, "Put your head down Tessa, put it down!" He then commands the man to get out of his vehicle. At this point, Matthew, our backup, arrives at the scene, and he searches the vehicle while David searches the suspect. The suspect is clearly intoxicated; he is unable to stand up straight and his speech is slurred and incoherent. After a round of questioning, the suspect admits to having a firearm, which he duly hands over to David. David then contacts the complainant (i.e. the client's relative) to ask him to come to the scene and identify the man.

When the complainant arrives, he immediately runs up to the suspect and punches him in the face. The two men start yelling at each other, and David and Matthew are forced to intervene. Matthew then handcuffs the suspect. We step aside, and the complainant says to David, "Let me just fuck him up a little bit, come on. A few slaps here and there." David and Matthew answer with a firm "no" to ensure that the complainant does not hit the suspect. Matthew then turns to me and explains: "We can't let him do anything because he is related to one of our clients. We can't risk him getting

69 Interview: 6 May 2010.

into trouble. Normally, we let them go ahead, but we can't take a chance to lose the client."

The next step is to contact the police, but the control room promptly informs us that they cannot attend the scene because they only have one vehicle for the night and it is engaged elsewhere. Matthew and David become irritated and go off on a rant about the police. They then consider their options. The first is to wait, which they are loath to do since they had to wait for the police for three hours following a vehicle theft during last night's shift. The second option is to contact another police officer. David provides the control room with a list of phone numbers of police officers that he knows throughout the province, but all of them are either off duty or engaged elsewhere. The third option is to take the suspect to the station themselves, but they could get charge with "kidnapping" if they did this.⁷⁰

While Matthew and David are discussing their options, we suddenly spot two police vehicles driving towards us. David whispers to me, "Let's hope we have a good shift tonight". As the cars come closer, David starts to smile. He sees that the Inspector on duty is Manesh, an Indian policeman he knows very well, who is part of the "good shift". Manesh steps out of the vehicle and says playfully, "Why didn't you guys just bring him to the station? Why did we have to come all of the way out here?" While the other police officers attend to the suspect and complainant, Manesh chats with David and me. With a smirk on his face, he asks David, "How come this guy looks so good?" They both start laughing.

Shortly afterwards, the police take the suspect back to the station, and David also goes along to make a statement. I go with him, assuming that we will be there all night, but we are out of the station in fifteen minutes. David then says to me, "What happened tonight was good. We arrested a guy, got the SAPS out here, they helped us, I wrote my statement, and now I'm out, ready to continue my work, to arrest the next guy. No hours of waiting at the station, no funny questions asked. But we were lucky, because Manesh was on duty. Tonight was the good shift."



Besides the observation(s) that David and Matthew patrolled the public realm and ensured that the complainant did not use more violence, the main point I want to make here concerns the use of social networks. David is a white armed response officer who previously worked in the apartheid armed forces. Due to his background, he knows many police officers in the area he works in, whom he calls on "in times of need", as he did in this incident. David describes Manesh as part of the "good shift", which refers

70 This option also leaves the suspect's car unattended. At one point, David and Matthew consider having me drive the suspect's vehicle to the police station. However, I quickly make it clear I will not get involved.

to a group of police officers at the local police station who regularly collaborate with the armed response officers from the company David and Matthew work for. The "good shift" has a positive attitude towards the company, appreciates their work, and assists them when possible, which sets it apart from the "bad shift".

The distinction between good and bad shifts is primarily based on social connections that stem from the "old boys' network" (Hummer and Nalla 2003; Rigakos 2002: 39; Shearing and Stenning 1983). As discussed in chapter three, the "old boys' network" refers to a pool of white men within the industry and the apartheid armed forces, which also facilitated the entrance of former policemen and soldiers into the private security industry (Shaw 2002; Singh 2008). As many had worked together as police officers, collaborative relationships between the two policing bodies continued after several of them left to work in the private security industry. Such relationships were particularly common in the armed response sector, since many police officers started armed response companies as "one-man shows".

Another example of a collaborative police-armed response relationship that I encountered in the field was that between the owner of a community-based company and a police officer who had previously worked in the police force together. The two men frequently conducted night patrols and responded to incidents together; in fact, the owner of the company would rarely go out on patrols unless his "police friend" was on duty. They claimed that cooperating was enjoyable and led to more efficient policing. However, this friendly working relationship also involved some shady practices. For example, by sharing a police radio, the owner had direct access to police communication and was therefore able to choose which crime scenes he would attend.⁷¹ His presence at particular, often high-profiled, crime scenes appeared in the local newspapers and functioned as a marketing strategy for the company, which further highlights how security firms often engage in "symbolic borrowing" (Thumala et al. 2011: 294) from the state. As the owner stated, "I'm a small company, not so many clients, so this here, this radio, this keeps my clients; it makes me look good". But more importantly, the owner also used his police connections to cover his tracks. If he acted outside the parameters of the law, which he was renowned for doing, he always had a police witness to uphold his narration of events.

In other cases, the personal connections between police officers and members of the industry are less obvious. One example used by many informants was a local Tracker project. Due to the success of the national partnership between the SAPS and Tracker, the head of Tracker in KwaZulu-Natal implemented a pilot project in 2009 called the "private user programme", whereby private security companies acted as additional response teams to assist Tracker in retrieving vehicles. Tracker identified four companies

71 This is illegal, and the police officer was risking his job by permitting this.

as collaborators based on their reputation and location.⁷² However, when I discussed this partnership with other informants, many claimed that it was based social ties between a group of former police officers. Apparently, the owners of the chosen companies and several employees at Tracker were all former policemen who had worked together at the same police station. The partnership was thus regarded by many as a self-serving scheme to ensure that these former colleagues could work together within a new structure and with different titles. Although this did not result in any direct financial gain for the companies, it enhanced their reputation and served the eagerness for armed response officers to “get in on the action”.

In their study on security intelligence networks in Ontario, Canada, Lippert and O'Connor (2006) argue that interpersonal connections based on the migration of personnel from the public police to the security industry no longer plays a major role in the sharing of security intelligence. In my research, moonlighting was also claimed to be less prominent than in the past. The first reason for the aforementioned claim is that it is currently rare to find armed response officers who are former policemen; David is an exception in this regard. Nowadays, policemen who enter the industry do so in more lucrative sectors, such as investigations or tracking, or at the management level. Although their policing mentality may trickle down to operations (see chapter five), it does not define on-the-ground interactions. A second alleged cause of the demise of moonlighting concerned racial issues. As the “old boys’ network” stems from the apartheid era, it necessarily comprises of white individuals. The decrease in the number of white police officers has reduced the frequency of interactions between policemen and private security personnel, and has thereby lessened the opportunities for moonlighting. As the white owner of an armed response company mentioned:

A lot of white cops have left... I’m not gonna be received with open arms by a black policeman who wants to help me out. If the police still had a lot of Whites, or if more companies had black employees, or representatives, then the relationship with the SAPS would be much, much better.⁷³

Yet despite the claimed demise of moonlighting that largely stems from the “old boys’ networks”, I conclude that the “old boys’ networks” continue to shape local security networks. However, past professional and social connections can also lead to hostile relationships, where the “old boys’ network” can better be characterised as an “*old boys’ feud*”. The following section analyses a case involving the same company that David works for to show how social connections can create a “bad shift”.

72 Interview: operations manager, KZN Tracker, 1 July 2010.

73 Interview: white owner of an armed response company, 1 September 2010.

"Old boys' feud"*June 2010*

During shift change, a bunch of us are sitting outside the company office and chatting. At one point, an armed response officer arrives and hands over a plastic bag to Paul, the owner of the company. I ask Paul what's inside and he says "drugs". I initially assume that he's joking, but then a guard from the company appears and Paul shouts at him and slaps him in the face a few times. The guard is taken downstairs to the outside patio. Upstairs, we open the packet and find eight small packets of marihuana. Paul quickly gives me the background to this story: due to mounting suspicions that the guard was selling drugs at his site (a high school), Paul instructed some of the armed response officers to investigate the situation, and their fears were soon confirmed. The managers decided to bring the guard to the office for disciplinary action. Paul was clearly frustrated about the situation, saying things such as "Here we are fighting crime and this guard is wearing our uniform and selling drugs to schoolchildren" and "we have to take action and defend our reputation".⁷⁴

As a group, they discuss what to do next. One option is to phone the police and hand the guard over, but everyone is against this option. They believe that the police will not deal with the case properly or that they will only charge the guard for possession of drugs rather than for distribution. They also feel that it is their responsibility to deal with the matter. They decide to resolve this case without the help of the SAPS by finding the supplier of the drugs. Apparently, the guard provided information about the supplier's whereabouts to two of the armed response officers and offered to guide them there. In actuality, this information was likely obtained under duress; when the guard is brought back upstairs, he has obviously been physically assaulted as he is covered in cuts and bruises.

In two vehicles, we head off to a neighbouring Indian township, where we stop at a shack adjacent to a brick house. When we get out, a crowd of people immediately surround us and it gets bigger throughout the entire ordeal. The "supplier" is not at home, but the company employees search the shack extensively for drugs. While I remain outside and try to deflect any attention, I hear things breaking and people being pushed around inside the shack. A few seconds later, the armed response officers all walk out of the shack and one of them holds up a bag that they found inside a drawer that contains 38 small packets of marihuana. At this point, the guard's wife and family arrive at the scene and a family dispute erupts, with the wife hitting the guard several times. Paul turns to the crowd and declares, somewhat piously, that the company employees will need to take the guard to jail to set an example. He repeatedly stresses that the

74 As discussed in chapter five, cases such as this, where a guard is selling drugs to schoolchildren, become highly morally charged. In these instances, the use of violence is tolerated or even perceived as necessary to deal with such "evils".

company will not tolerate this type of behaviour. Before we leave, one of the armed response officers is instructed to hide any evidence of their search of the shack.

Now that they have found more marihuana, they collectively agree that they have enough evidence to go to the police, who will be forced to charge the guard with drug dealing. The three armed response officers who initially arrested the guard (and brought him to the company office) proceed to take him to the police station to make a statement, while the rest disperse to continue the night shift and I join David on his patrols. A little while later, we hear over the radio that the three armed response officers are still at the police station, so David and I go there to find out what is going on. When we enter the charge office of the station, we see the three officers standing in a cell: they have been arrested for “assault GBH” – assault of grievous bodily harm.

As we step outside the police station, we come across two familiar policemen. The more senior one explains to us how stupid we are: “I can’t believe you did this. You guys took the risk for something so small? You fucked the guy up completely and then bring him here for marihuana? You don’t bring in a guy bleeding like that and then say that nothing happened. At least be smart enough to give a statement that makes it look like you had to use the force you did; then it’s fine, but like this, come on!!”

The rest of the night shift is filled with speculations, chatter, and gossip about what happened, and when I return home as the sun starts to rise, my thoughts keep me from sleeping. Although I am worried about the armed response officers in jail, I also sympathise with the police. I may not have actually witnessed any of them hitting the guard, but I am certain that they inflicted physical pain on him. I am deeply torn between empathising with my informants and judging their behaviour.

It is not until two days later during a day shift that the three armed response officers in question tell me what happened that night.⁷⁵ Apparently, they were framed. They first reiterate their innocence by stating that although they had arrested the guard and taken him to the office, they were conducting patrols when the rest of us visited the supplier’s shack and had therefore not been a part of the entire ordeal, which I realise is true. They then tell me that when they arrived at the police station, the guard was arrested and taken into custody by the police. However, the commanding police officer questioned him about his visible wounds, and the guard stated that he had been assaulted by Paul, but not by any of his three escorts. The commanding officer then instructed the guard to change his statement to say that all three of the armed response officers had also assaulted him. The guard was convinced by the commanding officer’s promise that he would only have to pay a small fine and release him. The guard went along with the plan, which resulted in the arrest of the three armed response officers. I was initially hesitant to believe this story, as it implied that the commanding officer had unlawfully arrested them and purposely altered the guard’s statement. Yet over the next few days, I spoke

75 They were released the following night, having spent just over 24 hours in jail.

to other police officers who were also on duty that night, and they each confirmed the response officers' account.



Whether the armed response officers were really framed is not the point I want to make. Rather, what I want to show here is that the hostile relationship between this particular police officer and the armed response officers was shaped by previous interactions and can only be understood with background information about the company and police station in question.

During my time in Durban, I heard from various sources – police officers, employees of the company, community members, and so on – that there was a very hostile relationship between the owner of the company, Paul, and a high-ranking Indian police officer, Robert, which stemmed from the time when Paul worked as a police reservist. One theory for this enmity was that Paul was often guilty of illegal misconduct as a police reservist, primarily due to his excessive use of force. He continued such practices with his own company, and the police regarded this as vigilante behaviour. The second theory was that Paul was an efficient police reservist who chalked up a lot of arrests, which incited jealousy among other police officers. Paul claims he was “bullied away” by a specific group of police officers, of which Robert was the ringleader. This encouraged him to start up his own company, which has gradually become a successful one that plays a large role in policing the community. Therefore, rather than constituting an “old boys’ network”, the social connections here resulted in a competitive and hostile relationship.

Furthermore, various interlocutors told me that moonlighting also played a role in this antagonistic relationship, as Robert owned a guarding company that was registered under his wife’s name and that competed directly with Paul’s company. Two different forms of competition thus shaped this hostile relationship: that between the private security company (and its employees) and the police, and that between two private security companies, in which one is owned by a public official. The conflict of interest resulting from Robert’s moonlighting entered the domain of public law enforcement and had a tremendous impact on the overall relationship between Paul’s company and the police station. I want to stress that obtaining information about this issue was not easy since many informants were very reluctant to discuss it publicly, as is shown by the following comment from a member of the local CPF board:

I would like to tell you about it, but I can't, it's too risky. But what I can say is: it's not about two organizations; it's about individual and personal fighting and

problems. And if the situation doesn't get better, then innocent lives will go to jail. We need to come up with a solution or the situation is going to burst.⁷⁶

Although the animosity between Paul and Robert was rather extreme, hostile relationships between particular police officers and members of the industry are not uncommon. Thus, social ties between the two policing bodies do not always mean that a local security network is more efficient and appreciated. Old social connections, what I have labelled here as an "*old boys' feud*", can also be the source of rivalry and competition between different policing bodies.

We therefore see two contrasting local security networks between one company and one police station, referred to by David as the "good shift" and the "bad shift". These contrasting relationships are a main source of the "gambling" sensation highlighted by Gavin in the introduction. In both cases (i.e. the incident involving David, Matthew, and Manesh and that of the guard selling marihuana), we see how armed response officers contemplate whether or not to involve the SAPS when an incident arises. Both episodes required the armed response officers to weigh up their options. Although their eventual decisions were based on numerous factors, the likeliness of encountering the "good" or "bad" shift was pivotal. This also highlights how armed response officers and other members of the industry are aware of their subordinate role in relation to the state police, who ultimately define the outcome of an incident. The dominant position enjoyed by police officers is also evident when armed response officers use violence.

"They do our dirty work"

November 2008

During a day shift with Gayle, we received a rather strange call from a client about a young boy who was tied to a tree. We were given an address, but when we arrived at the scene, we couldn't find anything. After back and forth communication with the control room, we learned that the tied up boy was somewhere on the streets, close to the client's residence. We drove around the neighbourhood for a while and then saw two middle-aged black women hailing us to stop. As the car slowed down and we came closer, we saw a young black male with his hands tied behind a tree. He was only wearing shorts and had obviously been beaten, as he was bleeding from several places and had numerous scratches on his body. A strand of mucus hung from his nose and saliva streamed from his mouth. He was making incomprehensible noises, moaning, and speaking gibberish. The two women were laughing and yelling at the boy. They told us that two boys had robbed them on the street, but they had chased after them and were able to catch one of the culprits, whom they then beat and tied up.

76 Interview: 22 May 2010.

Shortly afterwards, the police arrived on the scene. The three police officers, Gayle, and the two women all laughed at the boy and called him a "retard" because of his appearance and obvious speech impediment. I felt rather out of place. One of the police officers then stepped towards Gayle and me and said with a smile on his face, "You had fun with this one, didn't you?" Another police officer then untied the boy and smacked him a few times before handcuffing him, at which the police officer next to us then said, "Don't worry, we'll make it that he got out of hand".



In the case discussed above, the police officers not only assumed that Gayle had hit the boy but also openly condoned it, stating that they would "cover" it up for him. This "covering up" was also evident in the preceding example, in which a senior police officer reprimanded the armed response officers not for their use of violence towards the guard but for not being "smart enough" in covering up their tracks. This raises questions about how police officers perceive and act upon armed response officers' use of violence.

In much of the literature on policing, police officers are defined as enforcers of the law who represent the "legal" side of policing, particularly when private security officers use violence. In their case study, Sharp and Wilson highlight how the public police was negative about a particular private security company because they were "taking the law into their own hands" and operating "on the fringes of the law" (2000: 127). In his case study, Noaks also shows how the public police were unwilling to work with certain private security officers due to the latter's "tendency to come in all guns blazing" (2000: 154).

Although I experienced a few instances where police officers stepped in and arrested armed response officers for malpractice, such as assault, I predominantly experienced the opposite, when the use of force was condoned or even encouraged by police officers. I frequently saw suspects handed over to the police with clear signs of assault, which the police duly ignored. The incident involving David, Matthew, and Manesh was one example, with Manesh, the police officer, expressing his surprise that the suspect still "looks good". Additionally, David and Matthew stopped the complainant from hitting the suspect for the primary purpose of retaining their client, not out of fear of punishment by the police. Many police officers voiced sentiments such as "they [armed response officers] do our dirty work" and even claimed to be grateful that they (the police officers) didn't have to "get their hands dirty". As noted by Baker, the "state police may outsource their 'dirty work' to nonstate agents that, as the police, they are not entitled to perform" (2010: 33). In this perspective, the use of violence by armed response officers does not undermine the role of the state; rather, it is a form of outsourcing.

In chapter one, I discussed how violence is the source of power, the means to create and maintain a particular social order. I also discussed how state law primarily defines sovereignties based on the use of violence. This was exemplified with reference

to the distinction between vigilantism and private security, whereby violence used by vigilante organisations is defined as illegal and violence used by private security officers is generally regarded as legal, since they operate within the legal parameters of the state. However, this case of the tied-up boy and many others that I observed in the field show that this distinction is not always clear cut. Although Gayle did not use violence on the boy, the police officers assumed that he had and tolerated it. And as will become clear in chapter eight, the use of violence by armed response officers does not always operate within the legal parameters of the state. Yet if it is tolerated or even encouraged by state officials, can we define it as illegal? Furthermore, can we assume that police officers always represent the state? Jensen (2003, in Baker 2010: 34) argues that state representatives often “shed their stateness” and act independently from state rules. Can the condoning of violence by a police officer therefore be seen as a practice of state sovereignty?

Furthermore, I want to highlight here that interventions on part of police officers are very often based on their social connections with armed response officers, as several cases in this chapter have shown. Such connections often determine whether police officers decide to enforce the law. In the case of the tied-up boy, Gayle told me afterwards that he did not know the three police officers personally, but that his boss (i.e. the owner of the company), was good friends with one of the high-ranking police officers at that station. The company as a whole was therefore viewed positively by these police officers. Perhaps the police officers would have acted differently if armed response officers from another company had attended this incident?

Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, I have analysed the relationship between the private security industry and the state in South Africa. I first examined state regulation of the industry by PSIRA and argued that, despite its encompassing nature, it is subject severe criticism. Furthermore, state regulation does not necessarily determine the daily interactions of armed response officers with the “state”. Rather, the latter are defined by their encounters with police officers. The state can therefore implement a far-reaching regulation scheme that empowers various government agencies to oversee different parts of the industry, but the impact of state regulation on the actual policing practices of armed response officers are largely dependent on the practices of state police officers. As a former member of PSIRA’s council put it, “How can PSIRA address illegalities in the private security industry if police officers are the ones doing it and encouraging it?”⁷⁷

77 Interview: 25 May 2010.

It therefore seems that it is not only a matter of regulating the industry, but also about regulating the practices of state police officers.

This chapter has shown how the South African state envisions interactions between armed response officers and police officers to occur within a "junior partner" framework. Yet due to the lack of a national agreement that outlines how "partnership policing" should occur, interactions between armed response officers and police officers are very often informal, ad hoc, and based on social networks. We have seen how private security companies engage in policing activities that occur without police supervision. Moreover, I have shown how the state police may not always be in possession of all available crime data and may not determine or control all of the mechanisms and processes that occur in local security networks, which threatens their dominant and senior position. As armed response officers increasingly enter the public realm and engage in "state-like performances" (Buur and Jensen 2004: 144), they challenge the state's role and incite feelings of competition between the policing bodies. Furthermore, with decreasing public confidence in the state police and clients demanding to have their own police force, the role of the public police is becoming increasingly peripheral. Meanwhile, private security companies, which are often regarded as more reliable and efficient, continue to grow in popularity.

However, the eagerness of private security personnel to cooperate with the police shows that the state is far from obsolete. Private security employees actively build alliances with the police, particularly through social connections. Armed response officers also mimic the state and thereby (re)produce its "procedural and symbolic forms of legitimacy" (Buur 2006: 750). Security networks between police officers and armed response officers are thus "negotiated tactical alliances" (Baker 2010: 35) that are simultaneously competitive and collaborative.

All this points towards the performance of policing practices in an ambiguous domain, namely the twilight zone, and this chapter has shown the active role of police officers in creating and participating in this zone. This is particularly evident in the instances of moonlighting, whereby police officers engage in private policing practices. Engagements in moonlighting show that private and public bodies can be distinguished by their uniforms and other aspects of their appearance, but that their motivations and actions do not always match this physical distinction. Determining whether a practice is "public" or "private" is increasingly difficult. A police officer may represent the state in uniform, but if he/she is motivated by financial gains or by acts of reciprocity within a social network, then what and who does he represent? And if an armed response officer is managed by a former police officer and regularly works with police officers and supports the latter's actions, then how "private" is his position and performance? With citizens increasingly claiming that the two policing bodies are essentially the same, is there even any need to make such a distinction? As argued by Davis, "when the same individuals or networks of armed professionals move back and forth between the state

and civil society, sharing knowledge and personal relations, it is harder for citizens to leverage institutional accountability, and abuse of coercive power is more likely to continue” (2009: 239).

Ultimately, however, I conclude that it is the state police who decide if and how networks remain in play, either through front-door, official channels or through back-door operations and informal mechanisms. Schmitt’s (1985) idea that the sovereign power of the state rests in the monopoly to decide rather than the monopoly to rule implies that police officers are the “deciding” actors who determine how a network unfolds. I therefore concur with scholars such as Loader and Walker (2004, 2006), who argue that it is ultimately the state and its representatives that determine the course and nature of local security networks. It is the state that “structures the security network both in its presence and in its absence, both in its explicit directions and in its implicit permissions” (Loader and Walker 2004: 225). Although there are “multiple sovereignties” (Bertelsen 2009), this research concurs with Rigi’s (2007: 41) claim that representatives of the state are “the final arbiters” (2007: 41): they have the final say about which sovereign practices are honoured.

However, this decision-making process is not always steered by “state-based policies”, but social networks, financial gains, and individual personalities also play an equal, if not greater, role. This does not diminish the role of police officers as “arbiters”; it simply makes the process much more complex. And as the policing practices in these networks are often informal and ad hoc, they are continuously in flux, which further attests to the precarious and unpredictable nature of twilight policing. This creates immense uncertainty for armed response officers, as they often have no idea how the police will react to their actions. This is encapsulated in the “gambling” sensation described by Gavin in the introduction, which also highlights the subordinate position of armed response officers in relation to the state police. As Nick, an armed response officer, once said to me, “It’s all about the guys at the station. We’re always willing, but no matter what we think or do, they decide. It all comes down to them.”⁷⁸

78 Interview: 20 November 2008.

7

“Getting Connected with the Community”: The Beneficiaries of Armed Response

Introduction

December 2008

It’s one of my first night shifts with Brian and we head out to meet a client who’s just reported a break-in. Another reaction officer, Mark, is waiting for us at the client’s premises. On our way there, Brian emphasises that this client is the leading member of one of the company’s “special projects” and therefore needs “extra special attention”; we will need to on our “best behaviour”, he explains. When we arrive at the scene and begin talking with the client, I observe how Brian is indeed putting on his best behaviour and treating this client differently – better – than others.

A few hours later, while we’re having a cup of coffee at a gas station, we hear over the radio that Tim, one of Brian’s colleagues, has just escorted a female client from her workplace to her residence. Over the radio, other reaction officers are making crude jokes, complaining about her demands, and mocking her “paranoid” behaviour. Brian explains that this client requests escorts frequently and is “a bit of a pain”. A few minutes later, a white male in his late 40s knocks on Brian’s window and they strike up a conversation about the current crime situation in the area. The man fills Brian in on recent crime activity and what he and his colleagues need to look out for, and also asks Brian for any relevant crime updates. When the man leaves, Brian explains to me that this man isn’t a client of the company but someone who conducts patrols in this neighbourhood and “helps us out”.

A few weeks later, Brian and I are reflecting on this particular shift. I question him about these different interactions with clients and citizens, and he replies as follows:

You see, every client, every person, needs a different approach, and when you’re in the game long enough, you know this. Now, you don’t know exactly how to be with every single person coming up to you, but with every company, there are different types of clients that need a different type of way. And if you work for a company long enough, you suss it out, you start to feel it, it becomes a part of it all, this work. Some clients want more; some want less. Some clients want to be treated like they own the fucking world; others want you to do your job and just get out of there. Some guys think what we doing is worthless; others look out for us and take the time. But at the end of the day, they’re all clients, or people that

the company wants to be clients, and they tell us what to do. That's the same, no matter where you go.



This extract from my field notes shows the different types of clients and the variety of encounters between Brian and citizens from one a single shift: a client who needs “special attention”, a client who is “a bit of a pain”, and a supportive citizen engaged in his own policing efforts who “helps us out”. This chapter will analyse various forms of interactions and relationships between the armed response sector and citizens (mainly clients) and how they shape the foundation of the twilight zone.

Citizen-based initiatives for fighting crime, both individually and collectively, are plentiful in South Africa and range from individual patrols to entire “communities of security”.¹ These initiatives, which are often categorised as forms of “self-policing”, “citizen policing”, or “community policing”, have been extensively studied in the South African context.² However, there are only a few studies that have analysed the interactions and relationships, both formal and informal, between citizen-based policing initiatives and private security companies worldwide, particularly ethnographically (Brown and Lippert 2007; Crawford and Lister 2006; Marks and Wood 2007; McManus 1995; Noaks 2000). This chapter thus sheds light on a largely unexplored terrain in studies on private security, for South Africa and beyond.

I make this contribution by analysing the various interactions and relationships between armed response companies – at the level of management and operations – and citizens, particularly clients, through the framework of local security networks (Dupont 2004). Although I examine the perspectives of clients and managers, my primary focus is the experiences and perceptions of reaction officers. I distinguish between formal security networks, which are networks based on an official partnership between a client and a company and governed by a contractual agreement, and informal security networks, which are networks in which the interactions are not based on an official contractual agreement. Formal security networks consist of “clients” (i.e. paying citizens), while informal security networks consist of both clients and non-clients (i.e. non-paying citizens). I further differentiate between high-maintenance, collaborative, and competitive local security networks that can be both formal and informal. Although

1 At the beginning of my fieldwork, I wanted to map out all the different citizen-based initiatives found in Durban. However, I quickly realised that this was a futile task as there were simply too many.

2 For literature on a wide range of forms of community policing in South Africa, see Bénéit-Gbaffou (2008), Emmett and Butchart (2000), Gordon (2001), Marks and Bonnin (2010), Marks and Wood (2007), Schärf (1989), and Steinberg (2008). For studies on vigilantism, see Buur (2005, 2006), Buur and Jensen (2004), Minnaar (2004), and Oomen (2004); and for research on gangs, see Glaser (1998, 2000), Jensen (2008), Kinnes (2002), Kynoch (1999, 2005), Pinnock (1997), Standing (2006), and Steinberg (2004).

these categorisations highlight the diversity of local security networks, they all show how clients and citizens play a crucial role in creating the foundation for twilight policing.

This is for two reasons. The first is that clients are undoubtedly the "dominant actors" in these networks. I concur with Shearing and Stenning (1983), Lippert and O'Connor (2006), and Wakefield (2003) that clients play a vital role in determining the nature of security provision. The second reason concerns the main contemporary trend of the industry, namely the establishment and growth of "collective arrangements". This refers to (in)formal schemes whereby citizens "club" together to benefit collectively from armed response. Through these arrangements, armed response companies are "getting connected with the community" and increasingly serving "communities of security" that mandate them to operate in public spaces. Due to the dominant position of clients and the growth of various collective arrangements, armed response officers are engaged in an array of policing tasks that occur in the public realm. Clients are therefore also responsible for creating and perpetuating the twilight zone.

The first section of this chapter analyses the general demand for private security. It examines how fear, and particularly fear of crime, shape the (perceived) need for private security and the desire to upgrade into a "collective", how the state police has encouraged this trend through the neoliberal profiling of citizens as "responsible citizens", and how certain marketing strategies imposed by the industry have accelerated the establishment of collective arrangements. This section thus elucidates why citizens subscribe to private security companies, particularly armed response, and why they increasingly establish a collective arrangement. The second section analyses various types of formal and informal local security networks. I also distinguish between high-maintenance, collaborative, and competitive networks to show the diversity. The third section examines further repercussions of the growth of collective arrangements in shaping exclusionary policing practices. The creation of such arrangements does not always result in unified communal entities, and this complicates the policing efforts of armed reaction officers. The growth of collective arrangements creates (imagined) borders between communities. Armed response officers are ascribed the role of "gate-keepers" to police these borders, yet are continuously negotiating their own position along them. This chapter ends with some concluding remarks that emphasise how "getting connected with the community" sets the stage for the performance of twilight policing.

Understanding the Demand

An analysis of the demand for private security is needed to understand the vast size of the private security industry and the growth of collective arrangements. This section addresses this issue by exploring how citizens, state police officers, and the private security industry create this demand.

“It makes me feel safer”*July 2010*

I accompanied Sally, a white female in her late 30s who is a sales rep in a large armed response company, for a day to analyse her work. Our third port of the call was a young woman who had recently moved back to Durban after living abroad for over a decade. She was a new client and wanted to install a completely new security package, so Sally inspected her residence and advised her on the type of technical installation she would need for maximum security. At one point the client and I were standing outside and she told me that she had been back in the country for just a few days and that this was her first “home-coming” task, as she perceived it to be the most pressing. I asked her why she was so eager to set up a private security system as soon as possible. She explained how she had left the country right after the political transition to study abroad and had been horrified by the stories about crime on the international news. Since her return, her friends and family had recounted numerous incidents of serious crime and had urged her to employ the necessary security measures. She then elaborated further:

Of course I’ve heard all the stories; I’ve been back to visit a few times and I know all the stories. But I haven’t lived here for a while, so I’m no expert. But look around [she points to the houses on the same street as hers]; everyone has it, don’t you? I mean, that must mean that it’s necessary. Why else would have everybody have it? So I’m just trying to be smart and do what I think I should. And with all these stories you hear all the time, the media, it just makes me feel safer that I’ve done what I can.



This client was new to armed response, yet her perceptions of private security were fairly typical and highlight the collective impact of fear. Purchasing private security or taking part in any type of security initiative is always instigated by an incident of crime, whether felt close by or experienced “at a distance” through social acquaintances, rumours, or media reports (Brown and Lippert 2007) that feed into the “talk of crime” (Caldeira 2000). Whenever I asked clients why they subscribed to private security, crime was the primary explanation.

Chapter three briefly analysed South Africa’s high crime rates and showed how crime is a real social problem. Yet the (perceived) need for private security is primarily based on perceptions of crime, fear of crime, and feelings of insecurity. The biggest boom in the industry occurred around the time of the political transition. Although crime rates increased during this era, it was predominantly marked by uncertainty about the direction of the post-apartheid South African state. The fact that South Africa has the largest private security industry in terms of GDP (Abrahamsen and Williams 2011;

Singh 2008) cannot be explained solely with reference to the high crime rates in the country, but must incorporate the complexities of fear, especially collective fear.

Fear is primarily understood as an emotion or feeling that is associated with particular images, events, and people and is felt and expressed during particular moments. Although fear is also a biological response, it is given meaning through representation. It can be regarded as a text and cultural artefact, because it "acquires meaning through cultural language and rites" (Geertz 1973, in Bourke 2005: 7). The experience and meaning of fear is intrinsically connected to the social environment in which it is evoked (Reguillo 2002). Fear is a social construction; it is society, with its encompassing social logics, structures, and practices, that constructs fear and notions surrounding fear, such as risk, death, and danger (Beck 1992; Douglas 2002; Merry 1981). As Sparks et al. argue, "the place of fear and insecurity in the structuration of everyday life can only be grasped intensively and in situ" (2001: 886). When I asked Durbanites about their fears and what they felt they needed protection from, their answers centred on crime. However, substantial literature shows that fear of crime primarily revolves around fear of *becoming* a victim of crime rather than of actually *being* a victim (Lemanski 2006; Merry 1981). Bourke (2005) therefore uses the concept of "victimization prevention" rather than crime prevention.

In combining the cognitive perception of risk and the emotional dimension of fear, the perspective used here is that fear of crime and discourses of crime are embedded in larger social issues (Rountree 1998).³ The concept of crime operates as a condensed symbol comprising more general perceptions of fear and insecurity within one's social environment (Douglas 1986; Lemanski 2004, 2006; Merry 1981), as also highlighted by Jackson:⁴

Attitudes towards crime express a range of complex and subtle lay understandings of the social world-broader social values and attitudes about the nature and make-up of society and the community, the value placed on crime in its symbol of deterioration, and all the implications that flow from both its prevalence and its impact. (2004: 963)

3 Studies from various disciplines (i.e. psychology, criminology, sociology, and anthropology) debate the interconnections and/or differences between the concepts of "fear" and "risk". Ferraro (1995) argues that there is a fundamental difference between fear of crime and the perceived risk of harm, the first focusing on crime and its associations, the latter focusing on the possibility of exposure to a more general form of loss, pain, or injury. In this sense, fear is more emotional, while risk is cognitive in character (Ferraro 1995). Warr (2000), on the other hand, argues that it is more about the sequences in which they emerge; a risk is simply an immediate cause of a fear of crime.

4 Chapter eight analyses the social construction of the "criminal".

Throughout my fieldwork, I was frequently astounded by South Africans' perceptions of crime and the numerous "practices of security" (Rotker 2002: 13). I often felt that they were paranoid and that their fear of crime was rather disproportional.⁵ Yet the reality is that many South Africans have experienced traumatic incidents of violent crime. All my acquaintances had been victims of violent crime or knew people who had. Tales about having a gun pointed at one's head, being physically forced out of a car, or being tied up were widespread. The traumatic nature of these experiences and their impact on one's perception of crime should not be underestimated or trivialised. Furthermore, the "talk of crime" feeds into a larger, collective understanding of fear and a perception that private security is a basic need.

In South Africa, perceptions of fear and responses to fear have become part of the whole nation's *habitus* (Bourdieu 1977) whereby citizens engage in numerous "practices of security" to provide a safe environment amidst a "violent criminal culture" (Altbeker 2007: 82). According to the study conducted by Roberts (2010: 270), 43 per cent of his respondents stated that a burglar alarm system was "essential" and 31 per cent defined armed response as "essential".⁶ The consumption of private security is a practice that reacts to fear and gives it meaning. Goold et al. (2010) argue that security products cannot be compared to other forms of mass consumption as they are not "a significant part of mainstream consumption" (2010: 10), are not on substantial display, and do not constitute a part of "routine" shopping. Rather, security occupies "a marginal place in contemporary consumer culture" (2010: 10) and provides little satisfaction and joy: it is a grudge purchase. Although I concur with some of these claims, nonetheless, I argue that it does *not* occupy a marginal space in South African society, but that it is very prominently on display. Driving through any South African city, the dominance of private security is inescapable: high walls with spikes, glass countertops, or barbed wire, electric fences, boom gates, and emblems of private security companies are in abundance. In a neighbourhood where everyone displays their subscription to a private security company, the one house without one is regarded as the weakest link and easiest target.

Due to the emotional element of fear (Loader 1997b, 1997c; Spitzer 1987), security must be analysed subjectively and understood as "the hopes and fears of those who are willing, in ever increasing numbers, to purchase it in the market-place" (Spitzer 1987: 46).⁷ Purchasing security to mitigate fear should be seen as "an investment based on faith" (Spitzer 1987: 47). Security makes people feel protected, empowered, and

5 See Altbeker (2007), Camerer et al. (1998), Kaarsholm (2005), Lemanski (2006), Louw (1997, 2007), Shaw (2002), and Steinberg (2007).

6 Furthermore, 71 per cent stated that a "fence or wall around the property" was essential (Roberts 2010: 270).

7 Spitzer (1987) criticises the tendency to understand the consumption of private security through rational choice theory and encourages a more subjective approach.

responsible (Brown and Lippert 2007; Buzan et al. 1998; Loader 1997b, 1997c, 1999). Purchasing private security therefore "provides people with some semblance of control" (Loader 1997c: 154) and "a greater sense of direct influence and 'ownership'" (Noaks 2000: 150). Many clients claimed that purchasing private security was a means of empowerment, as the following quote from a white male client illustrates:

I know that an alarm system in my house and car, an electric fence, burglar bars, whatever, it's not going to stop the guy. Even if I carry a panic button with me wherever I go, I can still get jacked.⁸ So I know it doesn't really work, it doesn't really protect me. But it does make the chance smaller, it does give me some protection... And it makes me feel safer. When I come home and lock up the doors and put on the alarm, I know that I am not 100 per cent safe, but I am safer than if I don't do anything, then I wouldn't be able to sleep at night.⁹

For many, private security acts as a deterrent and provides assurance and "peace of mind" (McManus 1995; Sharp and Wilson 2000). This is not only experienced at the individual or household level, but also, and more intensely, at the collective level in a social environment that encourages the consumption of private security.

As the case of the new female client discussed at the beginning of this section illustrates, the phrase "everyone around me has it, so I need it too" is a powerful way of reasoning and highlights the collective nature of fear and the workings of social pressure. Private security is an individual *and* collective mode of consumption (Loader 1999). This explains the proliferation of collective arrangements: they are social "fear-management strategies" (Lemanski 2006) that amalgamate individual practices of security to produce a collective one. I view collective arrangements as a form of upgrading one's security in a context with endless possibilities. If security depends on the *absence* of something "risky" and "dangerous" (Brown and Lippert 2007; Sharp and Wilson 2000), then it is an industry with never-ending prospects (Bauman 2001; Buzan et al. 1998; Spitzer 1987). This is particularly apparent when a product fails the client, such as when one's house is broken into despite having a security system. Upgrading to collective arrangements is very often the result of such incidents. The inference is not that the security measures did not work, but that there simply weren't *enough* of them, as one marketing manager emphasised:

There is a never-ending supply... First it starts off with alarms. Then people realised, and I feel exactly the same way, I don't want the *oak* standing in front of

8 This refers to hijackings, a crime that falls under the category of "aggravated robbery" (see chapter three).

9 Interview: 27 November 2008.

me, I want to know in the garden that he's already there and about to come into my house. So then came the beams. But then that wasn't enough, and then came the CCTV cameras, so we can see exactly what is happening around our house. And now, clients are thinking: hey, let's get together and create a system together, so we can control what's going on in our neighbourhood and act together.¹⁰

Upgrading to a collective arrangement is also believed by many to strengthen social cohesion and order. Crime is associated with disorder; it erodes trust, security, and social interaction. Mobilising residents to create a collective entity with a common objective (i.e. in this case, fighting crime) is regarded as a means of (re)establishing trust and social cohesion (Cohen 1966). The perception holds that "Missing community means missing security" (Bauman 2001:4). The creation of a collective entity will defend residents from the destructive nature of crime in an "atomizing" society (Wilson 1975).

Fear of crime and perceptions of insecurity define the perceived need and demand for private security. Private security provides citizens with a sense of empowerment, assurance, and peace of mind. This is experienced on an individual level, but is augmented when it penetrates into the social fabric of a community or society. In South Africa, private security is part of the urban architecture, which (re)produces the perception that it is indispensable. The formation of collective arrangements is a practice that represents and gives meaning to the collective experience of fear.

"The police won't do that for me"

This need for empowerment ties in with the perception that the state police was failing to provide security for its citizens. "Crime" was the main reason that people gave for subscribing to private security and this was automatically linked to a view of a failing state police force. Numerous quantitative studies highlight how the state police is one of the least trustworthy institutions in South Africa (Mattes 2006; Roberts 2010). For example, 41 per cent of (people) interviewed by Roberts (2010: 270) expressed distrust towards the state police.¹¹ During my fieldwork, the state police was habitually described as worthless, corrupt, understaffed, and incapable.

One day in November 2008, I was on duty with William when we received word of an attempted break-in. When we got to the residence, the clients – an elderly white couple – showed us in detail where the suspect had tried to get in and what he was after.

¹⁰ Interview: 7 July 2010.

¹¹ Roberts (2010) further states that individuals who described feeling safe also expressed more trust in the state police, and correspondingly, those who described fearing for their safety expressed more distrust and lower levels of confidence in the state police. However, although levels of distrust remained the same between 2000 and 2005, levels of trust in the state police rose from 41 to 45 per cent. According to the Victims of Crime Survey (VOCS) of 2011, Whites are generally the most dissatisfied and least satisfied with the state police among the four population groups.

After a casual chat about crime in the area, William asked whether he should notify the police. The elderly couple were adamant that they did not want police involvement. When I asked why, the woman narrated a rather convoluted story about a previous break-in at her neighbour's house and the subsequent involvement of the police. She ended her story with the following remarks:

The police are not the answer to the crime; they are the criminals. I am sure that that one policeman at the station – that young, black man with the funny teeth – he helps the criminals with the break-ins in this area. So no! I do not want them here. I will just bring trouble on myself.

Regardless of whether such stories are true, they feed into the "talk of crime" and reproduce images of the police as unreliable, inadequate, and criminal.

Although I claim in this book that the "state-failure" argument is insufficient for explaining the proliferation of non-state policing worldwide, I do concur that the provision of private security "bridges the gap between public expectations of security services and the existing reality of police protection" (McManus 1995: 118). With the armed response sector, there are three main factors that bridge this gap: quick response, visible patrolling, and personal service. My informants repeatedly cited the poor response times of the police as a grievance. According to the Victims of Crime Survey report (2011: 23), 68.1 per cent of the respondents identified the fact that police "don't respond on time" as a reason for being dissatisfied with the way the police deal with crime.¹² The following quote from an Indian male client highlights the allure of quick response:

If something happens to me or my family, if some criminal comes into my home, and hurts one of us, or takes anything, I want somebody to be here right away. Not after three hours to take my statement and try to get some fingerprints, but I want them here when the guys are still inside my house... at the point when one of them has a gun to my head and the other is walking outside with my flat screen. That's when I need help and that's what I'm paying for, because the police won't do that for me. But armed response, they're here within a few minutes; they respond much quicker. That's their job – to be here as soon as possible. That's what I pay them for.¹³

In addition to quick response, patrolling is also appealing to clients. Patrolling functions as a physical and symbolic form of public assurance. The patrolling of public spaces

12 This was followed by laziness (56.2 per cent) and corruption (46.6 per cent) (VOCS 2011: 23).

13 Interview: 1 December 2008.

is citizens' main motivation for forming a collective arrangement, whereby armed response officers are requested to actively patrol a given area and look out for anything suspicious. This resonates with an increasing global demand for visible policing, whereby state police and private security officers are encouraged to be proactive rather than re-active.¹⁴

Additionally, private security companies provide personal service and cater for clients' specialist needs. Clients often mentioned that the state police didn't "care for them" or "take the time" to address their needs. Private security, on the other hand, offers a personalised service that allows clients to feel "heard" and "taken care of". Security officers are seen to be willing to deal with personal issues and to take the time to "sort things out" (Sharp and Wilson 2000: 124). This personal service provides clients with a sense of ownership and allows them to make demands (Walsh and Donovan 1989), unlike the state police, which make them feel that they are "put on hold" and "one of the many".

"Take back your streets!"

Quick response, visible patrolling, and personal service are the three key elements of armed response that differentiate it from the state police in the eyes of citizens. This allurements is strengthened by encouragement on part of the state police. As part of the neoliberal era, states are increasingly framing people as "responsible citizens" (Johnston 1992). Crawford situates this within a larger process of "the marketization of social life", where there is a reigning "perception of society as a series of private spheres in which individuals, corporations and organisations must take responsibility for their own problems" (1995: 102).

Since 1994, crime has played a distinctive role in the formation of citizenship in South Africa (Bénit-Gbaffou 2008; Singh 2008). During community policing forum (CPF) meetings, police officers repeatedly called upon citizens to take initiative in combatting crime. People were encouraged to "take back your streets", to create neighbourhood watches, to "know your neighbour", "to be a survivor, not a victim", and to be "vigilant", which was made explicit during a CPF meeting that I attended in February 2009. When the crime trends and hot spots of the area were discussed, a particular road was identified as a "problem" due to the large number of recent break-ins. The police officer coordinating the meeting then issued the following warning:

If no one in that road does anything, they will get punished. They will get robbed, or even worse. And then if that happens, they will come crying to the

14 According to the study conducted by Roberts (2010: 270), 77 per cent of respondents stated that "having police on the streets in local area" was essential. This highlights a public demand for visibility. For further information on this issue, see Crawford and Lister (2006), McManus (1995), Noaks (2000), Sharp and Wilson (2000), and Wakefield (2007).

police and blame us for not being there. But this is not only our responsibility: you are responsible for your road; you cannot expect us to do everything.

This statement shows how citizens were encouraged to assume at least some responsibility for their own safety. However, such views also result in feelings of guilt if crime does occur. While I was patrolled with police officers, they frequently blamed citizens for particular incidents of crime; they were recurrently described as stupid, apathetic, and irresponsible in ensuring their own safety. Police officers often felt that citizens relied too much on them and that they needed to take particular matters into their own hands, with subscribing to a private security company being the most obvious course of action. Almost all of the police officers I interviewed supported citizen-based security initiatives, such as collective arrangements with the private security industry.

State officials are thus sending out a message that citizens are "responsible" for their own security and therefore to blame if preventative action is not taken. This process of blaming instils tremendous feelings of guilt in people and consolidates a constant security-related state of mind. This is augmented by the marketing strategies of the private security industry.

"Who's in your bed while you're at work?"

June 2008

I was walking through the grand halls of Securex, a large exhibition for the private security sector that is held annually in Johannesburg and caters to industry members from across the globe. At one point I spotted a sign on a large red banner that read, "Who's in your bed while you're at work?", and I laughed out loud, assuming that this was a clever pun or exaggeration of some sort. All of a sudden, an elderly white salesman came up to me and said, "Yes, you can laugh all you want, but you never know who can enter your house, who is talking to your wife or what your kids are doing while you're at work. You need to be aware of your surroundings at all times." I was shocked by his statement, which my face apparently betrayed as the salesman continued to explain to me at length how I, as a young woman, was not safe in this "dangerous world". He urged me to realise that I could easily fall victim to "the sick evil of this world" and that protection through an array of gadgets was my only hope of salvation. I was left slightly stunned and somewhat disgusted by the content of the message and the way the salesman was trying to "sell" his products.



Although my conversation with the salesman was an extreme case, it underlines how members of the industry commonly portray security as essential. The sales and marketing sector is a huge part of the industry that cannot be overlooked when analysing the demand for private security and the growth of collective arrangements. In

the world of private security, clients are labelled as “the cornerstone” of every company, and firms invest heavily in marketing strategies and regular customer service training for their employees.¹⁵ They also devise powerful marketing strategies featuring slogans such as “Always Peace of Mind”, “*That Much More*”, “There First, There Fast, There for You”, “We Serve and Protect”, and “Peace of Mind Security”.

Private security firms are regularly scrutinised for profiting from and consolidating fear (Thumula et al. 2011).¹⁶ High crime rates in South Africa maintain a demand for private security, as one marketing manager I spoke to willingly acknowledged: “Nine out of ten of our new sales are a result of criminal activity – yourself or your neighbour”.¹⁷ Tapping into the fear of crime is an inherent part of their marketing strategies, as the marketing manager of a large company explained:

Yes, the fear factor does play a role in how we sell and we do work with this. But without fear, people wouldn't need us anymore, so it has to be done. We do try to be more subtle, but it is still there, yes. It is not our main push, but it is underneath it all, a basis of sorts.¹⁸

This focus on fear is also evident in the monthly newsletters released by companies which offer safety tips and updated crime statistics. The following extracts from the digital newsletters of a large armed response company show how crime and (in)security are framed:

We're waging a “war on crime”...knowing the common modus operandi of burglars will help you devise a home security plan to keep you and your family safe... Make sure your security system is designed to counter this. (October 2010)

Living in South Africa is a lifestyle decision, part of that decision is to take appropriate measures to ensure your safety and that of your family. (November 2010)

15 The marketing manager of a large company stated that the company's budget was approximately R 100,000 per month for each regional office (Interview: 7 July 2010).

16 The role of insurance companies is essential for understanding the pervasiveness of private security (Loader 1997c: 146). For example, when I purchased a vehicle during my research, I was only able to get insurance if it was fitted with certain security devices. Furthermore, my premium was substantially lower after installing these gadgets. For example, installing a car alarm cost approximately R 200. However, without an alarm, my monthly premium would have been R 80 more expensive. Installing the alarm was therefore financially more viable.

17 Interview: 21 August 2009.

18 Interview: 7 July 2010.

Sad to say, but many of these crimes were committed because the work of criminals was made easy – yes, you got it, criminals gained access to homes through open, and in some cases, unsecured windows with devastating consequences... We can change our behaviour by taking the power for ourselves and accepting that there is a lot we can do to prevent crime. (February 2011)

These extracts reveal how subscribing to private security is framed as a “lifestyle decision” that allows citizens to take “the power for ourselves”. Significantly, this resonates with the “responsible citizenship” message propagated by the state.

Entering the “community”

Around the turn of the century, armed response companies began to target middle-class and lower-income segments of society as potential clients. It proved a successful strategy that allowed companies to enter untapped markets. This was accompanied by a general rebranding of the industry from a military-style force into “community policing groups”. Although some companies still identify themselves with using militaristic symbols, there has been a general shift towards companies portraying themselves as having a “community orientation”. Many firms want to be seen as “friendlier”, comprising “community policing officers” who cater to the needs of citizens and are not only interested in profiting from crime, as a marketing manager explained:

We wanted to move away from the whole combat, military-style, because we were starting to see that people didn’t want that anymore, they were done with it. They wanted a friendly professional to assist them. So we researched it and created a “community policing force”... We invested in everything: new uniforms, new vehicles, new symbols, you name it, and it worked, because our sales went through the roof.¹⁹

This shift was primarily orchestrated by the marketing sector of the industry, which rebranded armed response officers as committed and trained individuals “care about the community”. Companies enforced new branding styles to present themselves as friendly organisations made up of a “professional force” of employees. This branding was promoted through the usual channels, including newspaper adverts, radio commercials, newsletters, and flyers. Companies also began offering anti-hijacking and “domestic watch” training,²⁰ and company representatives started attending community policing forum (CPF) meetings and operational meetings run by police stations.²¹ Yet the main

19 Interview: marketing manager of a large company, 2 July 2010.

20 “Domestic watch” training refers to security training given to domestic workers.

21 These meetings are discussed in more detail in chapter six.

strategy for “getting connected with the community” was (and continues to be) the establishment of collective arrangements, as is made clear by the following quote from a marketing manager:

It’s not about price anymore...all of us charge about the same. As a company, you need to differentiate yourself through your service, through making your product stand out. So we invest money into the community. The message is: we care about your safety. So we invest in the community policing forums, sponsor local crime newsletters, provide free security trainings, provide free monitoring to schools, all of that. It costs us a hell of a lot of money, but it pays off, because our signage is everywhere, it’s visibility, and people think: they really care for the community, and so I want to be their client. This is what we’re targeting, this process... And this really comes out in these client projects, these groups of clients that come together. This is what we invested for and these special projects are the fruits of this investment we made years ago, and we now focus on this, getting these clients.²²

Due to the saturated nature and oligopolistic structure of the industry, acquiring clients is increasingly difficult. Collective arrangements are highly lucrative and regarded as the most efficient means of procuring new clients. Let me provide a simple example of how this works. The residents of a certain street want to establish a collective arrangement and are in the process of selecting an armed response company to partner with. Let’s say this street has 22 households of which 11 are clients of company A, four belong to company B, and seven are linked to other companies or are non-subscribers. As its clients are in the majority, company A is the most obvious choice of provider and will invest heavily in winning this contract. It may offer a “reduced fee” to its existing clients and non-clients and will promise to deliver “specialised service”. In most cases, company A will be successful in gaining the contract; it will thus retain its existing clients while also gaining new ones.

Collective arrangements match the companies’ community-oriented profile and provide financial benefits. They are therefore a key source of competition between companies:

It is a very competitive market. As soon as a community organisation springs up or a road or area wants to set up something, we all jump, and we jump high! It literally happens like me phoning him, offering him so much money,

22 Interview: marketing manager, 7 July 2010.

then the next company will offer more, then I will offer something else... This community thing has become the way to promote yourself.²³

Collective arrangements are therefore "increasingly seen by the industry as a growing and legitimate commercial opportunity" (Crawford and Lister 2006: 168). They are labelled as "special projects" and "champion areas" that provide a "platinum service" to their clients. Such arrangements allow companies to amalgamate pockets of clients to create and consolidate "strongholds" and "dedicated areas". Their profitable nature is also linked to their catalytic effect: the creation of a collective arrangement in one area often instigates the establishment of another in a neighbouring area due to crime displacement (Crawford 1995; McManus 1995), as a marketing manager emphasised:

You see an area where they've got guards or a vehicle, and crime goes down... But then it shoots up in another area, so then those residents want a guard or a vehicle. If you follow the crime stats, you literally see it moving down the hill... so each road keeps setting up their own community thing and we keep getting in on it.²⁴

This section has shown how the demand for private security, including the current growth of collective arrangements, is based on citizens' perceptions of (in)security, active encouragement by the state police, and marketing strategies implemented by the industry. Fear of crime and perceptions of insecurity shape a demand for additional protection, and private security provides assurance and a sense of empowerment. Establishing a collective arrangement is a means to upgrade one's security subscription. The state police encourage this process by portraying people as "responsible citizens" who must implement their own safety measures. The private security industry employs various marketing strategies to maintain the perception that private security is necessary.

The Local Security Networks

This section analyses the various types of local security networks that have evolved to meet the demand for (more) private security. These can be subdivided in two ways. The first distinction is between formal and informal local security networks. Formal local security networks are based on an official relationship, generally involving a contractual agreement between a client and a company. Informal local security networks, meanwhile, are based not on an official contractual agreement but on social networks

23 Interview: marketing manager of a large company, 7 July 2010.

24 Interview: 7 July 2010.

and ad hoc interactions. The former always consist of clients, while the latter consist of clients and non-paying citizens.

Within this categorisation, I make a second distinction that applies to both formal and informal local security networks. I argue that there are three types of local security networks: high-maintenance, collaborative, and competitive. Due to the saturated nature of the market and the prevailing mentality that the client is always right, clients generally have the upper hand in defining the nature of the local security networks: they are the “dominant actors”. The aforementioned categories thus describe both the networks and the clients themselves. Therefore, the way an armed response officer views a client corresponds to how he defines the interactions that make up the security network.

High-maintenance local security networks are those where the dominant role of clients is unmistakable and thus experienced by armed response officers and companies as demanding and “high-maintenance”. Collaborative networks consist of interactions where the dominant position of citizens is less pronounced; this provides room for citizens and armed response officers to work together to combat crime. Competitive networks refer to networks marked by power struggles, in which actors compete with one another for the status of the “dominant” and the “dominated”. Some networks are experienced as simultaneously collaborative and competitive. For example, a local security network between a company and a collective client may be experienced as collaborative by those parties, but another company may define it as competitive. As Dupont states, “If networks are infused with collaborative values, they can also be construed [...] as spaces of conflict or competition” (2004: 84).

These two categorisations allow me to analyse the plurality and diversity of local security networks that prepare the ground for twilight policing. I argue that each type of network – high-maintenance, collaborative, and competitive – heightens competition between companies and encourage reaction officers (and their employers) to perform additional tasks that draw them (i.e. officers) into the public domain.

Formal local security networks

This section will analyse three different types of formal local security networks: individual clients, sponsorship, and collective clients.

Individual clients

Contractual agreements with individual clients are the most common type of formal local security networks. An individual client is someone who subscribes to an armed response company as a single unit, either residential or commercial. The local security network between a single client and a single armed response officer can assume numerous forms, such as pleasant, hostile, or indifferent, and can vary greatly between clients, armed response officers, companies, and contexts. However, this diversity is too enormous to discuss in detail. Yet there is one general adjective that is assigned to

all clients, namely high-maintenance, which suggests that provision of security to that person requires a lot of time and effort. Armed response officers repeatedly mentioned that their main concern was to "keep clients happy". Yet they also experienced this as "impossible", as clients often expected supplementary, unrealistic, or contrasting things. Officers complained greatly about clients' demands, claiming that they were treated like "slaves" or "dogs".

There are certain clients who are notorious for being high-maintenance, such as the female client whom Brian described as "a bit of a pain". Each company has specific clients that are as "daily headaches", those who "push our guys to the limits".²⁵ The armed response officers of one small company were obliged to check the residence of a particular male client thrice per shift, which was monitored by the personal guard on site. If the records showed that the armed response officers had failed to perform their rounds, the client subtracted a certain amount from his monthly premium.²⁶ With one large company, a particular female client was renowned for her recurrent phone calls about "suspicious noises" in her garden, which obliged the armed response officers to perform frequent checks outside her residence.

Although clients never defined themselves as "high-maintenance", many exhibited a strong sense of entitlement when it came to making demands of their service providers. Due to the large amount of armed response companies, clients are aware that they possess a great deal of purchasing power. This was evident when I interviewed clients about their subscription and how they perceived their position vis-à-vis their security provider. The following statements are a few examples:

There's so many companies to choose from, so if I'm unhappy with one, I simply move on to another.²⁷

We pay these companies good money, so if they don't respond on time or escort me home, I'll complain and threaten to go elsewhere.²⁸

I pay them for a particular service, so they must provide that service well, and if they don't, I'll complain. It's like any other service delivery really. And with security, lives are at stake.²⁹

25 Interview: operations manager, 9 December 2008.

26 This money was then subtracted from the salary of the armed response officer in question.

27 Interview: 20 November 2008.

28 Interview: 10 December 2008.

29 Interview: 19 May 2010.

Many private security employees feel that clients abuse their purchasing power and claim that this has intensified over the years, with clients increasingly wanting “more for their money”.³⁰

When employing a geographical lens, residential areas in Durban have particular reputations and degrees of popularity within the armed response sector. These reputations are based on the attitude of clients and citizens in general. Areas regarded as “more difficult” tend to be affluent suburbs populated by citizens who are less hesitant to express racist sentiments. One particular part of Durban, which I shall refer to here simply as area A, is highly affluent and has a predominantly white population. Approximately eight different companies work in this area and the employers of *all* of these firms described it as the most arduous to operate in, both at management and at operations level. Armed response officers dreaded working in area A. They claimed that the clients are more suspicious of them, are quicker to complain about response times, and demand more from them (such as jumping over gates and walls) than clients in other areas.

In November 2008, I accompanied Gayle on a day shift in area A, during which he discussed his disdain for working there. He stated that although he felt that armed response officers were treated poorly by most people in society, “it is here where you really feel it”. In the course of the day he pointed out an array of negative factors that characterised this area, such as the gestures of citizens and the way clients treated him when we came to their premises. I slowly started to understand what he meant. Just as it was difficult for Gayle to explain this atmosphere to me, it is hard for me to convey exactly what it entails. It is perhaps best described as a heightened sense of hostility, contempt, and suspicion. Most armed response officers working in area A (for different companies) echoed Gayle’s sentiments, noting that the place had “something different to it”. They also provided examples of citizens displaying their contempt overtly, such as by refusing to get out of the way during an emergency or by readily notifying the managers when one of the vehicles was driving too fast.³¹ Regardless of this perceived behaviour and attitude was intentional on the part of the inhabitants of area A, it was experienced as such by armed response officers and affected their daily performance. For them, area A was high-maintenance.

There are also clients who are regarded as collaborative. This refers to individuals who assist armed response officers in their tasks, such as by opening a gate rather than expecting him to climb over it, or by moving out of the way if his emergency lights are on. It also refers to a kinder and friendlier approach towards reaction officers. One example of this was a client whom Gayle and I visited in August 2010. Although he had

30 Interview: manager, 19 July 2010.

31 Each residential area has a petrol station or café that offers armed response officers a free coffee or cool drink and free use their sanitary facilities. Area A does not have such facilities.

just experienced a break-in and was visibly distressed, he was extremely kind to us, offered us a drink, took the time to clarify exactly what had happened, and offered us his assistance. As we left his premises, Gayle smiled and said, "I wish all clients were like him". Similarly, certain geographical areas have a more "collaborative" reputation, and unsurprisingly, armed response officers prefer working in these areas.³²

Sponsorship

The second type of formal local security network between companies and citizens is sponsorship. Sponsorship refers to an official agreement in which a company provides financial assistance to a citizen-based partner organisation in exchange for free advertising. One example was the relationship between a large company and an individual who designed an anti-crime SMS-alert system to update subscribed members about suspicious activity, recent crime, and safety tips. The system worked as followed: all (paying) members are linked to a larger network and sent notifications about a certain residential area via SMS; thus, when a crime-related incident occurs, such as a break-in, or if someone sees something suspicious, an SMS is circulated among all members in that area who subscribe to the system. In 2009, the system had approximately 1,600 members who each paid R 25 per month.³³

This SMS-alert system was sponsored by one of the biggest private security companies of South Africa. The latter covered the system's phone bill, which was approximately R 9,000 per month in 2009.³⁴ In return, the company enjoyed free advertising on the website and in each SMS, which featured the company's logo and slogan. This arrangement provided the firm with advertising that spanned the entire city and conjured an image that this company "looks out for the community". It was thus a mutually beneficial partnership for both parties – a collaborative local security network.

The founder of the SMS-system informed me that he provided free membership to certain policing individuals, such as state police officers and armed response officers from other companies. However, many of the police and armed response officers I spoke with complained that this was no longer the case. They blamed the sponsoring company for excluding them in order to consolidate its dominant position in that area. Thus, the sponsorship generated information about crime that was not shared with other companies, which angered many in the sector.

A second example of sponsorship was a community-based armed response company that sponsored an anti-crime citizen organisation working in the same area. In return, the organisation featured the company's signage on its vehicle and actively promoted the firm in its newsletters. Unfortunately, the founder of the organisation and

32 Due to the abundance of variables, I was not able to firmly conclude which particular factors determine this collaborative nature. My guess is that personalities are the defining factor.

33 Interview: founder of the SMS initiative, 2 February 2009.

34 Interview: founder of the SMS initiative, 2 February 2009.

employees of the armed response company did not reveal any specific details about the nature of the sponsorship.³⁵ However, it is well known that the company has seen its client base grow exponentially through this partnership. For other companies, it has been a “nightmare”:³⁶ they have lost many clients in the area and several claim that the citizen-based organisation is paid to bad-mouth them.

These two examples of sponsorship show how companies align themselves with citizen-led crime initiatives without signing them up as a client in order to acquire new clients. For the parties involved, sponsorship is a collaborative security network. For other companies, however, it can be a source of increased competition.

Collective clients

November 2008

I was living in a block of flats with three housemates in an avenue off Florida Road, one of Durban’s nightlife hot spots. Over a period of approximately four weeks, several break-ins occurred within the block of flats, prompting the body corporate to organise a meeting with all the residents to discuss the security problem that was currently “plaguing” us.

On a Monday evening, approximately 25 of us gathered by the communal braai-area. The meeting commenced with the “victims” sharing their personal accounts of the break-ins: how the criminals had entered, what had been taken, and how the residents thought they were “tricked”. The victims were questioned about their own role in the events: had they taken the necessary precautions, or had they been slack in maintaining a secure environment? Interestingly enough, the break-in that received the most attention had occurred in the only flat with black occupants. Suspicions were raised about their ability to afford the rent in this prime location and the trustworthiness of their visitors. After the residents were questioned, a watchful eye was directed towards frequent visitors to the complex, such as domestic workers, to eliminate the possibility of an “inside job”.

Discussion then turned to the kinds of precautions that people needed to take to prevent future break-ins. Each resident proceeded to offer instructions on how to be more security conscious – to watch the gate closely as one drives in, to keep one’s windows open at night to hear suspicious noises (or not to, since open windows are a potential point of entry), to close one’s garage doors so that valuables are not displayed, and so on – based on their own views on how to prevent crime. One resident stated, “You can only be safe if you are 100 per cent alert at all times. We must all be very vigilant.” To assist us in taking these precautions, the security system of the complex itself would be updated, with a new and improved security fence, new remotes for the gate that could

35 Interviews: 1 April 2009 and 10 August 2010.

36 Interview: manager, 21 April 2010.

not be duplicated, and, most pressingly, the establishment of a new security contract with a better private security company, since the one we currently subscribed to had obviously failed in its duty to prevent break-ins.

The meeting ended with a well-intended message from the head of the body corporate: "We are like a family, a community. It is important that we all stick together and pay close attention to each other in order to know what's going on in our building and who is coming in and when." Many residents responded with approving nods and remarks, evidently concurring with the familial metaphor. This came as something of a surprise to me, however; many residents did not know the names of their neighbours and ongoing tensions were apparent throughout the meeting. It seemed bizarre to regard this block of flats as a united group of individuals, let alone a community or family.



This block of flats eventually became a "collective client", the most prominent form of collective arrangement, whereby several individuals (in this case, residents) establish a contractual agreement with an armed response company to collectively purchase its services.³⁷ The formation of collective clients is regularly based on meetings such as that described above, which commonly comprise three stages: a period of blame and self-reflection, to identify the potentially dangerous outsider that trespassed in a secure zone, and strategic selection of further action and improvement, often leading to more security measures. The creation of a collective client is a process whereby residents "club together" to collectively benefit from security to establish "contractual communities" (Crawford 2006: 121) of security.

Figure 7 presents basic information on four different residential collective clients for the period 2008-2010.³⁸ The collectives are arranged according to size and assigned a single letter for anonymity purposes. The four collectives each paid for a "dedicated" armed response vehicle.³⁹ Figure 7 shows that the size of a collective client can vary greatly, with the largest consisting of 3,000 members and the smallest of just seven. Three of the collectives were established between 2006 and 2007, which highlights

37 Most collective clients are found in the guarding sector due to lower employment costs. Such arrangements often involve a security guard who patrols an area on foot or by bicycle. A second option is to install guard huts at the entry points of a certain area. Guard huts are particularly popular for enclosed sites, such as individual streets or "peninsula"-type residential areas, where entry and exit points are easily defined. However, this research will not discuss these collective clients, since it primarily examines the armed response sector.

38 It is likely that these figures have changed since this time.

39 During my fieldwork, collective B wanted to introduce a second vehicle, which would have raised the monthly premium to R 454. By the end of my fieldwork in 2010, they had not yet received full support for this. I was informed a few months later that they had decided to introduce a second vehicle that operated 12 hours per day rather than 24 as a means of "testing" the impact of this initiative. However, the data in Figure 7 excludes this development.

Figure 7: Residential Collective Clients of Armed Response

Letter	Inception year	Number of participants	Membership cost (per month)
A	2007	3,000 homes ⁴¹	R 57 (flat) R 114 (house)
B	1997	270 homes (out of 358, 75%)	R 265
C	2007	125 people (out of 420 homes, 29 %)	R 400-900 ⁴²
D	2006	7 homes	R 4,000

Source: Data collected and compiled by the author

such arrangements are a recent trend. Each collective was steered by an individual or a few prominent members. Companies refer to these persons as “road captains” or “psych drivers”.⁴⁰ The implementation of collective clients is based on the shared use of particular spaces. Some of those I encountered, such as collectives A and B, were built upon existing community-policing initiatives that served the “community”, while others, such as collectives C and D, profiled themselves as an “initiative” or “association”. The rules governing a collective are not straightforward, as will be discussed later, but geographical demarcations generally determine membership. For example, collective B defined the “community” as the “individuals who work or permanently reside in the area”.

Collective clients are an upgraded form of security arrangement that are perceived to be highly efficient in combating crime. In addition, they also provide financial benefits. With my block of flats, for example, residents were offered a discounted fee if they all subscribed to the same company. The average monthly premium for armed response is R 240 (see chapter four). Figure 7 shows that collective A paid far less than that, while collective B paid slightly more. This means that for approximately the same amount of money, the members of collectives A and B enjoy a “better service” with a “dedicated” armed response vehicle. Due to their membership size, collectives C and D paid above the average monthly premium. In exchange, they enjoyed a “special status” with their respective companies.⁴³

40 Private security companies often rely on road captains to win over other clients (Interview: manager, 19 July 2010).

41 It is difficult to obtain a percentile representation for this organisation, since it does not correspond to a particular geographical municipal area.

42 This community organisation has several options for residents, hence the price range. Some pay for a dedicated vehicle and some only for guarding. Each individual has a different arrangement with the company despite being part of the same collective client.

43 Collective D paid far above the average and was unusual in the armed response sector.

Collective clients choose a particular company for numerous reasons. For example, the residents committee in my blocks of flats opted for a company that already had numerous clients in the area to ensure a better response time. A company's focus on "community engagement" is also appealing, as one Indian female member of a collective explained:

I wanted [company name] because they care about the community. They are involved with the community. They have this newsletter that lets me know what's going on in my neighbourhood... And once in a while, they phone just to see if I'm happy with them. It makes me feel like I'm looked after.⁴⁴

Personal networks also play a role in people's choice of their security provider, as exemplified by statements such as "I chose that company because I know someone who works there". Similarly, industry members who reside in communities that are looking to initiate a collective arrangement are likely to promote their company.

Collective clients are regarded as the most high-maintenance clients. Due to the lucrative nature of such arrangements, armed response officers are instructed to be at clients' beck and call. For many individuals, establishing a collective is a means of increasing control over the provision of security. Operating as a collective rather than being "one of the many" provides clients with an increased sense of ownership and entitlement, as a white female member of collective C emphasised:

We did this whole thing to have more control over our security. We decided amongst ourselves what we want, and we are paying the company to do that. We expect them to meet our demands; if they don't, we'll find a company that does. We are in control here, as a community, and the armed response officers must meet our needs and demands... So if my neighbour asks him [the armed response officer] to do an escort outside the area, he does it. And if I ask him to check the suspicious *oak* walking down my road, he does it. And if I want the *oak* to leave, he must make sure that he's gone. It's that simple. And I couldn't make these demands before, when I was just one of the many.⁴⁵

This feeling of ownership is also reflected in the type of payment. Collective payment entails that the collective client gathers the monthly premiums from all the members and then pays the company a single sum through its own administrative system. In contrast, individual payment entails that each member pays their own contribution to the private security company directly. Clients generally prefer collective payment; they

44 Interview: 1 December 2008.

45 Interview: white female member of collective C, 11 August 2010.

feel it provides them with more steering power as they control all of the finances. For example, collective B emphasised how collective payment allowed it to be “a resident-driven association controlling the security affairs in our area”⁴⁶ and to ensure that the “structure is community driven, not driven by private security companies”.⁴⁷ A female member of the executive committee of collective B elaborated on this:

If you are just one client, then the company can come up with long stories and excuses about why they didn't do this, why they took so long to respond... They don't want to lose you, but at the end of the day, you're just one client. But if you are 10, or 100, and you all complain, together, then they need to answer. This financial control gives you power, because losing all of us would make them suffer – they'll feel it. It gives us the opportunity to demand good service, to make sure that they do as they're told and that they answer to us.⁴⁸

I heard contrasting opinions from companies regarding the preferred type of payment. One of the managers highlighted the benefits of individual payment: “It makes sure that they don't know how much they are eventually paying us, so they don't question exactly where their money goes. People don't keep track of each other, so fewer questions are asked.”⁴⁹ However, many companies preferred collective payment for administrative purposes.

The high-maintenance nature of collective clients is also evident in – and consolidated by – the various forms of surveillance employed by certain collectives. For example, collective C demanded that armed response officers underwent polygraph-testing every six months. It also installed its own tracking system to monitor the movement of response vehicles, and officers were required to use a Magtouch system to record their whereabouts.⁵⁰ Collective D stipulated that its allotted armed response vehicle was never allowed to leave the area and implemented a strict daily schedule that specified where the vehicle should be at different times (e.g. it must park outside certain houses when a client leaves or enters, it cannot move too far up or down the road, it has to be parked in a certain way, and so on). The head of collective D kept track of this movement and reported any misbehaviour to the company manager.⁵¹ Therefore, in addition to the discipline and surveillance measures implemented by companies (see

46 Source: collective B manual.

47 Extract from speech made by the chairman of collective B during the Annual General Meeting (AGM) held in August 2010.

48 Interview: member of executive committee of collective B, 16 April 2009.

49 Interview: 2 July 2010.

50 This system is normally only found in the guarding sector.

51 Interview: road captain of collective D, 30 April 2009.

chapter four), armed response officers endure further surveillance by clients, particularly collective clients, which exacerbates their feelings of always "being watched".

Although collectives are generally defined as high-maintenance, they may also be regarded as competitive and collaborative, as was the case for collective A. This collective paid for a dedicated armed response vehicle, yet it also operated and staffed three of its own vehicles to provide additional "security". Furthermore, the company also operated another vehicle to serve clients who lived in the area but were not members of the collective. There were thus five vehicles operating in the area; three had the signage of the collective and two of the armed response company. Residents in this area therefore had numerous options when it came to private security: to be a (paying) member of the collective, to subscribe to the private security company, to do both for a reduced fee, to subscribe to neither, or to subscribe to another armed response company.

The relationships between the five different vehicles were generally collaborative. I witnessed numerous incidents where they responded to alarms and chased and arrested suspects together. However, there were also instances that resulted in hostility. One such incident occurred at the end of 2008, when an armed response officer from the company and another from the collective arrested a suspect together and both provided a statement to the police. Shortly afterwards, the armed response officer from the company claimed that he had been "forced" to lie in his statement by the officer from the collective.⁵² When this information surfaced, a range of accusations emerged from both sides about previous incidents of illegal activity and misconduct. This caused uproar between the client and the company and almost resulted in the termination of the partnership. The issue was eventually settled, but tensions and animosity lingered.⁵³

In this local security network, there were two types of armed reaction officers operating in the same area – those working directly for the collective and those working for the armed response company – all of whom owed their salaries to the residents. Different operational styles, different rules, and different salaries between the partners were the subject of friction and competition.⁵⁴ Therefore, although these two actors shared a common objective – to fight crime – they did not always agree on how to do this, and this incited competition. They also competed with each other for new clients. This highlights how fine the line is between a community organisation and a private security company when they provide similar services, and especially when they are

52 The officer from the company stated that he was made to lie about finding the suspect exiting the house with the stolen goods, which he denied having witnessed.

53 The "truth" about this incident never surfaced. Not long after the event, both of the individuals involved were arrested for separate Schedule One offences and are currently imprisoned.

54 Differences in salaries and employment benefits were a particular source of friction. The armed response officers working for the company had higher salaries and better benefits. The operations manager of the collective demanded better health insurance from the executive committee, but they stated that they lacked the finances to provide this. The operations manager eventually left. (Interviews with members of the collective: 3 February 2009, 22 April 2009, and 19 April 2010).

“partners”. In such contexts, it becomes difficult to see where and when the community and the private constituents begin and end, and locating the boundaries is “a perilous exercise” (Dupont 2004: 79).

For other companies operating in the area, the provision of security by collective A was regarded as a direct form of competition. This was due not only to its partnership with one of their competitors but also to the fact that it was conducting its own policing operations, as the manager of an armed response company explained:

That whole thing going on in [area name] is wrong on so many levels. There’s some community organisation acting like a private security company, arming their own guys who simply stand on top of the hill, watch the cars of other companies, and steal your clients. They call themselves a community thing, but they private, they do what we do! And then they’re running around with [company name] – one of our biggest competitors. It’s cleaned us out there; our clients have all left us.⁵⁵

Informal local security networks

These three different types of formal local security networks, namely individual clients, sponsorship, and collective clients, are the most common arrangements between citizens and the armed response sector. But there are also *informal* local security networks between members of the public and armed response companies that consist of systematic encounters. Though these citizens may also be clients, this section is primarily concerned with informal interactions that occur independently of their role as clients. In what follows, I will examine informal local security networks between “active policers” and neighbourhood watches.⁵⁶

“Active policers”

“Active policers” refers to non-clients who have an active relationship with armed response officers, such as the man who knocked on Brian’s window during our night shift discussed in the introduction.⁵⁷ These are individuals (mainly male) who often have several policing roles, such as police reservists, founders of neighbourhood watches, and participants in community policing forums (CPF). One example of an “active policer” was a white male in his 40s who was a police reservist, conducted regular patrols in his community in his spare time, ran a company that did “private security-related work”, and was on the provincial board of the CPF.⁵⁸

55 Interview: 10 February 2009.

56 I use the term “neighbourhood watch” as this was how the organisations defined themselves.

57 One person whom I refer to as an “active policer” described himself as a “serial involver” (Interview: 29 January 2009).

58 Interview: 6 May 2010.

Most "active policers" have a military or policing background and describe their willingness to contribute their skills as being born of a need "play their part" and "give back to the community".⁵⁹ Although many subscribe to armed response, it is not their role as a client that defines this local security network. Rather, it is their "active" role in policing that shapes their informal interactions with armed response officers. One example of an "active policer" is Vikayiphi Ngcoco, a man who received considerable media attention at the beginning of 2009 due to his active patrols and the arrests that he made.⁶⁰ The community applauded him for his hard work and armed reaction officers in the area also expressed appreciation for his efforts.⁶¹

Many "active policers" are police reservists. A police reservist is "a member of the community, who volunteers their services to perform policing functions or activities for the South African Police Service without being remunerated for such service".⁶² Part of the "old regime", reservists were established to increase community policing involvement and strengthen the police force: they were "force multipliers".⁶³ Since the National Instruction of 2002, certain individuals have been forbidden to work as reservists, including journalists, politicians, individuals engaged in community policing forums (CPF), and employees of the private security industry. This policy is not adhered to in practice, however, and numerous police reservists are engaged in citizen-based policing activities off-duty. The role of reservists as "active policers" concerns their engagement in policing activities while off duty.

Sometimes "active policers" work closely with a specific company, particularly community-based companies. I knew of several cases of reaction officers and "active

59 Interview: police reservist, 6 May 2010.

60 Vikayiphi works closely with Miles Steenhuisen, whom he befriended after a lawnmower was stolen from Miles's garden and they retrieved it together. During our interview, they told me that they wanted to "bridge between our different communities, so that we can all fight crime together" (Interview: 23 March 2009).

61 Gremick Integrated Security sponsored Vikayiphi in the form of an additional pair of handcuffs and safety shoes, a new bulletproof vest, combat trousers, a baton, a torch, and a notebook (*The Mercury*, 15/1/2009: 6). During a brief return to the field in 2011, I heard that he was working as an armed response officer for a community-based company.

62 Definition obtained from the South African Police Service (SAPS) website: http://www.saps.gov.za/comm_pol/reservists/reservist_index.htm

63 Many people become police reservists in the hope of becoming a fully fledged police officer. Although this does not happen frequently, 200 reservists were taken into the force in March 2010. Like police officers, reservists are divided into different categories and ranks. Category A refers to reservists who can be regarded as fully functioning policemen: they have the same rights and powers, operate in police uniforms, and do not need to be accompanied by a fully fledged police officer. Category B reservists conduct "support services": they do not wear uniforms and operate solely inside the police station. Category C refers to individuals who conduct "special services" as opposed to "normal" police work, such as doctors, pilots, and divers. Category D reservists are those linked to the commando units; this entire category is set to be phased out in the near future (Interviews with two police reservists: 6 May 2010 and 26 August 2010).

policers” patrolling together and sharing crime information. In June 2010 I patrolled with the operations manager of a small community-based company who conducted night patrols in his residential area. On some shifts, several friends who described themselves as “dedicated individuals” accompanied him. These friends were not trained or licensed individuals but patrolled with their personal firearms and were actively engaged in policing efforts, such as making arrests.

Armed response officers generally view “active policers” as collaborators, since the latter are also in the “policing game”, understand the nature of armed response work, and share a passion for fighting crime. The following statement from Brian reflects this widely held view of “active policers”:

These are guys who understand and know what’s going on, how to act, how to be... They’ve seen the shit, been there and done that. They don’t hassle us, ask too many questions, give us shit for driving too fast – they get out of the way, ask us if they can help us with anything, that sort of stuff. They let us know what’s up, what’s going on. But, they’re a pain in the ass if we fuck up; then they act like they know what’s better and come and tell us what to do, but even that keeps up fresh and sharp. They work with us. We’re in it together.⁶⁴

As “active policers” do not act as clients, armed response officers do not approach them with the mentality that “the client is always right”. Thus, the relationship is based not on economic gain but on sharing crime information and working together. This eliminates competition and leads to collaborative efforts. Interactions between armed response officer and “active policers” are often friendly and occur between “guys I know”.

Neighbourhood watches

There are some areas that are home to numerous “active policers”, very often in the form of a neighbourhood watch. Although the various individuals that comprise a neighbourhood watch are also sometimes clients, they do not have a collective contractual agreement with a company and are therefore not defined here as a collective client. This section will analyse two contrasting informal local security networks made up of neighbourhood watches and armed response companies.

The first informal security network that I wish to discuss here consists of a neighbourhood watch that worked closely with a large armed response company, primarily because many members of the watch were also clients of the company. Besides sharing information and using a communal radio, they frequently patrolled together. I spoke with Keith, a reaction officer who had been stationed in this particular area for a long period of time. He felt that his company’s collaboration with the neighbourhood

64 Interview: 13 August 2010.

watch was a major reason behind the high number of arrests they made, and he repeatedly conveyed how he loved working in the area and how he felt appreciated and respected by the community members:

These guys are good to work with and they know what they're doing. And they let me in, let me be part of it. And the people here, whether they're part of the whole patrolling thing or not, they know that we work together, they see us as a part of the team, so they're just nicer, friendlier, like greet you on the street and ask how you're doing and all that. They're more involved, this whole community, because of these patrols, and it matters. It makes this area nice to work in.⁶⁵

Although this area was a "stronghold" for the company Keith worked for, armed response officers from other companies shared his sentiments.

The second example is a neighbourhood watch that had a rather hostile relationship with several companies. The watch consisted of approximately 50 members who each paid R 150 for administrative costs. The founder and several other members conducted regular patrols in the area. However, unlike the previous example discussed above, they did not work closely with an armed response company. In fact, when I interviewed the founder, he expressed an acute disdain towards the industry at large and said that he refused to patrol alongside them. He felt that the neighbourhood watch was a "community form of armed response", and a much more efficient one at that. He further explained how he mistrusted the entire industry and believed that security officers of all types were criminals or else associated with them.⁶⁶ He himself was not a client of private security and actively encouraged other residents to revoke their subscription. He believed that private security increased rather than decreased crime and that citizens should act for themselves.⁶⁷

The founder's perception of private security resulted in competition between the members of this watch (particularly the founder) and the armed response officers working in the area. Information was not shared, encounters were often hostile, and companies lost clients. Dirk, an armed response officer who had worked in this area for a long time, respected what the neighbourhood watch was doing, but he also resented how they treated him. He felt that they monitored him excessively and intervened in his work. He also claimed that several clients who were not members of the watch had complained to him that the watch was encouraging them to end their contract. Dirk felt that he repeatedly had to "fight" the initiative in order to maintain his company's clients.⁶⁸

65 Interview: 17 February 2009.

66 This mistrust and suspicion was also directed at many state police officers.

67 Interview: 19 April 2009.

68 Interview: 2 December 2008.

Creating and Maintaining “Communities of Security”

High-maintenance local security networks are those where the client is clearly the “dominant actor” and steers the constituent interactions. Armed response officers find working with these clients as very strenuous. Collaborative local security networks, meanwhile, are effectively “partnerships” where clients and armed response officers work together towards a common goal. However, these networks can also be experienced as competitive when the actors involved compete over the provision of security. This is particularly common when citizens provide similar services that compete with those of armed response companies, as was the case with collective A and the second neighbourhood watch. Finally, competitive local security networks are those where auspices and providers of security “engage in ‘power struggles’ with one another (and even within their own organizations) as they seek to ‘jockey’ for important positions in the field of security delivery” (Wood and Dupont 2006: 4).

Despite their (obvious) differences, I argue that all three of these local security networks place constant pressure on companies and reaction officers to “up their game” and outshine their competitors. In order to acquire new clients, companies provide extra services and increasingly profile themselves as “community orientated”. Many of these extra services entail an expansion into public spaces, such as when officers escort clients to and from their residences. Thus, their work is no longer limited to servicing individual clients in private spaces; armed response officers are increasingly working for collective entities, both formal and informal, in public spaces.

I do not claim, therefore, that these local security networks *directly* instigate twilight policing. Rather, they cultivate a competitive mentality within the armed response sector that encourages companies and officers to police public spaces. These local security networks, particularly collective arrangements, provide a blueprint for the twilight zone. In the following section, I analyse how this engenders various social processes that define twilight policing as exclusionary and unpredictable.

A Community?

Establishing a collective arrangement projects social cohesion. This is particularly so when collective arrangements claim to represent a community, such as collective A and B. In fact, both of these collectives started as community organisations and only later made contractual arrangements with private security companies.

As discussed in the first section of this chapter, creating a collective and operating as a community is perceived to instil social order and combat crime. The word

"community" connotes a sense of cohesion and togetherness.⁶⁹ It has great "emotional resonance" (Amit and Rapport 2002: 14) and functions as a "powerful site for social order" (Crawford 1995: 104). With many collective arrangements, participants are described as "family members" or "close neighbours", as was the case for my block of flats. Slogans from such arrangements, such as "A united community is a strong community", "Together we stand", "Stand side by side", "Support your team mates", and "Watching each other's back", are geared towards creating and consolidating this "community" feeling.

While the use of the word "community" may evoke an image of a united group of individuals, intra-communal conflicts surrounding representation, legitimacy, membership, and participation are commonplace.⁷⁰ Like Brown and Lippert (2007), I found that several collectives functioned more as sequences of individual subscribers than as community initiatives that served all members equally. Many consisted of "a set of private individuals who happen to live near one another largely in isolation, but who share busy schedules, affluence, and a penchant for exclusion" (Brown and Lippert 2007: 607) and were characterised by "impersonal and distant relations among neighbours" (Brown and Lippert 2007: 606). In several cases, it was the arrangement with the armed response company that created the collective: members were bound solely by their security contract. Some collectives, such as collective B, contained a large majority of their self-defined community and were therefore regarded as more representative of the community than others. However, collectives that consist of a minority of the community, such as collective C with a 29 per cent membership, are more common. Thus, collective arrangements rarely act for all of the residents living in an area, and many non-members expressed that they did not feel represented, as the following statement from a non-member living in an area with a large collective client shows:

Those people that run all these meetings and patrol the streets here, they don't stand for me. I haven't really given them my permission, or should I say, my consent, to do that. I know they don't need it, but they don't work on behalf of me, they don't stand for what I want; it's not a democratic thing or anything like that. That's why I don't pay them.⁷¹

69 The concept of community and criticism thereof are sources of rich debate across various disciplines (Amit 2002; Amit & Rapport 2002; Bauman 1996; Cohen 1985; Suttles 1972). The concept has been criticised for being too vague (Bauman 1996) and containing a multitude of layers of meaning (Amit & Rapport 2002). Some scholars argue that a shared locality of physical spaces and geographical territories are hallmarks of a community (Crawford 1995). However, others claim that locality is not a prerequisite (Amit 2002; Anderson 2006; Cohen 1985; Crawford 1996; Kempa et al. 2004; Suttles 1972), as evidenced by communities that lack a specific locality, such as virtual communities (Amit 2002; Anderson 2006; Bauman 2001). A detailed discussion of these debates is beyond the scope of the present chapter.

70 Given this chapter's focus on local security networks involving the armed response sector, I will not elaborate on all of these issues here.

71 Interview: 4 September 2008.

Several non-participants were “named and shamed” for not participating, as one white female non-member complained:

I don't agree with what they're doing, so I don't want to pay for it. But if they want to do it, fine, just don't ask me to get involved, and I let them, but they don't leave me alone. They send out newsletters with the lists of people who aren't involved, so that everyone knows, or put flyers into my post box, trying to convince me to join. Now I am the bad one...you should see the way some of them look at me, like I'm the criminal.⁷²

In turn, members of collective arrangements view non-members as apathetic, lazy, and irresponsible. They are seen as “free-riders” (McManus 1995; Noaks 2000), “free-loaders”, and “piggy-backers” and are ostracised by others, as one member of the executive committee of a citizen-based initiative claimed:

This initiative is meant for all of us, so that we can all be safe. It's done so that we can all walk without being scared on the street... So we pay and do it. But they don't, because they say they don't agree. But they are benefitting from it, they are profiting from our money. They don't work with the community, but against us.⁷³

Benefitting from the security provision of a collective client without paying for it is a constant source of communal conflict. For example, collective D consisted of just seven houses, yet several other residents on this road also benefitted from this arrangement, which agitated the paying members. To eliminate this potential benefit for non-members, most collectives make a specific clause in their agreement with their armed response provider stipulating that the allocated vehicle is only permitted to respond to calls made by members of the collective. Armed response officers must thus refuse the requested assistance from non-members.

In some cases, particular individuals are refused membership, mainly by “road captains”, who generally determine the membership rules. With one neighbourhood watch, more than half of the members were “kicked out” for misbehaving.⁷⁴ Membership rules are tightened if members are found to be engaging in criminal activity. Since security initiatives are intended to combat crime, crime conducted by members

72 Interview: 16 August 2010.

73 Interview: 23 September 2008.

74 This neighbourhood watch initially had 40 members, but by 2010 there were only 12 left due to a disagreement about patrolling tactics. The remaining members recognised that they were not a true representation of the community, but they nonetheless described themselves as a “family” (Interview: 6 May 2010 and focus group discussion with three members: 6 August 2010).

undermines the purpose of the initiative and destroys the perception that crime always come from "outside" (Crawford 1996). I encountered three separate cases where members of a citizen-based initiative were engaged in criminal activity.⁷⁵ In one instance, the criminal activity of one of the residents (running a brothel) provided the initial impetus for setting up the anti-crime initiative. The founder of the initiative and his supporters refused membership to certain individuals who were suspected of colluding with the criminals. Members had to "prove their innocence", as the founder explained:

We didn't invite everybody and don't allow just anybody to join, because you don't know where the criminal element may be – not everyone means well, you know? A criminal can easily pretend, he can give a good cover-up, and then know our secrets. You have to be careful and be certain. You can't let crime manage you – you have to manage crime.⁷⁶

The creation of collective arrangements, and thus the materialisation of security as a "club good" (Crawford 2006), involves a distinction between insiders and outsiders. Yet these rules are continuously contested, and perceptions of free-riders, measures of naming and shaming, and the denial of membership are continuous points of friction. Therefore, although the notion of "communities of security" may connote a united group of individuals, such arrangements are very often marked by intra-communal conflicts.

These intra-communal conflicts also have a strong impact on local security networks involving armed response officers and companies, since they cultivate an additional element of uncertainty and a heightened need for armed response officers to be on their best behaviour. Pleasing the client, which is the main objective for companies, is arduous when it is unclear who exactly the client is, where the power balance lies among the constituent members, and which of several opposing demands to attend to. Thus, armed response officers are often required to negotiate between the divergent expectations of different members.

Borders and "gate-keepers"

While defining membership of collective arrangements is invariably contentious, the recognition of the common external threat (i.e. the "criminal", the "deviant", and the "dangerous other") unifies individuals and consolidates social cohesion.⁷⁷ Crime and disorder are generally seen as external forces, as illustrated by the following statement

75 The first case involved the arrest of one of the road captains for a Schedule One offence. This damaged the reputation of the community organisation and raised doubts about its ability to deal with crime. The other two cases concerned illegal brothels and drug dealing.

76 Interview: 19 April 2009.

77 See Cohen (1966), Crawford (1996), Gupta and Ferguson (1997), Hartnagel (1979), and Lee (2007).



Picture 4: Signage of BLUE Security by a collective client (photo by the author)

from a member of one collective: “Communities are being violated by people from outside the community”.⁷⁸

Blaming and scapegoating towards a collective fear of crime enhances social control and loyalty (Douglas 1986), augments feelings of belonging and exclusion (Bourke 2005; Reguillo 2002), and maintains social borders (Sparks et al. 2001). This creates boundaries between insiders and outsiders, with the latter excluded through both symbolic and literal means. Many collectives put up signs at the entry points of their area to announce the presence of a private security company, as can be seen in picture 4. Such signage gives the impression of a unified community that has eyes and ears that are on the look out for trespassers (Berg 2010; Brown and Lippert 2007; Lemanski 2006; Singh 2008). The use of the message “Be Warned, Criminals Will Not Be Tolerated” is a key part of the process of creating “communities of security” that are marked by social and physical boundaries. The literal ways in which armed response officers keep people out are through “chasing them out”, asking (or commanding) people to leave, and arresting them – issues discussed in chapter 8.

On a larger scale, such exclusionary messages and practices create an array of local security networks (both formal and informal) that do not necessarily join up to create

78 Interview: 27 February 2009.

a larger security network. For example, there were three neighbouring areas in Durban that each had a collective arrangement with a different armed response company and these companies did not interact. With another collective client, choosing the company caused a split among the residents and led to the creation of two separate clients, with one half of the residents subscribing to one company and the other half to another. This split was not made along geographical lines, which meant that two companies were providing overlapping services in the same area. Therefore, rather than "re-shuffling the decks of cards",⁷⁹ each suit is consolidated by different client-steered mandates and implemented by different companies.

The "motley patchwork of self-defence" (Steinberg 2008: 176) is constructed by clients and preserved by armed response companies. The borders between "insiders" and "outsiders" are defined by clients but are enforced and policed by armed response officers. Through the creation of local security networks, clients assign armed response officers authority and legitimacy to control access to the collective; they are the "gate-keepers". And as people are denied access to or expelled from certain areas, there is an inherent "*immediate violence potential*" (Franzén 2001: 214, italics in original). This prompts a punitive policing style.

To consolidate this "gate-keeper" role, collective arrangements often demand that the most experienced armed response officer works in the area permanently to build up local knowledge, such as the specific needs of the clients and the hot spots of criminal activity. Clients and armed response officers often establish personal relationships (McManus 1995; Noaks 2000).⁸⁰ In many cases, clients become fond of the stationed armed response officer and complain if he is reassigned elsewhere. For example, collective B had had three permanent armed response officers for several years, and these individuals were widely regarded as "an integral part of our community".⁸¹

However, armed response officers are also potential outsiders. When an incident of crime occurs, citizens generally believe that the armed response officer has failed to prevent a breach of the collective's security. He is very often the first to be suspected and is treated with the same suspicion afforded to other outsiders who repeatedly enter the collective, such as criminals. The various surveillance measures enforced by many collectives strengthen the perceived need to control the activities and movements of armed response officers. Since social boundaries are unremittingly reconfigured and redesigned through community interaction and social change (Amit 2002; Barth 1969), the locus of the armed response officers is fragile and continuously in flux.

Social boundaries are therefore based on what is "shared" within the community and how this differs from non-members, that is, outsiders (Crawford 1995, 1996). An

79 Interview: an "active policer", 23 February 2009.

80 Chapter five discusses how armed response officers often appreciate such personal relationships, but that companies purposely restrict these for numerous reasons, such as the fear of moonlighting.

81 Source: minutes from Annual General Meeting (AGM) of collective B, 18 March 2009.

armed response officer can thus fill both shoes: he is defined as an insider by working with the community and sharing the same goal, yet he is reclassified as an outsider when suspected of foul play.⁸² Thus, while armed response officers may be given the “gate-keeper” role, maintaining this position is a continuous struggle. Furthermore, the boundaries that distinguish between insiders and outsiders transcend established notions of public and private space. Generally speaking, public spaces are sites that are accessible and available to all citizens, while private spaces are sites where citizens, based on ownership, can exercise their right to “privacy” and prevent others from entering. In the early days of the industry, armed response officers served and protected private spaces and responded to alerts (such as alarms and panic buttons) that originated therefrom. Although this is still a part of their mandate, reaction officers are increasingly moving into public spaces, and this is largely due to the growth of collective arrangements. With collective arrangements, armed response officers are instructed to police the spaces *between* residences, such as the streets and parks – in other words, public spaces.

It is precisely this movement into the public realm that clients and citizens are now demanding from security providers. For the general public, the control over public spaces provides a heightened sense of reassurance and “peace of mind”, as the secretary of collective C explained:

I used to live in fear...I didn't even dare to enter my own garden at night, always scared someone was hiding behind the bushes. But now, it's gone. I walk freely and I sit in my garden at night. I know that when I go out at night and leave my kids at home, I don't need to worry about them, I can relax, because I know that everything will be okay. Somebody is taking care of my house and my street.⁸³

Thus, private security is no longer simply about security “my house”, but it is increasingly about securing and defending “my street”. Public spaces are increasingly experienced and defined along feelings of ownership, which is evident in the prevalence of phrases such as “my road”, “our area”, and “our streets”. Collective arrangements increasingly create “privately controlled public spaces” (Crawford 2006: 132) that are experienced as “club realms” (Webster 2001, in Crawford 2006: 131) rather than “public realms”.

The establishment of collective arrangements emerges from a perceived need and entitlement to control public spaces, and armed response officers are invariably the ones assigned the legitimacy and authority to exert this control. Their movement into the public realm is a purposeful one, which highlights how citizens, and particularly clients,

82 Chapter 8 elaborates further on how armed response officers experience this constant suspicion.

83 Interview: 11 August 2010.

play a central role in pushing armed response officers into public spaces through various local security networks.

Concluding Remarks

The aim of this chapter has been to analyse the different types of local security networks comprising armed response officers (and companies) and citizens, of which the majority are clients (i.e. paying citizens). I have examined various forms of formal and informal local security networks that were further subcategorised as high-maintenance, collaborative, and competitive networks. In so doing, I have demonstrated the multitude of ways in which clients create an environment conducive to twilight policing, which refers to policing practices that operate in a zone between state and non-state policing.

This chapter has revealed how citizens employ *private* agents yet increasingly encourage them to operate in *public* spaces. High-maintenance networks reaffirm the dependence of companies on clients (and potential clients) for income, collaborative networks consist of and enhance partnerships between citizens and armed response officers, and competitive networks are marked by power struggles. Despite their differences, each type augments the competitive nature of the sector (and industry), which encourages armed response companies and officers to provide and do "more". This "more" entails that armed response officers increasingly act like the state police by operating in public spaces. Furthermore, due to the growth of collective arrangements, "communities of security", in which borders are created that distinguish between "insiders" and "outsiders", are flourishing, which exacerbates the exclusionary nature of twilight policing. Clients define these borders, but armed response officers are contracted to police them; they are the "gate-keepers".

These different local security networks have also brought together two types of policing that are frequently distinguished in the literature, namely citizen/community policing and private policing. This chapter has shown that these do not always operate as two separate fields, but that they increasingly work in unison and even come to resemble one another. Although it is possible to distinguish between their respective members, such as the armed response officer whose uniform exudes his "private" nature, the policing practices of armed response officers are increasingly shaped and penetrated by citizens. And due to the saturated nature of the industry, clients have a great deal of steering power: they play a leading role in determining armed response officers police the streets. Thus, we can only understand the performance of twilight policing by analysing the behind-the-scenes role of clients and citizens.

PART III

**INSIDE THE
TWILIGHT ZONE**

8

Performances of Twilight Policing: Public Authority, Coercion, and Moral Ordering

Introduction

“Their full meaning emerges from the union of script with actors and audience at a given moment in a group’s ongoing social process.” (Turner 1987: 24)

This chapter analyses twilight policing through a performative framework that defines policing as a performance in which participants interact with each other on a specific stage for a particular audience. Using a performative framework permits one to investigate the expressive process by which human beings, in their relationships and interactions with others, construct and give meaning to their social realities.

This chapter has three aims. The first is to stress that twilight policing is a *joint performance*. This entails that the full meaning of twilight policing is located in the coming together of different factors and local security networks, as the opening quote from Turner indicates. I will elucidate this by analysing three different performances of twilight policing: a car chase, the arrest of two suspects, and “disciplining”. For each performance, I will show how various participants, through their interactions with armed response officers, shape twilight policing practices. My second aim is that twilight policing consists of practices that contain both public and private elements, that are based on the ability to use force (punitive), that aim to create a social and moral order (disciplinary), and that serve a particular group of “insiders” and “outsiders” (exclusionary).

As armed response officers are the main subjects of this research, they are the initial point of reference in this chapter, positioned as the lead players that interact with other actors who function as both audience members and other actors on stage. This does not imply that armed response officers are the dominant or decisive players: it merely means that their perspectives and experiences are granted more attention. Given this focus, the third aim of this chapter, which expands on the analysis presented in the previous chapter, is to show how armed response officers are assigned two roles in the performance of twilight policing: they are the “gate-keepers” of the imagined communities created by citizens/clients and the “negotiators” between citizens’ expectations and the (perceived) shortcomings of the state.

This chapter approaches these three aims in the following order. After a brief conceptual introduction to the performative framework, which builds on the work

Goffman (1959), the first and largest section of this chapter presents three ethnographic performances that show the punitive, disciplinary, and exclusionary nature of twilight policing. The second section explores the racial and social construction of the dangerous criminal “Other”, which defines the outsiders and subjects of policing. This section on race does not intend to imply that issues of race are necessarily an inherent part of twilight policing, but it aims to show how the South African context gives meaning to social constructions of race which exacerbate the punitive, disciplinary, and exclusionary nature of twilight policing. An analysis of race is also relevant for understanding the third section of this chapter, which examines the emotional experience of working as an armed response officer – the key performers of twilight policing. This chapter ends with a microanalysis of twilight policing which focuses on the ambiguity and liminality of such performances. As I was also an actor in these performances, both on and off stage, my own position in the field will permeate the empirical vignettes.

Performances of Twilight Policing

This chapter does not refer to theatre anthropology, the structure of rituals, cultural performances, or the more aesthetic and imaginative activities associated with the word “performance”.¹ Rather, it will draw on Goffman’s dramaturgical approach to analyse the expressive process by which human beings, in their relationships and interactions with others, construct and give meaning to their social realities. Performance is defined here as “all the activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by his continuous presence before a particular set of observers and which has some influence on the observers” (Goffman 1959: 32).

Goffman’s dramaturgical approach to understanding ordinary social situations centres on three key parties: the main player, other participants, and the audience. Every performance consists of two main regions: a front and a back. The performance is carried out in the front region and consists of a *setting* (context and geographical location) and a *personal front*. The latter includes one’s *appearance* – the fixed and changeable expressive items that are identified with the performer, such as clothing, race, age, and facial expressions – and one’s *manner* – “those stimuli which function at the time to warn us of the interaction role the performer will expect to play in the oncoming situation” (Goffman 1959: 35).

For armed response officers, the setting of the front region was originally the private domain (i.e. residences and businesses), but in recent years this has enlarged to include public spaces. In terms of appearance, armed response officers are generally non-white

1 See Barba (1995), Beeman (1993), Freeland-Hughes (1998), Hastrup (1992), Kapferer (1986), and Schechner (1985).

males between the ages of 20 and 40 who wear a company uniform, carry a radio and a firearm, and drive a company vehicle. Their manner largely depends on their personal characteristics. Taken together, these attributes (i.e. appearance and manner) shape people's expectations of what an armed response officer can and will do. Due to the vast size and continuous growth of the armed response sector – and the private security industry at large – the front region for armed response officers can be regarded as a “collective representation” (Goffman 1959: 37). Although other actors, such as clients and police officers, recognise the differences between companies and armed response officers, there is a collective understanding of their role.

While the front region tends to consist of respectable (socially) behaviour, the back region (also referred to as the backstage) includes more “informal” behaviour and suppressed activities. The back region is where performers assume that audience members will not intrude, where performances are contrived, and where flaws in the personal front can be adjusted. It can therefore contradict the appearance and manner cultivated in the front region. This chapter will highlight the importance of this back region among armed response officers. In fact, armed response officers depend on the back region; it is a space where they can dismantle the façade that they have to uphold for other actors (such as company managers and clients), and where they can reveal attitudes closer to their actual experience. This further highlights the fluid nature of twilight policing and the arduousness of performing.

In every performance, each participant possesses preconceived notions and expectations of other participants based on existing routines of interaction and established social relationships. For example, armed response officers can regard a call-out as a routine, and when performed for the same client on numerous occasions, a social relationship is established between the two parties. An armed response officer has expectations of how a client will behave, and vice versa. However, as Schieffelin (1998: 205) argues, relationships are shaped as the performance is carried out. Thus, performances are not pre-programmed, guided by a fixed and unchangeable set of rules; rather, as this chapter will show, they are flexible and very often shaped by improvisation.

Scholars have criticised Goffman's approach for presenting performances as “bounded acts that take place within a performance space (the ‘front region’) and therefore retain discernible temporal and spatial boundaries” (Jeffrey 2013: 29). Although I concur that Goffman's method poses a rather rigid situation, I choose to employ it here since it allows us to understand how a social reality is created and maintained. It is a framework that allows us to discern the different parts of a performance. In my analysis, however, I will emphasise how performances are shaped through a complex recursive relationship between social structures and individual agency that are not bound to a particular time and space. I analyse the “stage” not as a fixed entity within a distinct phase or space but rather, as Turner's abovementioned quote suggests, as part of an “ongoing social process” (1987: 24) that is continuously reconfigured. This ties into the

performative dimension of twilight policing, which entails that policing practices are performed repetitively, are continually changing, and (re)produce a series of effects (Butler 1997).

I therefore focus on the collective nature of performance that moves beyond an individual analysis (Jeffrey 2013). It is for this reason that I analyse twilight policing as a joint performance between actors located in a variety of social and historical contexts. Within a (joint) performance, there is a division of labour and an “interactional *modus vivendi*” (Goffman 1959: 21), which refers to the different roles ascribed to various participants, the necessary information each possesses, and their contribution to creating an encompassing definition of the situation. When armed response officers police the streets of Durban, what sort of “working consensus” (Goffman 1959: 21) is established and how is this achieved? If the primary aim of performers is to maintain a particular consensus in order to give meaning to their realities, then what reality is sustained in a joint performance? The remainder of this section aims to address these questions.

Performance 1: The car chase

November 2008

It’s been a long day; no real positives, but an exhausting day nevertheless. The heat of the midday sun has taken its toll on Gayle and I, and our usually lively conversations have been reduced to a few terse comments punctuating a deep silence. Just as we think that we’re done for the day, we receive a call-out: an alarm at a nearby residence has gone off close by. Gayle immediately speeds off in the direction of the client’s residence, but a few seconds later we hear that Tim has already attended and that it was a false alarm. Gayle sighs deeply. We turn around and slowly drive back from Durban North towards Morningside.

Just as we come off a bridge, I spot a short, bald white man standing at the side of the road by a petrol station, screaming and waving his arms frantically at us to stop. We’re caught by surprise, and Gayle breaks sharply and pulls up next to him.

“Open your window, let’s see what this guy wants”, Gayle instructs me. Wracked with panic, the man tells us that a woman has just been robbed not far from here and that the suspects are in a vehicle close by. It’s extremely difficult to make out what he’s saying, but it emerges that he has the suspects’ license plate number written on the palm of his hand.

“Get in the back, come on”, Gayle tells the man. I’m shocked. I know this is against the rules: armed response officers aren’t allowed to take other people in their vehicles, especially non-clients. I look at Gayle, and try to make eye contact with him in order to understand why he’s doing this, but he doesn’t look back at me; he just slams on the gas and races off. The man sits in the back of the car and continues to yell, “Oh my god, I just had them. The fucking assholes, I almost had them!”

Shortly afterwards, the man points to a car on the other side of the road. "It's them, that's the car", he exclaims. "You see, those two Coloured guys and that fucking *kaffir*, that's them. Go after them!" Gayle squeezes in front of the other cars, makes an abrupt U-turn, and chases after the vehicle. The suspects in the car look back at us and, spotting that the bald man is with us, start to accelerate. The vehicle is now in front of us, but there are two other cars in between. We're back on the bridge, but Gayle can't get right behind the car because other cars won't let us overtake. The man continues to scream at Gayle: "Fucking hell, can't you just pass this car? Fucking *coolie*,² do you even know how to drive properly? Drive faster, fucking drive faster! Get these assholes! Put on your sirens, get them!" As we approach a set of traffic lights, we see that the suspects' vehicle has just gone through them. We're forced to stop at the lights, and then it dawns on us that this is an intersection: the car could have headed in any direction; we've lost them. "Fuck! I can't believe they just left!" screams the bald man from the back seat. "Why didn't you just drive through the traffic light? We should have driven faster, you should have hooted at that car in front of you... Fuck, fuck..." He continues like this for a while longer, yelling and swearing at Gayle and blaming him for letting the suspects get away.

We drive around the area for a while, taking different passageways to see where the car could have headed, but it's clear that we've lost them. The man is still screaming at Gayle, at himself, and at the suspects in the vehicle. I'm extremely irritated by him and finding it difficult to stop myself from shouting back at him. I try to make eye contact with Gayle, but he's practically ignoring me and appears to be extremely calm, his eyes focused on the road. When the man finally calms down a little bit, Gayle asks, "So what exactly happened?" And then the story comes.

The man was working in his office when he heard a woman scream. He and a colleague went outside to see what was going on and found a woman in tears. She explained that while she was walking down the road, a black male had pointed a gun at her head, grabbed her handbag, and then ran across the road to a waiting vehicle and sped off. Out of anger and frustration, the bald man and his colleague had decided to chase after the vehicle, but they lost it. They then drove to the petrol station as they had often seen police vans parked there, but when they arrived there were no police officers about. His colleague decided to phone the police while he went to the side of the road in the hope that a police van would pass by. And then he saw us.

Only at the end of his story does the man finally acknowledge my presence and inquire, somewhat curtly, "Who the fuck are you?" I explain to him that I'm doing research, but I keep it brief. I'm annoyed with his attitude and I don't feel like explaining myself. I ask him why he stopped us and he answers, "Well, that's what you're here for, to catch criminals. I mean, you guys got a gun, you can do more than I can, you know? You're practically the police."

2 "Coolie" is a derogative term for Indian South Africans.

Gayle drops the man off at his workplace, near where the robbery took place. When we get there, several people are standing outside. We join the crowd, and the bald man explains what happened. He describes how he personally chased the vehicle with the suspects. Everybody concernedly tells him that he shouldn't act like that again, which is seconded by Gayle: "You shouldn't be chasing guys like this – they could have had a gun. What would you have done?" The man replies, "Man, so many of my friends have been robbed and shot, I'm sick of this shit, I really am. I can't just sit around and do nothing anymore... People need to step up!"

We find out that the woman who was robbed is sitting inside the office and that the police are on their way. Gayle provides his contact details in case the police want to contact him for further information, and then we get back into the car and drive off. Gayle finally looks at me and starts laughing. We then have the following conversation:

Me: What is it? What's so funny?

Gayle: You know that guy, I know him. I've had to take him out of a bar about three times because he was drunk and getting into a fight.

Me: Is it? Where?

Gayle: Thunderroad, that place on Florida Road. He got all racist and aggressive on me, calling me a *coolie*, refusing to leave, that kinda shit. And now he doesn't even fucking recognise me. And now here I am helping the racist drunk out. [Starts chuckling]

Gayle: You okay Tess?

Me: Yeah, I was just a bit irritated. I know he was upset, but he had no right to scream at you like that. And you were so calm; I almost flipped out at him.

Gayle: You see, that's how it goes. I have to put up with his stupid shit. If I get aggressive at him, he's gonna phone the head office and I'm gonna have to explain myself. And I'm gonna give the company a bad name. Like I've said before, the client is always right...and the client always needs or wants something and we must listen and follow, do as they say. We deal with this shit everyday, you've seen it, how people treat us like shit, like we're stupid dogs that are trained to protect them, like their own private little police. It comes with the job. It's the nasty part of this job. Now you see, if we would have got that vehicle, now that would have been nice. Then people realise we actually do do something. That we don't just spend our time driving around, being useless all day...that we actually do have a purpose... Ag, next time man, next time.



The preceding vignette describes an incident in which a citizen (i.e. a non-paying client) seeks assistance from a private agent in the public domain, because the public agent

(i.e. the police) has failed to meet his expectations. The citizen also describes the private agent as being “practically the police”.

The private security industry’s expansion into the public realm has become a common feature of policing worldwide. Although the armed response sector emerged in the 1980s with “one-man shows” that patrolled the streets, armed response has traditionally been a private affair. Yet as the last four chapters showed, in contemporary South Africa, “the power of private security in public spaces is beginning to equal the power it holds in private spaces (albeit symbolic rather than legal power)” (Berg 2010: 288). The expansion of their powers and operations into the public realm is encouraged by the armed response sector at large, police officers, and citizens/clients.

It is thus not uncommon to witness armed response officers engaged in the management of car accidents, parking issues, and funeral processions, or to see private security companies provide security at public events, such as local fairs, fundraisers, and sporting functions. All of the company representatives I interviewed stressed that their companies were engaged in “more than just response”. They repeatedly asserted that their armed response officers were proactive rather than reactive and that they were engaged in both crime prevention and crime management, which is evident in some of their statements: “Our company doesn’t just respond, we prevent crime”; “We are a proactive company and we do more than just respond”; and “We don’t just prevent crime, we do something about it”.

The encroachment of armed response into the public domain began with the expansion of services that were closely related to armed response. The first step was offering an escort service, whereby clients can request a vehicle to escort them on the road when they need extra protection. This entails providing security to clients outside the private domain of their homes. Patrolling has played an even bigger role in pushing private security into public spaces. As armed response officers respond to call-outs in their vehicles, patrolling is a mandatory part of their daily routine. Although there are companies that discourage patrolling (primarily for financial reasons), armed response officers are generally encouraged to make their presence known and to be constantly “on the look out for anything suspicious”. Patrolling is seen as a way for companies to increase their visibility and gather crime intelligence. Various companies, especially those that work closely with the public police, will conduct regular crime analyses and will instruct armed response officers to patrol areas found to have higher levels of criminal activity. Additionally, certain clients, particularly collective ones, demand that armed response officers are highly conspicuous and on patrol at all times.

An increase in patrolling results in a more perceptible presence in the public domain, thereby expanding the setting (stage) of the performance. And as the stage becomes larger, the number of participants increases; the stage becomes more accessible to others – such as non-clients – to enter and shape the performance, either as participants or as additional members of the audience. In the case of the car chase,

patrolling took place in the front region of Gayle's performance, and an audience member became a participant. If Gayle had stood down at a particular place, we would not have encountered this citizen's request for assistance. And if Gayle had not been encouraged by his company managers to assist non-clients, he probably would not have stopped in any case. The moment that Gayle allowed the citizen to enter his car, the latter became an active participant in the performance.

Armed response officers are increasingly providing assistance to non-clients. All of the companies I researched interacted with non-clients and assisted them if they could. One small company had the statement "We will render assistance to anyone that calls us for help" on the front page of its promotional pamphlet and website. Engagement with non-clients tends to occur more among community-based companies, as they have closer ties with the citizens of a given region. I witnessed numerous incidents where armed response officers assisted acquaintances and colleagues' family members. One community-based company received an average of 12,000 calls from non-clients per month in 2009, compared to 3,000 calls from clients and 4,900 signals from alarms and panic buttons.³ For this company, therefore, non-clients were more frequent recipients of security services than paying customers.

Assisting non-clients is not restricted to community companies, however. Larger companies may receive fewer calls from non-clients, but they are not adverse to helping out. Indeed, an armed response officer from a large firm undertook the car chase described above. Armed response officers also engage more with non-clients if they are part of a collective client or neighbourhood watch. Due to the lucrative nature of collective clients, companies prioritise them and clearly instruct their armed response officers to be on "top form" when working in these areas. Although collective clients generally inhabit a protected geographical area, there are numerous problems in defining and maintaining the "collective". Armed response officers are often unaware of which individuals make up a particular collective, and they therefore tend to treat everybody residing in that area as a part of the collective, even though some may not be paying customers. And even when armed response officers are aware who the non-members are, they may assist such persons in order to make them part of the collective, that is, to win them over as potential clients. All inhabitants are thus regarded as audience members.

What we find, therefore, is that the setting and the audience are both expanding, which constantly creates new forms of engagement. Performances are based on larger scripts with new public expectations in which a new working consensus is continuously constructed. With the car chase, for example, the citizen demanded that Gayle assist him under the supposition that he was entitled to such assistance. The citizen regarded Gayle's help as a public service available to all, and thereby assigned a new role to Gayle.

³ Needless to say, the company did not attend to all 12,000 of these calls.

And although he was not a client, he was treated as one. However, as Goffman (1959) argues, new tasks are always based on existing social interactions and performances. The expanding role of armed response officers is an extension into the domain of the state police.

In the case of the car chase, the police were what Goffman refers to as “outsiders”: participants who are not intended to witness the performance. However, although the police may have been physically absent, the participants felt their presence. Like Goldstein (2012), who coins the term “phantom state”, I argue that the physical absence of a state does not mean that it is absent from one’s experiences and perceptions. With the car chase, the citizen was initially seeking the police, but he found us instead. The police thus clearly influenced the performance. In fact, such acts may have the intention to “catch the eye of an inattentive state and to perform for it visually and unmistakably the consequences of its own inaction” (Goldstein 2004: 182). This performance shows how twilight policing simultaneously contains public and private dimensions, which not only refers to a private agent operating in the public domain; it also concerns the appropriation of activities and behaviour associated with the state police. It is an example of how armed response officers simultaneously mimic and undermine the state police.

Performance 2: Arresting suspects

May 2010

It’s Friday morning and a bunch of us are standing outside the office for a cigarette break. When a call comes in about the presence of two suspects in someone’s yard, the guys throw down their cigarettes, start screaming at each other to hurry up, and rush over to their vehicle. I quickly grab my vest and hop into the front seat of the car that Chris, an Indian armed response officer in his late 30s, is driving.

On our way over to the premises in question, we hear over the radio that the suspects have been apprehended. When we reach the site, I am asked to stay in the car, but I can see that a group of eight armed response officers are standing around two suspects lying face down on the ground with their hands cuffed. For the next few minutes, they repeatedly hit the suspects with their batons and kick them while the suspects howl with pain. A large crowd of members of the community begins to gather. The armed response officers continue going at it hard; they thump the suspects, rebuke them, and accuse them of stealing from innocent people. I feel extremely uncomfortable to be sitting in the car – almost as if I am hiding – especially when I realise that several of the bystanders are looking at me. I feel somehow responsible, as if I am partaking in this violent act.

The armed response officers then pick up the suspects and I finally get a full view: the two men are bleeding from various parts of their bodies and their clothes are torn. The officers dump the suspects into the back of two pick-ups, including the one I am

sitting in. The beatings continue in the rear of the vehicle, which rocks from side to side with each blow. The sound of the suspect's screams and grunts are ear piercing. Chris then gets into the front seat and asks me whether I am all right. When I say, rather hesitantly and unconvincingly, "yes", he replies, "Ach, all that violence..." interrupted by a smirk, "but I told you we were tough and know how to hit".

Everyone then gets back into their vehicles and we drive approximately 100 metres further up the road. The suspects are taken out of the car and thrown onto the ground. I am told that I can get out of the car. For the next 20 minutes or so, the armed response officers continue to interrogate the suspects, knocking them about in a playful manner. Two officers cock their firearms, point them at the suspects, and then threaten to shoot them, which is met with laughter from the other officers. The armed response officers tease and provoke one another, some using this as an opportunity to show off their fighting skills. At one point, one suspect makes eye contact with me and I instantly look away, unable to cope with his pained expression. And then it dawns on me: here I am, standing on the other side of the road, watching a group of armed men in uniform berating and beating two unarmed suspects. And they seem to enjoy it. I am absolutely disgusted by what I see. I long for them to stop. Everything inside me is screaming, yet I do not make the slightest sound.

To cope with the situation, I purposely focus on other events happening around me. I start questioning community members about their feelings and opinions, but few seem to share my feelings of disapproval and disgust. One elderly man, who has been at the scene since the beginning, explains how often the local residences have been burgled. He points to several houses that have been robbed over the last few months and to a spot (where the suspects were apprehended) where two hijackings have taken place in the last year. He then says, "The guys deserve it – it's good that they're hitting them, they deserve it". Other community members voiced similar statements, such as "We need these guys to stop the animals from killing us" and "We're constantly under attack; these men need to teach them a lesson, to stop them from destroying our communities". At one point, two bystanders even ask to join in with the interrogation, but the armed response officers do not allow this.

When the police arrive, my first thought is that they will condemn the actions of the armed response officers, particularly their use of violence, and arrest some or all of them. However, nothing of the sort happens: the two police officers – an Indian male and a black female – make a few cursory inquiries and then simply place the two suspects in the back of their vehicle and prepare to head back to the police station. The two armed response officers who first apprehended the suspects are asked to come to the station to make a statement, but no further action is taken.

A week or so later, I run into the male police officer and ask him about this incident. Rather than condemning what the armed response officers did, particularly their

treatment of the suspects, he actually praises it. He recognises that “such cases can be problematic”, but he maintains that there is a “need for it”.



In this performance, armed response officers used violence in the public streets and in broad daylight as a “team”, a team being “any set of individuals who cooperate in staging a single routine” (Goffman 1959: 85). As a team, violence was overtly projected in their front region. Chapters four and five discussed how bodily and force capital is cultivated in the armed response sector through the use of violence and coercion by armed response officers, how the continuous presence of danger and risk affects their occupation, and how their moral frameworks are shaped with regards to use. Armed response officers’ exposure to violence and crime leads to a degree of moral cynicism, where everyone is regarded as potentially threatening, and certain armed response officers do not shy away from using coercion and violence.

Coercion and violence are used for numerous reasons; to apprehend, intimidate, and search suspects. During their training, security officers are taught how to search individuals without the use of force, yet in practice, more coercive methods are used to apprehend suspects, such that they are increasingly employing a “detection and punishment mentality” (Berg 2010: 295). Besides physical violence, I witnessed various other forms of coercion, such as the use of pepper spray and making suspects sit or stand in very uncomfortable positions. Swearing at suspects, calling them names, and making threats were also common. Armed response officers frequently made statements such as “If you don’t stop, we’ll come back next time”, “Next time I won’t be so polite”, and “Next time there will be more of us”. They regularly lectured suspects as a form of “moral disciplining”, admonishing them at great length for their immorality and wrongdoings.

However, to assume that all of the armed response officers involved in the abovementioned case of arresting the suspects were “trigger-happy” and prone to violence would be too simple. Although some appeared to derive enjoyment from the performance, we must recognise that their use of violence was also steered by other factors and participants. For a team to operate as one they must work together to create a coherent impression; otherwise, the entire performance will be disrupted. Operating as a team, rather than as individuals, is often regarded as more powerful and convincing for the audience. One owner cited this as a key strategy:

When we hear something has happened, I want as many of our vehicles as possible to go there. This is for safety reasons, so that the guys can help each other out, but it’s also to show force to the community: we come as a group, a force to be reckoned with.⁴

4 Interview: 24 April 2009.

In addition to the way in which team members influence and encourage each other, the audience also plays a crucial role in armed response officers' usage of force. In this performance, the audience members (i.e. the bystanders) tolerated, encouraged, and even praised the use of physical violence and thereby configured the joint performance. In this case (and numerous others), physical violence was accepted and legitimised by the audience members as well as by the police officers who appeared later. The latter were initially outsiders but became insiders by approving of the situation. In the following example, we will see how a client signed up with a company based on its reputation for fighting and disciplining "wrong doers". Echoing the findings of Sharp and Wilson (2000: 125), clients sometimes viewed the criminal past of company employees as a "positive advantage". Many companies are well aware of this and emphasise their violent capabilities accordingly.

Armed response officers often displayed conscience knowledge of when violence was "appropriate". This depended on the context and severity of a crime, but also on the client and the way the audience would react. Michael explained this as follows:

If I had the choice, I would whack every guy that I thought was suspicious, but I can't go and do that. You see, at night, you can do more: less people around, less witnesses... I mean, I'm not going to hit a guy, bleeding and all, in the middle of the CBD on a Monday morning... And I know that certain clients are alright; they like the way we do our work, they expect it from us, so we have to show them something to keep them, to show that we're worth their money, but there are others...they are a bit more difficult. You have to act more professional in front of them; screaming is good, and a few smacks, but no excessive hitting.⁵

When various teams come together, there is a *performing team*, one that directs and controls the setting, sets the pace of the performance, allocates parts of the performance, readjusts any possible disruption, and restores order when others do not act correctly. In the case described above, the armed response officers were assigned the authority to be the performing team. The use of violence was crucial for them to obtain and maintain legitimacy and authority; it was used to display power and to underscore their leading role. Violence is thus very often a demonstration of power, particularly when performed in public spaces (Goldstein 2004; Hall et al. 1978).

The expanding role of armed response officers also represents an increasing use of punitive behaviour. Twilight policing does not necessarily imply the use of coercion and physical violence, but it does imply the ability to use violence that is confidently placed in the front region. Although this ability is inherent to all forms of policing, twilight policing is distinct in the fact that it occurs in an ambiguous fashion. Furthermore,

5 Interview: 11 May 2010.

punitive behaviour cannot be reduced to trigger-happiness, but must instead be understood in relation to the parts played by other participants in either encouraging or tolerating the use of violence. The performance of violence is therefore part of an emerging working consensus.

Performance 3: Disciplining

May 2010

We're in the middle of a staff meeting when we hear about an alarm notification at an important client's residence. David is ordered to attend and asks me to come with him. When we get to the premises, an Indian male is standing outside. We initially assume that nothing is wrong, but then he waves at us to come inside the house. When we enter the residence, David and the client address each other by their first names, shake hands, and engage in some banter. It is clear that they know each other. When we move into the living room, I see the client's wife holding a young boy of about two years of age, and then notice a young black girl sitting on the couch, looking down at the ground. There is an eerie vibe, and I'm confused about what is going on. The clients tell us that the girl is a maid who been working for them for the past fortnight. Last week, there had been two occasions when the wife had suspected the maid of stealing between R 20-50, but she wasn't sure. She discussed her suspicions with her husband, and they decided to set a trap using four R 20 notes as bait. Now the money was gone, and they were confident the maid was to blame.

The client then looks at us and says, "We asked you to come here because we want to show her [the maid] how quick you guys come here, what will happen next time. It's not about the money – it's about the trust. I want her to know what will happen next time she does this." He then nods at David to signify that he can take over. David approaches the girl and starts talking to her in a stern tone of voice, asking her what she did. The girl's gaze is fixed on the ground, but she is clearly afraid of David. David raises his voice and commands her to look at him and explain herself. The girl says she needed the money to buy bread for her family; she admits to stealing R 10, then admits to stealing R 20, and then denies the theft altogether. David grows increasingly frustrated. I stand in the corner of the room, trying to remain as inconspicuous as possible, but the girl repeatedly looks at me, probably wondering who I am and what I'm doing here.

The clients then reiterate to the girl why they called the company, and David intervenes to support their claim. "Do you know what will happen next time they call us?" he asks. "You'll arrest me", replies the maid. Then David smirks and says, "No, we're not the police. We won't arrest you – we'll beat you. I don't care how old or young you are, male or female – if you steal, you must be taught a lesson." The client nods and supports David's threat by saying, "You know [name of the company]? Do you know what they do? They're not the police; they'll hurt you if you do this again." Still staring at the floor, the maid murmurs that she understands.

The clients, David and I leave the living room to discuss the matter outside. The clients question whether they should give her a second chance. David strongly advises against this: “You can’t trust her. She will steal again. Better you get an older lady; they are more reliable. These young ones...they are out to steal. Next thing you know, she’ll get her friends and they’ll come and steal everything.” David provides numerous examples of maids who have worked alongside criminals, including one who orchestrated an armed robbery and watched as the suspect raped the woman of the house. Nevertheless, the clients say that they want to give the maid another chance, so we return to the living room and David orders the girl to return the money she took.

The wife and I head into the kitchen for a glass of water. She repeatedly emphasises how disappointed she is, because she treats the maid with dignity and wants to help her. I ask her why she phoned the company and not the police. She explains to me that they’ve been clients of the company for years; they respond quickly, she tells me, and – she stresses this – she likes “their way of operating”. She then asserts, “I don’t want the girl arrested; I want her to know that what she did was wrong. Going to jail won’t teach her anything; it will just make it worse. She needs to be disciplined, and the police won’t do that for you.” I find this situation incredibly sad, and I sympathise with the maid. I somehow feel that she is not the wrongdoer, and I am appalled by the clients’ and David’s attempts to impart moral discipline.

On our way back to the office, David explains how these clients’ problem was not uncommon: maids, gardeners, and other black employees often steal from their employers. When I ask him what will happen if the maid steals again, he says, “We will eat her”. He repeats this several times. I ask him what he means exactly. “We’ll beat her,” he replies, “give her a good hiding...she needs to be taught a lesson. Only like that will she learn. Going to prison isn’t a punishment at all.” David appears to notice my disapproval. “People like you,” he says, “from overseas, you think it isn’t right, that it’s inhumane, but they [the criminals] are the inhumane ones; they’re the ones who don’t care and they must be punished.”



This performance depicts a particular role that is expected of armed response officers in the private domain, whereby clients legally entitle security officers to execute their policing needs. Armed response officers are increasingly providing all sorts of help in the private sphere that far exceeds a basic “response”, such as providing medical and technical assistance. They were often regarded as negotiators and mediators, being called upon to diffuse situations or to intervene between different parties, and intimidation was inherent in these roles. In the case of the errant maid, David was called upon to insert his symbolic authority and bodily capital in the front region of his performance. The threat of force was used to deter further acts of crime, to protect the interests of the clients, and to instil morality. Armed response officers refer to this as “disciplining”.

I was initially surprised at the frequency at which armed response officers attended “domestic disputes” between siblings, neighbours, tenants, and housemates, as I assumed that this was the domain of the public police. Armed response officers and company managers described domestic disturbances as the most annoying and least rewarding call-outs. They were also regarded as the most risky and difficult: although armed response officers want to help clients and provide “maximum service”, they also feel constrained in addressing such disturbances and are concerned about the potential problems they may bring. Many armed response officers discussed their attempts to solve cases of domestic violence that had backfired on them, with the person (very often a woman) they intended to protect ending up pressing charges against them.

As armed response officers operate with a client mandate, they will usually side with their clients to protect their interest without investigating the situation. This was evident in a neighbourly quarrel that occurred in May 2010 while I was on day shift with Ryan, an Indian armed response officer in his mid-20s. We had been called out to a site to address a “domestic”; when we arrived, we saw an Indian man (the client) sitting behind his gate and exchanging insults with an Indian woman standing on the road. The man explained to us that she was swearing at him, calling him all sorts of things, while the woman accused him of entering her house without permission and spreading rumours about her in the neighbourhood. Ryan intervened and told the woman that there was nothing the company could do and that she must go to the police to resolve the dispute. He kept highlighting that she was disturbing the peace in what was a quiet residential area. When we got back into the car, Ryan told me that he actually sympathised with the woman and that she was probably right, because he had heard stories of this man acting up before. When I asked him why he defended the man, he said, “He’s our client and that’s all that matters. It’s not my job to choose sides, but to protect our clients, not just everybody.”

In cases such as this, clients and armed response officers operate as co-actors, reading from the same script and pursuing the same goal, perhaps even functioning as a team. In the episode involving the maid, for instance, the clients and David worked as a team to maintain a particular working consensus that identified the maid as the target of the performance due to her deviant behaviour. David and the clients displayed the same mentality, and David gladly acted in a front region in a way that suited the clients’ needs. However, this team performance may be a façade, as armed response officers may actually feel differently to their clients, something that they conceal in the back region. This is exemplified by the tenant dispute that Ryan attended, in which he acted as a team member to maintain the particular working consensus despite this clashing with his actual interpretation of the situation, as he later admitted. If he had enacted these feelings in the front region, the working consensus would have been undermined, which would have resulted in an entirely different performance. These domestic disputes highlight how armed response officers are employed to impose and maintain a certain

moral order. In the case of the maid, stealing from clients was considered a crime, yet using physical means to “punish” her was regarded as necessary. Although David did not use physical force on this occasion, I witnessed other cases where armed response officers were expected to use force in order to convey moral teachings.

The state police are often referred to as the “thin blue line” that serves as a moral buffer between social order and chaos. Violence perpetuated by criminals is regarded as “bad violence”, while violence that counteracts this is regarded as “good violence”, since it is intended to create and maintain a “good” social order. Defining and preserving this distinction is increasingly the role of the private police; they have come to be involved in “moral social ordering” (Berg 2010: 297). This is primarily due to a public perception that public institutions are failing to “punish” and “discipline” those committing “bad violence”. And by defining what is permitted (and what is not) and assuming the role of the “punisher”, the conduct of armed response officers is increasingly resembling vigilante behaviour (Jensen 2007; Johnston 1996). As moral communities must be protected and order must be maintained, violence is often seen as “a necessary and justified form of discipline, as a legitimate way to restate and internalize the core moral values of the community” (Buur 2005: 193).

These three performances have shown that twilight policing entails a physical and symbolic expansion into the public realm, that it rests on the armed response officers’ ability to use violence, and that it produces and maintains a particular social and moral order. The next section will focus on how the exclusionary nature of twilight policing is framed by racial hierarchies.

Racialised Constructions of the Dangerous “Other”

The ‘mugger’ was such a Folk Devil; his form and shape accurately reflected the content of the fears and anxieties of those who first imagined, and then actually discovered him: young, black, bred in, or arising from the ‘breakdown of social order’ in the city; threatening the traditional peace of the streets, the security of movement of the ordinary respectable citizen; motivated by naked gain, a reward he would come by, if possible, without a day’s honest toil; his crime, the outcome of a thousand occasions when adults and parents had failed to correct, civilise and tutor his wilder impulses; impelled by an even more frightening need for ‘gratuitous violence’, an inevitable result of the weakening of moral fibre in family and society, and the general collapse of respect for discipline and authority. (Hall et al. 1978: 161-162)

In their well-known research on “mugging” in the United Kingdom, Hall et al. shed light on the various political, economic, and social dimensions of this phenomenon. One

key argument is that “mugging” has an underlying racial element; it is “ambiguously identified” (1978: 327) with black youth. This section will address how race shapes understandings of crime in South Africa, how “the criminal” is invariably associated with the young black male, and how armed response officers are employed to police this socially constructed threat.

Fear is a powerful emotion that is felt both individually and collectively and that shapes relationships between social groups. Fear of crime creates boundaries between “us” and “them”, with risk, evil, and the dangerous “Other” located outside the social group. Such a categorisation creates order, structure, and “cleanliness” in an otherwise disordered, dirty environment (Douglas 2002). To consolidate cohesion and solidarity, an external threat is required (Hartnagel 1979; Reguillo 2002). Although the concept of crime is vague and abstract, the “criminal” is much easier to pinpoint: “When fear has a face, it can be faced” (Reguillo 2002: 199).

The criminal is the personification of crime, and “whether particular acts are categorized as criminal depends as much as on who has the power to define it as crime as on the act itself” (Jensen 2007: 49). Caldeira analyses the “talk of crime” that leads certain “others” to be labelled as dangerous and immoral, where “symbolic criminalization” (2000: 2) is a part of everyday practice and “poses clear-cut distinctions between that which belongs and that which does not” (77). Each society has its own “systematic ordering and classification of matter” (Douglas 2002: 44) that rejects elements regarded as dirty. Since criminals are regarded as untrustworthy, deceitful, and immoral, they are the “dirt” that originates from marginal places (Caldeira 2000; Douglas 2002; Goldstein 2004, 2012; Hall et al. 1978). Borrowing from Agamben (1998), Buur argues that criminals are “relegated to the status of ‘bare-beings’” (2005: 204); to beings that can be treated with impunity.

The “Bravo Mike Syndrome”

November 2008

During one of my first days on duty with Nick, we received word over the radio that we should be on the look out for a “suspicious individual” who was wearing a “woollen jacket with red stripes”. I had not yet mastered the language used in the radio communication, so I did not quite understand what had been said. What follows is an excerpt from our conversation.

Me: What exactly did he say?

Nick: There is a suspect we need to look out for: a black male wearing a woollen jacket with red stripes.

I became confused and started to question what I thought I had heard.

Me: Was that in the original message?

Nick: No, control didn't say black male, I added that on, for you.

Me: Why?

Nick: To make it clearer.

Me: But why didn't control mention that?

Nick: Because he doesn't have to, it's already clear. When I hear about a suspect or suspicious person, I assume it's a black male. Sometimes control will mention it specifically, and say, "suspicious Bravo Mike", but many times, it's left out. But I know what he means – we all do.

Me: And what about a suspicious Whiskey Mike [white male]?

Nick: [laughs] If that's the case, he'll mention it. But I haven't heard that said in years, maybe never. In this line of work, a suspicious Whiskey Mike doesn't exist. It's almost always a Bravo Mike, maybe sometimes an India Mike [Indian male], but that's only in certain areas. A suspicious man is a Bravo Mike. And we all understand it like that.



In the course of my fieldwork, Nick's claim that "we all understand it like that" was repeatedly borne out. On countless occasions, I witnessed the identification and apprehension of "suspicious individuals" who were defined as "Bravo Mikes" (i.e. black men) and who armed response officers were always on the look out for. When I asked my informants what "suspicious behaviour" meant, I received various answers that mainly referred to someone's behaviour. For example, someone who is walking quickly and continuously looking behind them might be suspected of running away from somewhere, possibly a crime scene. Similarly, a car parked outside with its engine running and guarded by an individual would be suspected of being a getaway vehicle, while a person who is driving erratically would be suspected of being a car thief. And so the list continues.

These descriptions illustrate how identifying something and/or someone as suspicious is linked not only to an activity, but also to *who* is conducting this activity. Suspicious individuals are generally described as poor and "unwashed". However, the context in which such a person is identified is very significant and I refer to this as "*class matching*". For example, if an apparently poor person were seen walking in an affluent area, it would be regarded as suspicious, yet if the same person were spotted in a township there would be no reason to be wary of them. Detecting suspicious individuals is about identifying contradictions between their appearance and manner with the context; in other words, it is about deciding whether an actor is entitled to be on that particular stage. It is about identifying "matter out of place" (Douglas 2002).

As my conversation with Nick suggests, race plays a major role in defining "matter out of place" in South Africa. In many parts of the world, certain ethnic minorities are

more likely to be labelled as suspicious, and thus stopped and searched, than others (Hall et al. 1978; Rowe 2004; Weber and Bowling 2011). A common explanation for this is that certain ethnic communities are more likely to live in areas with higher crime rates and are thus statistically more likely to be engaged in criminal activity. However, this research does not focus on men who are suspected, stopped, and searched in their own areas of residence, but on those who are regarded as suspicious outside their own neighbourhoods. I am concerned with the areas where they are not “supposed to be”, where they are “matter out of place”.

During my time on duty, clients and armed response officers used a range of descriptions that cut across racial lines, yet the terms “white female” and “white male” were conspicuous by their absence. Rather, their calls always concerned suspicious black males or suspicious Indian males. I term this the “Bravo Mike Syndrome”, which refers to the framing of the criminal as the immoral and dangerous black male, and to the consequent policing practices of armed response officers. In describing the importance of colour in constructing fear in South Africa, Hansen makes the following claim:

The enemy of the post-apartheid society is conceptualized as the ordinary, under-educated and impatient young man of colour, emerging from an anomic and morally distorted township culture, armed with lethal weapons and imagined to be aligned with crime syndicates. This popular and official view of ‘the criminal’ as a morally inferior person beyond redemption and reform, only amenable to punishment and incarceration... (2006: 284)

During apartheid, race was a political and social grouping that defined moral categories. Racial segregation aimed to prevent mixing and to protect “racial purity” (Posel 2001b: 52). The apartheid state created racial categories to reject and keep out the “dirt”, the non-Whites, from the pure and clean, the Whites. Swanson (1977, in Steinberg 2011: 354) has shown how “the notion of contagion”, where Blacks were framed as “bearers of disease” that would bring disorder, was used to instil and maintain segregation. The depiction of Blacks as “dirt” was thus the explicit depiction used during apartheid that served as a powerful metaphor and current racial framing shows that this classification is still present in South Africa.

During apartheid, state policing maintained racial segregation. Although crossing geographical borders was permitted for economic reasons, such movement was heavily policed and non-whites were regularly subjected to check of their *dom passes* (i.e. to ascertain whether they were permitted to be there). When apartheid was dismantled and the policing of the “new South Africa” was designed and implemented, geographical borders no longer determined policing strategies. For many policing agents, this transformation was not easy. Johnny, a white armed response officer who had been working in the industry for over 20 years, shared some of his experiences:

Back in the 80s and 90s, being a good security officer meant checking the Blacks – questioning them about what they’re doing, making sure they’ve got their papers... And then, with the new government, all of that changed; we were now told we couldn’t do that anymore. And you know, it was difficult. If you’re used to something – it was how we were taught to think and do – it’s difficult to turn it off. But we did it... But now, with crime being so high and people in South Africa, we’re fed up, we’ve had enough. So we’re going back again, because now I am questioning Blacks again and clients are phoning in about these suspicious black men... I sometimes wonder what it all changed for? Or did it change?⁶

Racist policers?

In looking to understand the “Bravo Mike Syndrome”, one explanation centres on racist attitudes and perceptions among armed response officers. Racist remarks, jokes, and comments were common among all of the companies I researched. When racist comments were made to colleagues, they were jokey, whereas when directed at suspects, they tended to be more serious. I clearly recall a day shift with Michael in May 2010, during which he pointed to a group of black children standing outside a school and said, “What a waste of money of even educating them. It’s a tragedy. They’re just going to grow up to hijack or kill innocent people.” Similarly, one afternoon in February 2009, Gayle and I were talking about apartheid. The conversation started with him condemning it, but he then proceeded to say, “But eventually, you can’t mix a bunch of barbarians and criminals with civilised people. It’s like putting lions loose with cats. It just doesn’t go.”

Such views highlight how Blacks are characterised as untrustworthy barbarians in much the same way as criminals are. In my research, armed response officers and citizens often described criminals were as deceitful, inhumane, and bloodthirsty individuals who lacked morality and were guided by hate and a “desire for revenge”: they were “animals”, “hungry beasts”, “soulless killers”, and “individuals that need to be punished”. For example, in performance 2, the suspects were described as “animals”, while in performance 3, the maid was said to be “out to steal”. The newsletters of community organisations also highlight these viewpoints, with criminals portrayed as “the scum”⁷ yet also as clever and deceitful individuals who “do not hesitate to shoot to kill if need be”.⁸ Although these descriptions are not necessarily racialised, they are never directed towards Whites and contain implicit racial categorisations.

Similar to the issue of “moral cynicism”, encountering crime on a daily basis for years and seeing Blacks as forming the majority of suspects and criminals has shaped

6 Interview: 10 February 2009.

7 Digital newsletter of an anti-crime community organisation: 4 August 2011.

8 Digital newsletter of an anti-crime community organisation: 19 April 2009.

many of these racialised perceptions on part of armed response officers. Gayle was very astute about this:

You see, when I was in CIT [cash-in-transit] I saw a lot of fucked-up shit. I stopped it, because I was becoming a racist. I started to think that every black man was going to shoot me. But you know, black men do kill more. They don't give a shit – they will pull the fucking trigger and end your life. Without a doubt. You see, we might have trouble sleeping at night, but these guys...they just fucking do it. Just like that. And the next day they'll do it again.⁹

Such racist sentiments not only constitute the “Bravo Mike Syndrome” but they also influence how black citizens are treated. For example, after the car chase (performance 1), I asked Gayle about the circumstances in which he would provide assistance to non-clients and he explained how he based his decision on whether “they look like they needed help”. When I probed further, it became clear that appearance, and particularly skin colour, largely influenced Gayle’s decision-making process. Another example concerns the incident described at the start of chapter six, where a black man requested assistance from an armed response company. The man was sent back and forth between the company and the police and was eventually turned away by both. When I asked the armed response officers afterwards why they didn’t help him, they claimed that he was drunk and didn’t have a good case. However, one of them also said, “He’s probably a criminal himself anyways”. When I inquired further, it became evident that they were referring to his race. And then one of them openly stated, “If he would have been Indian or white, I would have helped. But this Blackie? Hell no!”

Company owners and managers often voiced similar opinions. One Indian owner explained how his company had a strict policy of offering assistance to anyone in need, yet when I asked whether this also applied to the neighbouring black townships, he bluntly said “no”. The owner initially cited safety reasons, but a while later he said, “We wouldn’t be welcome there, even if somebody called us... It’s not safe, but they also deal with things differently, and chances are, that they’re involved in crime themselves, so who are we protecting?”¹⁰ Perceptions of crime are thus very often racially framed.

This racial framing is even more evident when intra-racial interactions occur. Although they form a minority, there are Black South Africans who purchase (Burton et al. 2004, in Kempa and Singh 2008: 346). Black clients hold very similar views of criminals outlined above, but their understanding differs through its incorporation of poverty and class as defining factors, which differentiates the client from the criminal. The criminals are those who have not “made it out of the townships” and improved their

9 Interview: 28 May 2010.

10 Interview: 25 May 2010.

economic standing since the political transformation. Here, the notion of “economic outsiders” (Kempa and Singh 2008: 345) is significant; the criminals are the “Other” due to their economic position; they are judged by “the moral measure of success in capitalist markets” (Kempa and Singh 2008: 347). This highlights the link between racist security policies and broader political economies. Generally speaking, black clients of private security in former white areas are not categorised as “Bravo Mikes”. Although they may not be considered full and worthy members of the “us”, they are also not identified as the dangerous and dirty “Other”. Rather, the “dirt” refers to individuals who reside in certain “marginal spaces” that are seen as dangerous, chaotic, and the source of disorder (Caldeira 2000; Douglas 2002; Goldstein 2004; Hall et al. 1978). And in South Africa, townships continue to be perceived as “breeding grounds of brutality” (Comaroff and Comaroff 2006c: 216).

“Carrying the Indian torch”

Out of the four companies that I selected for in-depth analysis, one was an Indian-owned company that operates in a former Indian township. Although I chose this company for various reasons, I mainly wanted to see whether private policing was different in a racially homogenous neighbourhood that prided itself on being “Indian”. However, it did not take long to identify the existence of racialised policing strategies and the pervasive “Bravo Mike Syndrome”.

On a sunny afternoon in 2010, one of the ward councillors from the area took me for a drive to show me around the neighbourhood and we started talking about crime and policing.

You see, after 1994, two things happened. The first was the free movement of Blacks. Before, Blacks that were walking on the road were stopped and checked – checked for their permits, their *dom passes*, controlled about what they were doing here, if they were allowed to be in the area, because they weren’t. This area was 100 per cent Indian. After 1994, this changed: Blacks could come in the area, buy from the same shops, go to the same schools... At the same time, crime started to increase drastically, especially theft. We never had any real problems with crime beforehand; we used to walk freely down the street... Now, imagine what this does for perception: many people see that when Blacks started coming into the area, so did the crime. So in their minds, there is a link, and for many, all Blacks are criminals. Although they’ll employ them as gardeners or maids or whatever, they fear them. It is almost impossible to find an Indian living here that will trust his life with a black person, no matter what they tell you. And what you see now is that the style of policing under apartheid is coming back... If a group of black males, or even just one of them, is walking on the street late at night, or even during the day, he’ll be questioned by the police and the private

security companies about what he's doing here, back to the apartheid ways. So these companies that are working here, they are carrying the Indian torch, protecting the Indians from the Blacks coming in all around us.¹¹

Besides identifying crime with Blacks, the ward councillor also noted how this predominantly Indian community preferred to work with Indian companies because they were “carrying the Indian torch”. This highlights a certain racial solidarity between community members and policing agents. Hansen (2006) makes a similar observation in his study on Chatsworth, another former Indian township in Durban, where the presence of the Indian police provided a sense of racial solidarity during apartheid. The Indian armed response officers whom I encountered during my research, particularly those working in this community, took pride in their work and regarded themselves as “local warriors defending the community against attack, literally defending what they see as the border between the Indian and the African world” (Hansen 2006: 290).

This former Indian township was not exceptional: several geographical and/or socially defined areas – particularly racially homogenous ones – are known for having particular “racial” preferences with regard to policing bodies. Furthermore, certain companies recruit armed response officers based on their race. This is primarily based on clients’ demands: some clients prefer a company with a particular racial majority among its armed response officers, while others openly state that they want armed reaction officers of a particular race. I discussed this with a community leader from an affluent, predominantly white area who had been involved in an array of anti-crime initiatives since the late 1980s.¹² He concurred that his neighbourhood had a “racist” reputation and claimed that this was due to the large amount of elderly residents, many of whom still had an apartheid mentality, according to which the *swart gevaar*¹³ is ever present and non-white policing agents are not to be trusted. He also noted that this racially homogenous community was surrounded by several black townships, which made people feel isolated and constantly under threat. He described it as “a safe island surrounded by nearby outsiders”.¹⁴

During the Armed Reaction Man Competition in August 2010, one of the owners explained how he only employed white armed response officers due to client demands. He explained how the community “wouldn’t tolerate a non-white to enter their house and protect their streets”. During a shift in February 2009, I was talking to Anthony, a white armed response officer who had been stationed in an area with a majority of Muslim inhabitants. Anthony mentioned how he had been hugely popular in the area and how numerous clients had complained when he was transferred to another area.

11 Interview: 11 May 2010.

12 In chapter seven, I referred to this area as area A.

13 *Swart gevaar* is an Afrikaans term meaning “black threat”.

14 Interview: 27 February 2009.

When I inquired about the source of his popularity, he first emphasised that he was simply a “good” armed response officer who did his work exceptionally well, before casually adding, “and well, because I’m white”. When I probed further, he simply shrugged, looked at me like I was asking something stupid, and said, “Well, people trust me. They know I’m not corrupt. They know I’m honest and legal. They don’t think that of the other guys.”¹⁵

In his excellent research on the South African state police, Steinberg discusses the idea that Whites are less corrupt – a “White is right” mentality. He gives the example of a police officer who said to him: “There is a perception that it is better to deal with a white policeman than a black one [...] The white one will not be corrupt; he is just a professional” (2008: 112). A black company owner whom I encountered during my research echoed this claim: “When it comes to policing, I would trust a white guy over a black guy, any day. Not with everything, but with security, you just know a white guy’s gonna do the job, and with Blacks, many questions can be asked.”¹⁶ Thus, racial constructions of criminals not only portray the black male as the “dangerous other”, but also depict the white male as the incorruptible, professional policing agent.

In South Africa, dichotomies of dangerous versus safe and corrupt versus honest are thus racially framed. Given this, the racial element of the performance of twilight policing is not simply about institutionalised racism or particular “rotten apples” in the private security industry, but it also concerns the prevalence of race in constructing and reproducing certain social realities. Performances are not single acts or deeds; rather, they are part of a larger social process. They highlight particular social values, and as policing cultures very often emerge from social structures and norms (Hall et al. 1978; Reiner 2000; Rowe 2004), one must examine racism within society in order to understand racist policing practices.

And as policing practices are performative, I argue that the “Bravo Mike Syndrome” reifies and consolidates particular exclusionary practices. As Kempa and Singh argue, “disciplinary and exclusionary policing practices such as those engaged by many streams of the private security industry (in South Africa and probably elsewhere) freeze essentialist conceptions of ‘race’” (2008: 336). The urban architecture of South Africa shows how communities physically separate themselves through physical and imagined borders, and how this is highly racialised. The recent growth of collective clients exemplifies this process: it entails a growing need to define who is “in” and who is “out”. Crucially, it is armed response officers who are employed to maintain these borders between outsiders and insiders: they are the “gate-keepers”.

Race is not a distinctive element of twilight policing. Policing everywhere is generally defined as exclusionary and, in particular contexts, as racist. However, the issue

15 Interview: 17 February 2009.

16 Interview: 26 August 2010.

of race shows how twilight policing acquires meaning in the South African context and frames the disciplinary and exclusionary nature of the phenomenon. I therefore concur with Samara (2010: 640), who notes how “the governance of security can function as a form of racial governance”. We need to understand how public spaces are racialised in a context where “every physical space remains historically marked and defined by a single racial category – rarely two or more” (Hansen 2012: 7). Thus, while racism is not specific to twilight policing, it is an important dimension and consequence of it due to the complexity of South Africa’s racial legacies. Furthermore, it plays a crucial role in the emotional and liminal experiences of the performers of twilight policing, as I will show in the following section.

“It’s Never Good Enough”: Experiencing the Twilight

In this section, I will conduct a microanalysis of the individual experiences of armed response officers whereby they feel that their work is “never good enough”. This analysis shows how armed response officers experience their occupation and emphasises their position as “dominated actors” within local security networks.

Working as a policing agent, whether public and private, has been characterised as “a (not so) rewarding job” (Loyens 2009: 466). Although this is due to poor wages, boredom, and risk, the main factor is “status frustration”, which refers to the endured poor treatment. This is arguably even more problematic for private security officers given their limited legal powers and the additional burden of not being “good enough” for the public police (Loyens 2009; Rigakos 2002). Private security officers suffer from having “too many masters” (Button 2007: 135), including company management, clients, colleagues of higher rank, and state policemen. Each of these parties has its own interests and agendas, and private security officers struggle to please them all.

Besides the occupational hazards discussed in chapter five, armed response officers’ main complaint about their work concerned their inability to please clients, the constant feeling of “gambling” in their interactions with clients and police officers, and the sense of never being “good enough”. Nick once said to me, “It’s like we are always walking on eggshells; you always have to be careful. It can make you go crazy, really.”¹⁷ Armed response officers are also often asked to do “ridiculous” things. For example, on one occasion in June 2010, David was expected to dispose of a dead cat that a client had placed in a box outside her house, and in February 2009, Sanjeev was asked to transport food from one client to another. Armed response officers loathe such requests and feel belittled by them.

17 Interview: 20 November 2008.

Each armed response officer is continuously engaged in a process of “audience segregation”, which means that he must ensure “that those before whom he plays one of his parts will not be the same individual before whom he plays a different part in another setting” (Goffman 1959: 56). Clients and police officers exhibit diverse expectations and approaches. On the part of clients, these opposing demands are strongly linked to the perception of a failing state police force. It is as if their lack of confidence in and frustration towards the public police is channelled in their attitudes towards and treatment of armed response officers, precisely because private security is essentially a private good. Indeed, clients feel that they can choose between private security companies; if one doesn’t meet their demands, they will simply find another. This feeling of entitlement and consumer power is crucial in understanding how armed response officers are treated. The working consensus of a performance thus differs between audiences, and armed response officers must know which performance is legitimate for which audience.

Contrary to popular belief, assaults, abuse, and verbal threats against security officers are common, so common that they are regarded as a large part of the job (Button 2007; Lister et al. 2000; Loyens 2009; Rigakos 2002). For armed response officers, verbal assault and ill treatment are seen as something that come with the territory, as Gayle clearly expressed after the car chase. However, these experiences and the officers’ dislike for clients and police officers must remain in the back stage. The case of the car chase clearly illustrates this: in the presence of the citizen, Gayle was calm and polite, but as soon as we were alone together, he expressed his disdain. Similarly, reaction officers are rarely able to express their disagreement with clients. During the car chase, for example, Gayle initially conveyed a willingness to support the non-client’s plea for assistance, though he later disagreed with the behaviour by saying, “You shouldn’t be chasing guys like this”. If such opinions are pushed to the front region, armed response officers may be punished or dismissed.

The car chase also highlights the contradictory public attitudes and expectations towards armed response officers. On the one hand, they are regarded with a certain degree of public authority and sometimes even equated with the public police. On the other hand, as armed response officers do not possess the same powers and tools as the police, these expectations can never be met. During the car chase, the citizen expected Gayle to run red lights, and he swore at Gayle profusely throughout the entire episode. I often wonder what he would have demanded from Gayle if we had succeeded in apprehending the suspects. The work of armed response officers is marked by a conflicting combination of high expectations and contempt. Themba once described it as a constant balancing act: “Some clients want A, others want B; you never know until you get there. People pull and push, thinking that we can do everything, but we

can't."¹⁸ The reality is that most citizens are not aware of the legal limitations of armed response officers. This means that their initial expectations of the latter's performance are undefined, providing space for conflicting interpretations and further complicating the art of audience segregation.

Armed response officers also feel that clients frequently "test" them, such as by needlessly pressing panic buttons to test officers' response time. Some companies encourage their clients to test their alarm systems regularly in order to check that they are still functioning.¹⁹ However, this is also likely intended as a way to directly test the capability of armed response officers. During a day shift with Themba in November 2008, we attended an alarm activation at a client's house. The client wasn't at home, as is commonly the case, so Themba climbed over the gate and conducted a perimeter check. He saw no sign of any criminal activity, so he left a call slip behind and we proceeded to the next alarm activation. A few hours later, the control room informed us that the client had called the company to complain that his gate was broken. Themba explained to the control room that this wasn't his doing, but the client insisted that he return to the property. On the drive over, Themba seemed rather anxious. I asked him why the client wanted us to come back, to which he replied,

I think there is a problem with the gate. You see, there is always a problem. If you climb over the gate, then clients are angry that you come inside, they get suspicious... But if you don't climb over the gate, then they ask: why am I paying all this money if he doesn't even come inside? Always a problem. And I, no we, are always doing something wrong.

When we arrived at the client's house, we saw that the gate's motor and several of the railings were indeed broken. The client immediately demanded an explanation, and Themba became very defensive, repeatedly saying that he had not done anything. Themba used me as a witness, and I readily concurred that the gate had been fine when we left, which was the truth. The client remained agitated, but he eventually let us go to attend another call-out.

Private security officers are the first to be suspected if something is out of place or if crime occurs at clients' premises. This can be emotionally gruelling for security officers, especially if they have been stationed in a particular area for a while and have established personal relationships with some of their clients. Frank told me about a period of shock and depression he had experienced after one of his long-term clients from a collective client was robbed and accused him of colluding with the criminals. The

18 Interview: 22 November 2008.

19 One company conducted an average of 300 tests per month in 2009.

client made Frank take two polygraph tests, one conducted by the company and another by a personal contact. Frank passed them both, but the episode changed his mentality:

I felt betrayed, completely. I loved working in this area and put my heart into it. I really felt like these people appreciate me, they trust me, it's worth taking the risk for, you know? But when this happened, *uish*...everything changed. I mean, I still enjoy working here, but it made me realise: I will never be one of them, and they will always see me as this [he points to himself], this uniform. And they will always suspect me... Even if I work here for another 20 years.²⁰

In cases like Frank's, the breakdown of trust is almost always irreparable, and thus is carried towards the back regions of armed response officers' performances. When suspicions arise or accusations are made in such contexts, it implies that the members of the audience are not convinced that the performance is true (Goffman 1959: 59-66). There is concern over the authority of the performer, but not over the performance itself. In the incident involving the damaged gate, the client was not necessarily worried about the gate per se, but rather about Themba's honesty in carrying out the task and function as his security provider. The suspicion directed at armed response officers thus revolves around questions over their power and authority to react to "moral transgressions perceived to threaten the community" (Jensen 2007: 49). There is an ongoing negotiation about whether they belong to the moral community, which further reveals the shifting boundaries between insiders and outsiders.

Being the "Bravo Mike"

This ambiguity is intrinsically linked to the "Bravo Mike Syndrome", since the majority of armed response officers are not white (see chapter four). In fact, one of the issues that prompted me to conduct this research was the somewhat contradictory nature of private security in South Africa: citizens very often express a fear towards young black males yet simultaneously employ such individuals for protection. There is an inevitable friction in this: a "Bravo Mike" is both a source of fear and safety. As Kapuściński states, "The Other can be both of these, and that is the basis of his changeable, elusive nature, his contradictory behaviour, whose motives he himself is sometimes incapable of understanding" (2008: 21).

Armed response officers are believed to come from the same marginal spaces as criminals and thus to have the same potential to "pollute". Many black armed response officers I spoke to felt that clients made direct associations between them and criminals. Siphso, a black officer in his early 30s with a military background, expressed this view clearly:

²⁰ Interview: 22 July 2010.

You see, many clients are very suspicious. They don't say that directly, but you can feel it, the way they look at you. It's so sad, really so sad. One time, I had a call-out... When I got to the premises, the suspect had just climbed over the fence and left. The client was screaming at me: "Chase him, shoot him, there goes your brother, shoot your brother!" He was calling the suspect my brother, like I know him or something, just because we're both black. And it hurts to hear this, you know. It made me angry, so so angry... But also just very, very sad.²¹

For many armed response officers, the "Bravo Mike Syndrome" is an emotional and conflict-ridden affliction, as Siphon further elaborated:

It's a very big problem. Many times, the males are just walking down the street and then I have to ask them what they are doing. It feels very uncomfortable; I feel guilty, because it's none of my business to ask them what they are doing. And I would hate somebody to ask me that... But it's my job. It makes me very sad, but I have to do it, I just have to.²²

Many armed response officers define the "Bravo Mike Syndrome" as "White paranoia" and sympathise with the black men whom they are obliged to observe and question. These are situations where "the performer is forced to take a line which is deeply contrary to his inward feelings" (Goffman 1959: 184). On a day shift in November 2008, Gayle and I conducted a "Bravo Mike" check at the bequest of a white client who had just moved to a new neighbourhood, only to discover that the suspicious black male in question had in fact been working as a gardener in the area for the last 10 years. Afterwards, Gayle expressed his frustration:

So this new guy just doesn't know his neighbours, he doesn't take the time to think and actually know what's going on his area, so we must do it. I must ask a poor black man, who has been working here for 10 years, why he is walking on the street, all because of some lazy fuck [the client]? Their laziness, their stupidity, their ignorance...and so the black guy must be a criminal? And I must question him? Yes, that is exactly it. And it's fucked up, I can tell you that.²³

Liminal persons

Armed response officers function both as both anomalous and ambiguous persons: as anomalous for not fitting neatly within a given category; ambiguous for being able

21 Interview: 4 December 2008.

22 Interview: 4 December 2008.

23 Interview: 28 November 2008.

to fit into two different categories (i.e. the protector and the potential criminal) at the same time (Douglas 2002: 47). It is therefore unclear where to place them; their “status is indefinable” (Douglas 2002: 118). Policing is about creating “a separation between the ‘good’ community and the evil outsiders” (Jensen 2007: 65), and armed response officers are recruited to police this boundary. Yet members of the public, particularly clients, continuously call this role into question. Armed response officers are “neither there nor here” (Turner 1967: 97); they are not fully accepted as insiders, yet nor are they equivalent to the “dangerous” other. They are somewhere in the middle, and are both at the same time: they exist within a liminal phase, defined by its “betwixt-and-between condition” (Turner 1987: 101).

I argue that twilight policing is performed in a liminal phase. It has both temporal and spatial dimensions: it refers to the moment of performance and the spaces in which they occur. More specifically, twilight policing is a type of public liminality that is accessible to many participants. Performances in a public liminal phase have a temporal structure, contain both constant and variable features, and function as spaces for spontaneity and improvisation (Turner 1987: 25-26). Armed response officers are governed by a set of rules and regulations created by the industry, the police, and clients, yet there is also potential for alteration, and improvisation is repeatedly used to adapt to particular situations. When armed response officers receive a call-out or alarm notification, their work is structured by certain procedures and expectations, yet what will happen when they arrive on the scene is unpredictable. Thus, a set of rules and symbols may be in place, but their framing is continually being negotiated, resulting in a constant process of creating and redefining rules and relationships (i.e. the working consensus). Performances are thus not fixed but rather are constantly reconfigured. And this is why there is so much discomfort and anxiety felt by the key performers, namely the armed response officers. Although these elements of unpredictability and rule bending may be hallmarks of policing more generally, this *constant* level of uncertainty defines twilight policing.

Armed response officers operate in a space of “ambiguity and paradox, a confusion of all the customary categories” (Turner 1967: 97). The presence of “too many masters”, the disciplinary codes imposed by companies, the “gambling” sensation experienced when working with police officers, and the various demands made by clients results in a constant experience of uncertainty and unpredictability. And although their shifts consist of mundane routines, there is always potential for violence and risk, which carries an extra element of anxiety and stress. These feelings, which are compounded by a lack of knowledge about where their boundaries lie and what they are permitted and expected to do, create profound uncertainty for armed response officers. If one adds to this the occupational hazards discussed in chapter 5, such as the feeling of being unable to provide security for their own families, their morally rigid views of crime, their moral cynicism, domestic issues related to “taking the work home”, and the prevalence

of violence surrounding them, it can only be concluded that being the performer of twilight policing is a straining experience. It involves a constant movement from front to back stage performances, taking on and off certain characteristics. This reflects a process of “moving in patterned positions in relation to others, and as if choosing between possible patterns of relations” (Douglas 2002: 125).

Concluding Remarks

This chapter has sought to show that twilight policing is a joint performance that involves the coming together of various actors, each of whom is influential in his or her own way. With reference to three performances, I demonstrated how twilight policing is not possible if one or more of the actors are absent, and this does not refer to a physical absence. For example, the performances discussed in this chapter occurred without the physical presence of the police, but this did not mean that the state was “absent”. Citizens may feel that the state police are failing to provide security, but this perception shapes the performance. If such perceptions did not exist, then armed response officers would not police the public domain and engage in twilight policing. The state is thus very much present, albeit primarily in one’s perceptions and experiences.

The second aim of this chapter was to show that twilight policing consists of practices that encroach on the public domain. I have pointed towards the expansion of the armed response sector into the public domain through their increasing presence in public spaces and the acquisition and designation of additional roles and tasks that resemble those of the state police. This implies that twilight policing is occurring on a larger stage with more participants, which requires a constant process of re-establishing a working consensus whereby clients and police officers generally have the upper hand. Due to the saturation of and competition in the private security industry, clients are able to pick and choose between companies, placing pressure on armed response officers to act according to their clients’ interests alone. Furthermore, police officers, backed by the legal powers of the state apparatus, have the authority to decide whether to approve or disapprove of armed response officers’ actions.

In addition, I have also analysed the punitive, disciplinary, and exclusionary nature of twilight policing. This implies not the direct use of physical violence by armed response officers, but the ability to wield force to assert power and make claims to certain rights. Furthermore, twilight policing confers a moral order on the public and private life by imposing boundaries between insiders and outsiders. Although this classification is context dependant, it is primarily directed against the dangerous, violent criminal: the poor “Bravo Mike”.

My third aim was to show that armed response officers have two main roles as the key performers of twilight policing. First, they act as “gate-keepers” of the (imagined)

boundaries between insiders and outsiders, a position that is innately problematic and contradictory, since the locus of armed response officers along these borders is continuously in flux. This process of negotiation not only highlights the problematic process of setting the boundaries but also defines the emotional experience of twilight policing. It is for this reason that the term “twilight” is highly pertinent, since it expresses a sense of capriciousness and uncertainty. Although social relationships between clients, police officers, and armed response officers may dictate certain routines, there is always a sense of the “unknown” when armed response officers respond to a call-out and the sequence and nature of the joint performance.

This unpredictability is connected to the second role of armed response officers: they are negotiators between citizens’ demands and the perceived shortcomings of the state. Twilight policing is a way to “call attention to the predicament of insecurity in which the actors currently find themselves, as well as to criticize the failure of the democratic state and its claim to a rule of law” (Goldstein 2004: 182). Armed response officers (and perhaps private security personnel in general) are regarded as “better” than the public police in the eyes of many as they provide services that the police cannot and clients can wield some form of control over proceedings and thereby gain a sense of ownership. However, due to their limited legal powers and poor reputation, they are also looked down upon for not being the “real police”. This yields friction and ambiguity, which is evident in the persistent lack of trust and suspicion felt towards private security officers. This is due not only to the nature of the policing practices but also to the social structures in which these are performed. Twilight policing is therefore about operating in a twilight zone that is “neither here nor there”.

9

Expanding the Twilight

This ethnography has looked at the complex relationships between violence, (in)security, and policing. It has addressed the intricate dynamics between state and non-state policing and contributes to contemporary debates on legitimacy and sovereignty.

The global proliferation of non-state policing has been extensively studied across academic disciplines. Although this vast body of literature contains divergent approaches and epistemological stances, there has been an overall recognition that policing is not the sole prerogative of the state. This has resulted in a pluralised approach to security that acknowledges how numerous actors, both state and non-state, are engaged in policing practices. One of the dominant and recurring claims in this approach is that the contemporary security landscape is marked by weak, failing, or absent states that are unable to provide security for their citizens. The general rationale is that state weakness or absence provides room for other actors to obtain legitimacy and authority and thereby threaten and undermine the legitimacy and authority of the state. In this view, non-state policing is an indication, result, and consolidation of state failure.

This research has sought to enter this debate by questioning whether the proliferation of non-state policing worldwide can be explained through such a “state-failure” perspective. In so doing, it has engaged with current developments in criminology that examine how different policing bodies interact, overlap, compete, and collaborate. This criminological debate has occurred alongside a growth of anthropological studies on sovereignty, in which the latter is analysed as a socially constructed source of power that is reproduced through daily practices and repetitious public performances. This ethnographic focus on sovereignty has provided a conceptual framework through which to understand how diverse forms of authority are claimed in different contexts. In this book, I have drawn ideas from both academic fields to provide insight into the numerous ways in which different policing bodies are interrelated. More specifically, I have examined the policing practices of armed response officers – a specific type of private security officer – and their interactions with other actors through local security networks in Durban, South Africa.

The main argument of this study is that armed response officers are engaged in twilight policing. This refers to performances comprising policing practices that emerge through the interconnections between state and non-state policing. And as I engage with anthropological studies on sovereignty, I argue that twilight policing is the performance

of sovereign power, in other words, that in their daily practices and interactions with others, armed response officers claim authority through both the ability to use, and the actual use of, violence. I contend that twilight policing is needed as both a descriptive concept and a conceptual framework to make sense of what I encountered in the field, and thereby to contribute to debates on policing, violence, (in)security, and authority.

In the course of this book, I have examined the different components (processes, policies, and practices) that make up twilight policing and generate an environment in which such performances occur. To this end, I have analysed the historical background of and contemporary trends in violence and policing in South Africa (chapter three); the various components that constitute the armed response sector (chapter four); the experiences and perceptions of armed response officers (chapter five); the interactions between armed response officers and police officers (chapter six); the interactions between armed response officers and citizens, particularly clients (chapter seven); and the coming together of these various elements in the form of twilight policing performances, which consist of punitive, disciplinary, and exclusionary policing practices (chapter eight).

In this concluding chapter, I will discuss three main threads that bind this ethnography together. In so doing, I will reaffirm what twilight policing is, highlight the relevance of this framework, and show how it contributes to contemporary debates. The first thread concerns the interconnections between public and private policing as armed response officers increasingly operate in the public domain by acting like the state and performing in public spaces. The second thread concerns the punitive and exclusionary nature of twilight policing, that is, the use of violence to claim authority and create a social order. The third thread concerns the “dominated” position of armed response officers and their experiences of being the performer under the panoptic gaze of “many masters”. As I discuss each thread, I will reassert how twilight policing is a joint performance, one that is shaped by the coming together of practices conducted by various actors and their subsequent interactions. I end this chapter with a brief critical appraisal of the “state-failure” argument. I first conclude that armed response officers (re)produce statist policing practices and thereby reaffirm ideas and representations of the state. I then identify the state as the “arbiter” – the sovereign power that determines which claims to sovereignty are upheld and legitimised.

Interconnections between Public and Private Policing

The first, and perhaps most prominent, thread of this study addresses how twilight policing consists of practices that emerge through the interconnections between state and non-state policing. I have shown how armed response officers are simultaneously performing “state” and “non-state” practices and thereby engaging in “unstatey

stateliness” (Lund 2006: 677). I have expanded on this notion by demonstrating that armed response officers are private agents who work in a profit-making system with a client-steered mandate, yet who increasingly operate in public spaces, assist “non-clients”, mimic the state police, and appropriate “languages of stateness” (Hansen and Stepputat 2001: 5). In this section, I will analyse how the historical background of policing in South Africa, contemporary state policies of “partnership policing”, the occupational culture of the armed response sector, and demands made by clients encourage armed response officers to police in the public domain.

In South Africa, state and non-state policing have always been interrelated. During apartheid, the state repressively policed the non-white areas through numerous proxies, such as homeland police officers, Blackjacks, Kitskonstabels, and vigilantes. The apartheid state also established an alliance with the private security industry to protect white privilege. This was primarily done through the National Key Points Act (NKPA) of 1980, in which the state handed over the tasks of providing security for strategic sites to the industry, and the Security Officers Act (SOA) of 1987, which established a state regulation system in collaboration with the industry to control the latter’s (predominantly black) labour force. This alliance gave rise to an “old boys’ network” – a group of white men from the state armed forces and the industry – that further consolidated the political, social, and economic ties between the two. By the time of the political transition in 1994, there were thus numerous links between state and non-state policing bodies.

The post-apartheid state aimed to transform the former militarised state police into a force dedicated to democratic policing practices. The South African Police (SAP) became the South African Police Services (SAPS), and emphasis was placed on improving relationships with previously disadvantaged and neglected communities, particularly through community policing forums. This was part of an envisioned “multi-agency approach” (Singh 2008: 14), in which the state would work alongside other actors, such as the private security industry, to combat crime. Under this new system, state bodies would lead policing initiatives and other actors would take on a “junior” role to assist the state. The transformation of the SOA into the Private Security Industry Regulatory Authority (PSIRA) in 2001 further tightened the state’s control over the private security industry. The post-apartheid state therefore retained policies that outsourced particular policing functions and promoted partnerships with other policing bodies within the legal parameters of the state. Such policies demonstrate how the state actively shapes the policing practices of other actors. Thus, the prevalence of non-state policing in South Africa does not imply a weakness or absence of the South African state. Rather, my research shows that the South African state has created a climate that encourages an increase in contributions from non-state actors, often alongside state representatives.

This encouragement is evident in the local security networks between state police officers and armed response officers. Similar to studies in criminology that have identified a dual-sided relationship between state and non-state policing actors, I have shown that armed response officers both undermine and support the state police through competitive and collaborative practices. Yet I have developed this claim further by arguing that these competitive and collaborative practices often occur simultaneously and are not always distinct. This is further complicated by practices whereby police officers transgress the public-private policing divide. A prime example of this is the act of moonlighting – police officers who engage in security work off duty – which is an explicit manifestation of “boundary-crossing” (Davis 2009: 240).

Twilight policing is thus often encouraged by the state police, particularly through their own engagement in private policing practices. This shows that while private and public policing bodies may be physically distinguishable, their actions are often determined by motives that do not match this distinction. A police officer may represent the state, but his/her actions can be determined by profit-making motives or acts of reciprocity within a social relationship with private security members. Armed response officers may be private agents, but they are often managed by former police officers and work regularly with police officers to support state police actions. This further highlights the diversity of entanglements between public and private policing bodies.

In addition to state encouragement, I also analysed how the occupational culture of the armed response sector cultivates an environment that is conducive to twilight policing practices. Several studies on the occupational culture of private security have illustrated how the industry bears many similarities to the state police. I concur with this claim but develop it further by showing that this resemblance differs between sectors. I have demonstrated that the parallels are more prevalent in the armed response sector, which closely resembles the state police, both symbolically and operationally. This is firstly due to the nature of the occupation: armed response work involves armed men who patrol communities, possess a firearm, and operate in vehicles and uniforms that resemble those of the state police. Their policing practices are therefore very different from those of, say, security officers who guard shopping malls. Secondly, the sector emerged largely from “one-man shows” that were run by former state police officers who exercised state policing practices. The sector thus originated with a state policing mentality. Thirdly, armed response officers regard themselves as “semi-policemen” and strongly differentiate themselves from other private security officers. This predominant “wanna-be policemen” mentality further attests to their eagerness to act like state police officers and to work alongside them. The armed response sector therefore (re)produces particular “state effects” (Mitchell 2006) due to occupational, historical, and personal factors.

I have also examined how clients, and increasingly citizens, encourage armed response officers to operate in the public realm. In the literature, demands for private

security are habitually analysed with reference to neoliberal policies that frame members of the public as “responsible citizens” who are accountable for their own safety. In an environment of “multi-choice policing” (Baker 2008), citizens have an array of choices, and the plethora of policing initiatives in South Africa reflects this. For those who are financially capable, the private security industry is the preferred policing option. Although existing studies on private policing emphasise that companies operate with a client-steered mandate, there are only a handful that closely examine how clients and other citizens interact with security officers and influence their policing practices.

In this study, I have provided further insight into these relationships by examining the local security networks between clients and armed response officers. I identified three different types of local security networks: high-maintenance, collaborative, and competitive. High-maintenance networks feature demanding clients who clearly have the upper hand; collaborative networks are characterised by practices where citizens and armed response officers work together to provide a policing service; and competitive networks are marked by power struggles between citizens and armed response officers. Despite their differences, these three types of networks all augment competition in the sector and encourage armed response companies and officers to provide and do “more”, which entails a movement into the public realm. This is especially true for collective arrangements, which create “communities of security” – public spaces that armed response officers are mandated to police.

However, we can only understand these demands for “more” by connecting them to citizens’ perceptions of the state police. I argue that armed response officers are “negotiators” between citizens’ expectations and the (perceived) shortcomings of the state. Despite the popularity of private security, it is experienced as a “grudge purchase”, one that is regarded as necessary, but unwelcome. This is tied to the dominant perception of the police force as corrupt, inefficient, and failing. At the end of my fieldwork in August 2010, I was walking along Durban’s beach boulevard with a friend. A few days before, some people had broken into her house and stolen several of her personal belongings. Her armed response company had arrived late, prompting her to describe them as “pretty useless”. After a long discussion about private security and the state police, she concluded by saying, “It’s about trusting the devil you know and can control, rather than the one you can’t”.

For me, my friend’s words summed up how many citizens envision and define their relationships to private security and the state police: both are “useless”, yet one you can control – the private security industry – and the other you cannot – the state police. I have shown that frustration towards the state police is channelled into citizens’ interactions with armed response officers. This is evident in citizens’ expectations and requests: active patrols, quick response, and personal service are services that citizens perceive the state police are failing to provide. We can therefore only adequately understand why private security officers do what they do by analysing what clients, and

increasingly citizens, demand and expect of them. I encourage forthcoming studies to provide more in-depth analysis of the interactions between citizens and private security officers and of how citizens' expectations and requests shape policing practices.

This study shows how historical processes, state policies and representatives, the organisational structures of the armed response sector, and citizens each contribute to creating an environment that encourages, and sometimes even forces, armed response officers to increasingly perform in the public realm. This further highlights how twilight policing is a joint performance; it is shaped by the policies, perceptions, and practices of various actors. Armed response officers may be the *performers*, but they are not solely responsible for the practices that make up the *performance*. My analysis of twilight policing as a joint performance underlines the multidimensional relationships between state and non-state policing. However, I also want to emphasise that I do not propose to abandon the public-private policing dichotomy. Instead, I argue that we should regard "public" and "private" as useful reference points for describing what occurs "in between" rather than as definite states of being.

Violence and Exclusion

The second thread of this book concerns the punitive and exclusionary nature of twilight policing. In the anthropological literature on sovereignty, there are different perspectives on the role of violence in claiming sovereign power. My research is aligned with studies that define violence – the ability to kill and inflict pain – as the source of sovereign power. Yet I have also demonstrated through numerous case studies that the *ability* to use violence is equally important. Therefore, both the possibility and reality of violence are means to create a particular social order and to define who belongs to it. This results in exclusionary practices that make sovereign power visible. In this section, I will discuss how the occupational culture of the armed response sector cultivates the potential to use violence. I will then consider how this is linked to contemporary social discourses on violence and its "rightful" place in policing, which is reflected in clients' demands.

Although there is diversity among companies, officers, and contexts, the occupational culture of the sector at large is centred on violence and the prospect to use it. Due to their limited legal powers, armed response officers rely on other means to obtain authority and secure compliance, which is primarily achieved by cultivating bodily and force capital. Companies employ strategic branding and compel armed response officers to adhere to a particular "look" that projects force and bodily capital. The sector also (re)produces masculinisation processes that profile it as a collective of masculinities – a "man's world". This incites reaction officers to overtly display certain masculine attributes, such as being "tough" and even aggressive. Although there are

“trigger-happy” response officers who eagerly seek out violence, the punitive nature of twilight policing is apparent throughout the entire sector.

This punitive nature must, however, be analysed with reference to broader social processes and perspectives on violence. Many studies conducted elsewhere, particularly in Latin America, have identified the growing public support for punitive responses to crime, which is reflected in mounting demands for more coercive policing practices. I have also found this in South Africa: although the post-apartheid state has focused on democratic and community policing as means to eliminate the repressive nature of apartheid policing, recent developments highlight a return to militarised policing tactics. South African policing is “at a crossroads” (Marks and Wood 2010) due to divergent attitudes on how to police the streets and I framed this as a dispute between “old school” policing and that of the “new South Africa”. The former refers to apartheid policing, which was repressive and racist, while the latter refers to post-apartheid policing, which is founded on democratic principles. The distinction between “old school” policing and the policing of the “new South Africa” has a temporal dimension, but it also connotes differences in policing practices and the role of violence therein. Twilight policing practices are thus not only punitive but are also influenced by contesting ideas about the appropriate use of violence.

These conflicting ideas are also apparent in clients’ demands. I showed how private security companies are increasingly branding and marketing themselves as “community policing groups” to present a friendlier and less militaristic face to prospective clients. Yet I also analysed numerous cases in which citizens encouraged or condoned the use of violence by armed response officers. For some people, in fact, a willingness to use violence is a prerequisite when choosing a security provider. Citizens thus view and prioritise the use of violence by armed response officers differently.

By subscribing to armed response, clients grant reaction officers the authority and legitimacy to police the streets and maintain a certain social order. Clients determine who belongs to this order – the “insiders” and “outsiders” – and armed response officers are mandated to police these borders; they are the “gate-keepers”. In South Africa, these borders are demarcated by axes of race and class. The dangerous, criminal “Other” – the “matter out of place” (Douglas 2002) – is defined as the poor black male: the “Bravo Mike”. Armed response officers are employed to keep out this socially constructed threat. I refer to this social construction and its attendant policing practices as the “Bravo Mike Syndrome”. With the growth of collective arrangements between communities and the private security industry, more borders, both imagined and real, are created. This results in “pockets of safety” (Shaw 2002: 112-113), particularly in urban areas, which point towards not only a manifestation and consolidation of social inequalities but also the diversity of views on how to maintain a social order, particularly concerning violence and its rightful place in policing.

This thread of the research therefore concludes that for armed response officers, violence plays a crucial role in the acquisition of authority. It is precisely the centrality of violence that distinguishes sovereign power from other types of authority. I encourage forthcoming ethnographic research on policing to examine how the use of violence and perceptions thereof shape policing practices. Rather than analysing coercive policing methods as the remit of “trigger-happy” individuals, we need to explore how violence is embedded within larger social structures. Although I have highlighted the practical, ethical, and moral obstacles involved in studying violence, I also claim that ethnographic research on the actual performance of violence enriches our understanding of it.

Anthropological studies on violence are particularly pertinent in relation to the “state-failure” argument, which claims that the state has lost its presumed monopoly of violence. If, as I have argued, twilight policing emerges through the interconnections between public and private policing, then violence, which is inherent to these practices, is also shaped by these interconnections. This implies that the state is implicated in the use of violence and is therefore not failing, let alone absent. Similar to Goldstein’s (2012) analysis of the “phantom state”, this study argues that the state (re)produces insecurity and thereby impacts the performance of violence.

Performing under the Panoptic Gaze(s)

The third thread of this ethnographic study concerns the “dominated” position of armed response officers and the uncertainty that they experience when policing the streets of Durban. Studies on private security officers generally overlook or underreport the individual experience of policing. I have been able to include this dimension in my study thanks largely to my use of qualitative research methods.

In this section, I will show how armed response officers have “many masters” (Button 2007: 135). Like Rigakos (2002), who draws on Foucault’s (1977) idea of the Panopticon, I argue that armed response officers perform under a panoptic gaze. Armed response officers feel that they are always “being watched”, and this fosters a constant sense of uncertainty. I develop this claim further by stressing that this feeling of ambiguity is not simply a part of their policing practices; rather, it is also what defines it. Twilight policing is defined by insecurity, unpredictability, and capriciousness, reflecting an understanding of “twilight” itself as a state of uncertainty and obscurity.

After I presented my research findings at a conference in September 2011, a male colleague approached me and said, “That twilight thing of yours, it’s catchy and interesting, but do you really want to use it? Aren’t you worried about the association with vampires and the supernatural world?” His comment made me laugh. It was not the first time that someone had pointed out how the word “twilight” connotes a sense of anxiety, of a bizarre revelation lurking around the corner. But this is precisely the point. I

have not explored the tales of Bella Swan from the famous “Twilight” saga novels written by Stephenie Meyer or other popular productions containing the word “twilight”. Yet it has been my intention to unbridle a sense of unpredictability and uncertainty, since it is exactly this that defines twilight policing.

Summarising his idea of an “uncertain anthropology”, Goldstein (2012) emphasises that studying security inherently means studying “insecurity”. I have demonstrated that the twilight zone is an ill-defined area that contains features of distinct and often opposing conditions, including public versus private, legal versus illegal, and formal versus informal. Yet I also argue that armed response officers themselves are “in between”: they are “insiders” who are aligned with communities of security and protect citizens from potential sources of danger, yet they are also potential “outsiders” who belong to the defined threat. Primarily due to their poor employment conditions, armed response officers are habitually suspected of corruption and/or working with “the other side”. And as most armed response officers are “Bravo Mikes”, they are routinely associated with the same physical, social, and economic spheres as criminals. They are “neither there nor here” (Turner 1967: 97) – not fully accepted as insiders, yet not equivalent to the dangerous “Other” either. This creates a twilight sensation of belonging and exclusion, which is evident in the uncertainty experienced by armed response officers in the line of duty. Although there are rules and routines to guide them, there is always an element of unpredictability and sense of the “unknown” about what they will encounter during their patrols, how citizens and clients will treat them, and how police officers will judge their actions. This uncertainty can leave officers feeling on edge and thus affects how they police the streets. But more importantly, armed response officers feel they are always “being watched” and must be on their “best behaviour”: they perform under the panoptic gaze of their “many masters”.

Their first master is their company, which enforces a range of disciplinary and surveillance measures to exert constant control. Companies use numerous strategies to guarantee armed response officers are “good” and “do as they’re told”. It is a process of instilling discipline by constantly monitoring and controlling bodies without employing force. At the level of management, these measures are perceived as a necessary “part of the policing game”. For reaction officers, however, they are experienced as oppressive and controlling. This creates a divide between management and operations, which is exacerbated by the racial differences that continue to define the industry, as summarised by the maxim “Whites at the top and Blacks at the bottom”.

Armed response officers’ second masters are clients. Clients, and increasingly non-paying citizens, impose an additional level of surveillance. Due to the saturated nature of the industry, all citizens are regarded as potential clients and this exerts additional pressure on armed response officers to be on top-form. As the industry operates with a mentality that the “the client is always right”, clients possess a great deal of purchasing and steering power and exercise this regularly. Clients often feel entitled to “watch”

and “test” armed response officers, and with the growth of collective arrangements, this is increasingly exercised collectively. This tendency is exacerbated by contrasting expectations of the capabilities of armed response officers in comparison to the state police. On the one hand, they are regarded as “better” than the public police as they provide services in a way that the latter cannot. However, due to their legal limitations and poor reputation, they are also scrutinised and mocked for not being the “real deal”. Such contradictions result in armed response officers feeling that “it’s never good enough”.

The third master of armed response officers is the state police. The “gambling” sensation experienced by them in their interactions with police officers is a direct manifestation of the twilight sensation of insecurity and unpredictability. During every incident they encounter, armed response officers are hesitant about involving the state police because they are uncertain how the latter will react to their practices and whether or not they will enforce state law. Complex social ties between the two policing bodies, which are evident in the “old boys’ network”, “old boys’ feud”, and moonlighting, complicate this decision-making process.

The framework of twilight policing therefore includes the personal experiences of policing, of being the “performer”. This dimension is often neglected in studies on private security and I therefore encourage future studies to incorporate this factor, since, as my research shows, individual experiences of policing influence how armed response officers conduct their work. We can only fully understand the nature and impact of policing practices by looking also at how the performers experience their actions. And as is suggested by the term “twilight”, these experiences are marked by uncertainty, ambiguity, and feelings of “being watched”.

The State as the Arbiter

This ethnography therefore shows that armed response officers are engaged in twilight policing performances, which consist of practices that emerge through the numerous interconnections between state and non-state policing, that are punitive and exclusionary, and that are characterised by uncertainty and unpredictability. In this last section, I wish to return to the “state-failure” argument which I criticise here for two main reasons. Firstly, armed response officers perform statist practices that (re) produce ideas and representations of the state, thereby reaffirming that the state is not failing, absent, or obsolete. Secondly, police officers (i.e. state representatives) function as “arbiters” in their interactions with private security members. This implies that they are “dominant actors” who largely decide the nature and outcome of these local security networks – they are therefore not absent.

In the course of this ethnography, I have shown how armed response officers frequently withhold crime intelligence from the state police, engage in activities that occur without police supervision or interference, provide services that the state police do not, and often do so through violence. Armed response officers are often preferred to the state police or even equated with the police. This could be interpreted as a sign of a failing or absent state that has been overpowered and undermined by non-state policing actors. However, I argue that in performing these practices, armed response officers act like the state police; they (re)produce state practices and reaffirm what the state is.

Anthropological studies of the state have emphasised that the state consists not only of state institutions and practices but also of representations and understandings. I have shown how armed response officers reproduce “state effects” (Mitchell 2006): they mimic the state police, both symbolically and operationally, and borrow symbolic authority from the state. Furthermore, they rely on state representations to obtain authority and legitimacy and to ensure compliance. Their claims to sovereignty are therefore based on the ideas and practices of the state, which reaffirms what the state is. Although state bodies are not the only actors to employ these practices and ideas, statist practices are (re)produced and maintained nonetheless. This can only lead us to conclude that the state is not absent. Rather, state power is continuously reconfigured through multiple claims to sovereignty.

The reproduction of statist practices and representations by non-state actors has been analysed in numerous anthropological studies. My research has contributed to this literature by examining how this reproduction occurs among armed response officers in Durban, South Africa. However, I have also identified a more specific role for the state in my research, and this brings me to my second criticism of the “state-failure” argument. I conclude that state representatives are “the final arbiters” (Rigi 2007: 41): they determine the course and nature of local security networks with private security personnel. This “arbiter” role is also applied to the use of violence by armed response officers. I have shown how acts of violence are often condoned, encouraged, or outsourced by state police officers, as this prevents them from “getting their hands dirty”. Furthermore, armed response officers regularly employ violence without state police involvement or interference, but this is not “hidden” from the state police due to the numerous economic and social ties between the two bodies. Rather, state police officers very often choose their level of involvement and degree of law enforcement.

However, I have also shown that this decision-making process is not straightforward, as the interactions between state representatives and private security members are both competitive and collaborative. The role of the arbiter is not uniform: which practices are permitted or punished as transgression and when varies greatly, and this is more often determined by individual preferences, social connections, and economic gain than by “the law”. However, these factors do not diminish their role as the “arbiter”; it just makes these processes much more complex.

Furthermore, the role of the arbiter is not fixed. As sovereign power is precarious, claims to sovereignty must be constantly rearticulated. State representatives do not permanently possess or embody this arbiter role, therefore, but must habitually reclaim it through their daily practices. One of the ways in which this is achieved is through their interactions with armed response officers. When the latter support the state police or take on a subordinate role, they reify the state's dominant position. And when they challenge or undermine the state police, they push state representatives to reclaim and reassert this position. The arbiter role is therefore acquired through diverse interactions between police officers and armed response officers, further highlighting how policing bodies influence each other in numerous ways.

Other authors conducting research on sovereigns in South Africa, such as Buur (2005, 2006) and Jensen (2008), have not identified this "arbiter" role of the state police. This points towards a specific relationship between the private security industry and the state in South Africa, whereby the former functions as the latter's ally in the fight against crime at both the national and local levels. One reason for the emergence of this relationship concerns state regulation of the industry. PSIRA may be flawed and subject to frequent criticism, but it does legally outline how the industry must operate and thereby offers the state a certain degree of control and oversight. State regulation defines private security companies as "permissible sovereign bodies" that operate within the legal parameters of the state. They therefore differ from gangs and vigilante organisations, which are often exempt from government control and are generally not regarded as potential allies in the state-envisioned strategy of "partnership policing". A second reason is that police officers and armed response share numerous traits and thereby often have the same objective and policing mentality, which is consolidated by their numerous social and economic ties.

A third reason concerns socio-economic factors that differentiate the private security industry from other sovereign bodies in South Africa. Although I conducted research in former townships, my conclusions are based primarily on policing practices performed in affluent or middle-class areas. There are unquestionably differences between my research location and those of Buur (2005, 2006) and Jensen (2008), both of whom worked in less economically privileged areas. In such places, particular issues, such as higher crime rates, social exclusion, poor access to goods and services, and unemployment, result in different socio-economic contexts that give rise to different policing practices, particularly in relation to the state police. To therefore claim that the role of the state as the "arbiter" can be used to describe the relationships between the state and other sovereigns in South Africa would be to ignore the diversity of the dynamics and interactions between sovereignties.

I therefore propose that we need to move beyond the recognition that there are numerous sovereign bodies that claim authority to create a particular social order through violence. Although the anthropological literature on sovereignty has provided

extensive insight into the complex relationships between violence, (in)security, policing, and authority, we need to take a step further by examining how different sovereignties contest and supplement each other, how these divergent processes lead to complex and imbricated policing practices, and which factors are most decisive in shaping this complexity. I have identified the state as the arbiter, but I also assume that the interactions between sovereign bodies across the globe are shaped by myriad forms of relationships, such as alliances, power struggles, and structures of domination. If we regard the sovereign landscape as a spider's web comprising numerous bodies and connected threads, we need to investigate further which claims to sovereignty are decisive in determining how and why the web is spun in a particular way.

This ethnographic study has addressed some of these issues by analysing the policing practices of armed response officers and how these are influenced by their interactions with others. I have introduced the concept of “twilight policing” to describe the types of practices that I encountered in the field and to provide a framework through which to analyse the multiple ways in which state and non-state policing are entangled. My findings are based on performances of sovereignty in Durban, South Africa, yet this framework can also be used to examine how interconnections between different policing bodies in other contexts engender policing practices that are neither one nor the other, but something combined and in between, something “twilight”.



In August 2010 I was rounding up my research and spent my last afternoon with Gayle. We were having lunch while sitting on the bonnet of his vehicle on a cliff overlooking the Indian Ocean in the south of Durban. I surprised myself by suddenly asking, “So what do you actually do? What is this world of armed response?” He laughed, looked at me, and said, “You should know that by now, after all these years. But yeah, we respond, we patrol, we’re on the look out. We do what clients ask us to, we try to help out the police.” He turned his face towards the ocean, stared out onto the crashing waves, and said, “I just try to help people, but it’s not easy. All this crime, this violence. It’s pretty damn dark, and there’s not a lot of light to guide us. We do what the police do, but we’re not them. We’re somewhere halfway.”



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www.csvr.org.za
- Institute for Security Studies (ISS):
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Summary

This book is an ethnographic study of the policing practices of armed response officers in Durban, South Africa. Armed response officers are private security officers who patrol communities in vehicles and respond to distress calls from clients. This work looks at who these individuals are, what they do, and how they interact with other actors, particularly state police officers and citizens. Based on 20 months of ethnographic fieldwork conducted between 2007 and 2010, I claim that armed response officers are engaged in performances of **twilight policing**, which refers to practices that emerge through the interconnections between state and non-state policing. Furthermore, these policing practices simultaneously threaten and support the state, resulting in actions that are neither wholly public nor wholly private, but something in between, something “twilight”.

In the course of this book, I examine the processes, policies, and practices that make up the environment in which twilight policing occurs. The ethnography is divided into three parts. The first part – *Entering the Twilight* – outlines the theoretical, methodological, and contextual foundations of this study. In **chapter one**, *Twilight Policing: The Performance of Sovereign Power*, I introduce my theoretical framework by presenting a train of argumentation consisting of four consecutive steps that lead to the idea of twilight policing. The first step analyses the pluralised nature of contemporary policing, which involves numerous actors, both state and non-state. I show that policing is not the sole prerogative of the state and thereby challenge the frequently employed “state-failure” hypothesis, which holds that the global proliferation of non-state policing is evidence of failing or absent states. The second step of my argumentation conceptualises policing as a performance of sovereign power. This implies that policing bodies claim authority through repetitious public performances based on both the ability to use, and the actual use, of violence. The third step critically analyses how various sovereign bodies are categorised according to their relationship with the state and thereby defined as either illegal or legal. I argue that such categories present a one-dimensional relationship between sovereignties that are in fact much more complex and in flux. I develop this claim further in the fourth step, where I show that various sovereign bodies simultaneously complement and compete with each other, implying that state and non-state practices are entangled in numerous ways. The idea of twilight policing highlights the relevance for understanding the interconnections between state

and non-state policing practices in order to gain more insight into the working of sovereignty in contexts of high crime rates and pervasive insecurities.

In **chapter two**, “*Sierra Foxtrot Golf*”: *Doing Ethnographic Fieldwork in Durban*, I present and reflect on my methodology. I explain why Durban was chosen as the research location, discuss my decisions about how to write about race and violence, clarify the means of selecting and gaining access to my informants, and elaborate on my methods. I reflect, in particular, on my role as researcher, delving into issues of gender and race that shaped my position in the field and exploring particular experiences that highlight the emotional, ethical, and moral dilemmas that emerged during the fieldwork. I examine these methodological issues to provide a transparent and comprehensive account of how data were collected and analysed and to elucidate my own participation (on and off stage) in numerous performances discussed in this study.

Chapter three, “*Old School*” *Policing versus “the New South Africa”: Violence and Security in South Africa*, provides a historical account of policing and security in South Africa. I demonstrate that non-state policing bodies have existed in the country for decades and that the apartheid state engaged with many of these actors to maintain control. Through various forms of legislation, the apartheid state established an active alliance with the private security industry. This partnership resulted in an “old boys’ network”, a group of white men from both armed forces that further consolidated the political, social, and economic ties between the state and the industry. This chapter then discusses crime and policing during the post-apartheid era, when the state sought to transform the former militarised state police into a force dedicated to democratic policing practices, particularly by entering into partnerships with other actors, such as the private security industry, to combat crime. I examine how the South African state has created a climate that encourages an increased contribution from non-state actors, often alongside state representatives. I then analyse how contemporary policing in South Africa is marked by competing discourses on the “right” style of policing, particularly concerning the use of violence. I frame this as a dispute between “old school” policing and policing of the “new South Africa”, a contestation of which twilight policing is a manifestation.

The second part of this book – *Setting the Stage* – consists of four chapters that examine the different actors and local security networks that “set the stage” for the performance of twilight policing. In **chapter four**, “*The Promising Horse*”: *The Armed Response Sector*, I examine various characteristics of the sector, such as the number and types of companies, the typical costs endured by companies, the various areas in which they operate, and the different policing styles. I then analyse three key issues that largely define the sector. The first concerns the disciplinary measures and forms of surveillance implemented by companies throughout the various phases of this occupation (training, recruitment, and on the job), which create a divide between management and operations. The second issue concerns gender, specifically how the sector (re)produces

masculinisation processes that profile armed response as a collective of masculinities, as a “man’s world”. The third issue concerns the racial hierarchies within the industry, characterised by the maxim “Whites on top and Blacks at the bottom”.

Chapter five, “*Wanna-be Policemen: Being an Armed Response Officer*”, focuses on the lives, perspectives, and experiences of the armed response officers themselves. I analyse their motivations, a typical day “on the road”, the different tools they can employ on duty, the occupational hazards they face, and how they generally experience this line of work. Furthermore, I emphasise how armed response officers differentiate themselves from other private security officers and are best characterised as “wanna-be policemen”. Taken together, chapters four and five provide a detailed portrait of the occupational culture of armed response, which is centred on the use (and threat) of violence and geared towards resembling the state police.

In the next two chapters, the focus shifts to the interactions between armed response officers and other actors through the “local security network” framework. In **chapter six**, “*It All Comes Down to Them: Daily Interactions with the “State”*”, I examine the relationship between the private security industry and the state. I first discuss the Private Security Industry Regulatory Authority (PSIRA), the quasi-state body that regulates the industry and legally outlines how it must operate. I analyse how state regulation is an encompassing system, yet is also highly flawed and subject to criticism. I then discuss the state’s envisioned strategy of “partnership policing” that stipulates a “junior role” for the private security industry and is primarily enforced in local level projects due to a non-existing national framework. In the next and largest section of this chapter, I analyse the on-the-ground interactions between armed response officers and police officers. I examine how several factors, such as shared crime intelligence, divergent goals, and social networks, shape these interactions. I argue here that both cooperation and competition take place during these on-the-ground encounters – which are often informal and ad hoc – and constantly redraw the boundaries between state and non-state policing. Furthermore, I demonstrate that police officers, as state representatives, play an active role in pulling armed response officers into the twilight zone; police officers are not absent, therefore, but are directly involved in the policing practices of armed response officers.

The next chapter, **chapter seven**, “*Getting Connected with the Community: The Beneficiaries of Armed Response*”, focuses on the clients of armed response and citizens in general. This chapter shows that clients operate as “dominant actors”; they largely define what armed response officers do. This is primarily due to the saturated nature of the industry, which operates with a mentality that “the client is always right”, thereby providing clients with a great deal of purchasing and steering power. I present an analysis of the demand for private security, showing how it is shaped by perceptions of fear and (in)security, poor views of the state police, encouragement on part of the state police, and marketing strategies imposed by the industry. This section explains how

armed response officers serve as “negotiators” between citizens’ expectations and the (perceived) shortcomings of the state.

In the second part of this chapter, I move on to analyse the interactions and relationships between armed response officers (and companies) and citizens. I distinguish between formal and informal local security networks, which I then sub-categorise into high-maintenance, collaborative, and competitive forms. High-maintenance networks consist of demanding clients who clearly have the upper hand, collaborative networks consist of citizens and armed response officers who work together to provide a policing service, and competitive networks are marked by power struggles between citizens and armed response officers. Despite their differences, each local security network augments competition in the sector and encourages armed response companies and officers to provide and do “more”. This “more” urges armed response officers to operate in the public realm, which is particularly evident in the increasing establishment of “collective arrangements”, which refers to arrangements, both formal and informal, whereby citizens “club” together to collectively benefit from armed response. Through such arrangements, armed response companies increasingly serve “communities of security” that mandate them to operate in public spaces. Furthermore, these “communities of security” create more and more borders – both social and physical – which armed response officers are mandated to police; they are the “gate-keepers”.

The third part of this book – *Inside the Twilight Zone* – comprises two chapters. In **chapter eight**, *Performances of Twilight Policing: Public Authority, Coercion, and Moral Ordering*, I draw from Goffman’s (1959) dramaturgical approach to show how twilight policing is a joint performance, a manifestation of the coming together of various local security networks. I demonstrate that while armed response officers may be the performers, they are not solely responsible for the practices that make up the performance. This chapter demonstrates that twilight policing performances contain both public and private elements, are based on armed response officers’ ability to use force (punitive), create a social and moral order (disciplinary), and serve a particular group of “insiders” against socially constructed “outsiders” (exclusionary). I explore the racial and social construction of the dangerous criminal “Other” that is defined as the poor black male – the “Bravo Mike” – and analyse how armed response officers are employed to keep out this perceived threat. I refer to this social construction and its attendant policing practices as the “Bravo Mike Syndrome”. In the last section of this chapter, I conduct a micro-level analysis of twilight policing, showing how its performance is strenuous and capricious. I show that armed response officers are “insiders” who are aligned to “communities of security” and protect citizens from potential sources of danger and insecurity, yet they are also potential “outsiders” who belong to the defined threat. Twilight policing is analysed as a liminal experience

in which armed response officers experience a twilight sensation of belonging and exclusion.

This ethnography concludes with **chapter 9**, *Expanding the Twilight*, in which I elaborate on three main threads that bind this book together. The first concerns the proliferation of interconnections between public and private policing as armed response officers increasingly operate in the public realm and act like the state. The second thread concerns the punitive and exclusionary nature of twilight policing, that is, the use of violence to claim authority and create social order. The third thread concerns the “dominated” position of armed response officers and their experiences of being the performer under the panoptic gaze of their “many masters”. This chapter reiterates how twilight policing is defined by insecurity and unpredictability, as the term “twilight” itself refers to a state of uncertainty and obscurity. I end this chapter with two criticisms of the “state-failure” argument. I first conclude that armed response officers (re)produce statist policing practices and thereby reaffirm ideas and representations of the state. I then identify the state as the “arbiter”, the sovereign power that determines which claims to sovereignty are upheld and legitimised.

Through an exploration of a particular policing body, this research project analyses the complex relationships between policing, (in)security, and violence. It addresses the intricate dynamics between state and non-state policing and contributes to contemporary debates on legitimacy and sovereignty. The main argument of this study is that any analysis of contemporary policing must focus on the entanglements between non-state and state policing practices and thereby move beyond the public-private policing divide. I have introduced the concept of twilight policing to describe the type of practices I encountered in the field and to function as a conceptual framework through which to analyse how state and non-state policing practices are entangled. My findings are based on performances of sovereignty in Durban, South Africa, yet this framework can also be used to examine how interconnections between different policing bodies elsewhere in the world give rise to twilight policing practices.

Samenvatting

Deze etnografie analyseert de dagelijkse praktijk van *armed response officers*, een specifiek soort particuliere bewakers, in Durban, Zuid Afrika. *Armed response officers* zijn gewapende beveiligers die met gemarkeerde auto's in wijken patrouilleren en reageren op noodoproepen van klanten. Deze studie analyseert wie deze beveiligers zijn, wat ze doen en hoe ze omgaan met andere actoren, met name de politie en burgers. Op basis van twintig maanden veldonderzoek tussen 2007 en 2010 concludeer ik dat *armed response officers* veel meer doen dan alleen maar patrouilleren en reageren. Ze opereren namelijk steeds meer als de staatspolitie in publieke ruimtes en spelen een grote rol in het handhaven van sociale orde en veiligheid. Om deze redenen beschouw ik de handelingen van *armed response officers* als “**twilight policing**”. “Twilight policing” refereert naar een praktijk die ontstaat door het samenkomen van statelijke en niet-statale veiligheidsacties en ordebewaking. Deze handelingen worden uitgevoerd in een schemergebied tussen staat en de private sector, en zijn zowel een bedreiging als ondersteuning van de staat. Om die reden opereren ze noch helemaal publiek, noch helemaal privé, maar daar tussenin, in de “schemering”. Ik introduceer het concept van “twilight policing” om praktijken uit het veld te omschrijven, maar ook als conceptueel kader, om te analyseren hoe de veiligheidspraktijken van verschillende instanties in andere contexten met elkaar verbonden zijn.

In dit boek bekijk ik welke processen een rol spelen bij de totstandkoming van “twilight policing” en het specifieke milieu dat hierdoor wordt geschapen. Deze etnografie is opgebouwd in drie delen. Het eerste deel – *Entering the Twilight* – geeft de theoretische, methodologische en contextuele basis van deze studie aan. In hoofdstuk een, *Twilight Policing: The Performance of Sovereign Power*, bespreek ik vier opeenvolgende stappen die naar het concept van “twilight policing” leiden. In de eerste stap analyseer ik de meervoudige aard van hedendaagse *policing*, waar verschillende spelers zoals de staatspolitie aan bijdragen. Ik laat hiermee zien dat *policing* niet alleen de rol van de staatspolitie is. Ik bekritiseer dan ook de veelgebruikte “falende-staat hypothese”. Deze beweert dat de opkomst en groei van private veiligheidsactoren een direct gevolg of kenmerk is van zwakke of falende staten. In de tweede stap conceptualiseer ik *policing* als een aan soevereiniteit gelieerde praktijk. Doordat *armed response officers* in de publieke ruimte opereren met een bevoegdheid om geweld te gebruiken, of hiermee te dreigen, eisen ze autoriteit op. Dit impliceert dat de staat

niet de enige soevereine macht is, maar dat er tegelijkertijd meerdere soevereiniteiten bestaan die toezicht houden en veiligheid leveren. In de derde stap laat ik zien hoe diverse soevereiniteiten gecategoriseerd zijn naar hun relatie met de staat, en hierdoor geassocieerd worden als legaal of illegaal. Ik beargumenteer dat zulke classificaties een eendimensionale relatie tussen soevereiniteiten weerspiegelen, terwijl deze relatie in feite veel complexer en veranderlijker is. In de vierde stap ontwikkel ik dit verder. Ik toon aan dat verschillende soevereiniteiten tegelijkertijd met én tegen elkaar werken, hetgeen impliceert dat handelingen van de staat en handelingen van actoren buiten de staat op meerdere manieren met elkaar verweven zijn. Deze vier stappen brengen mij naar het concept van “twilight policing”, waarmee we op nauwkeurige wijze de relaties tussen verschillende actoren kunnen begrijpen, vooral in een context van hoge criminaliteitscijfers en alomtegenwoordige onzekerheid.

In hoofdstuk twee, “*Sierra Foxtrot Golf*”: *Doing Ethnographic Fieldwork in Durban*, beschrijf ik mijn methodologie. Allereerst leg ik uit waarom ik Durban heb gekozen als mijn onderzoekslocatie. Hierna bespreek ik mijn opvattingen over het schrijven over ras en geweld in Zuid Afrika. Vervolgens duid ik het selectieproces van mijn informanten en behandel ik de gekozen methodiek. Hierna reflecteer ik vooral op mijn rol als onderzoeker, analyseer ik hoe kwesties rondom gender en ras mijn positie in het veld vormden en bespreek ik hoe bepaalde emotionele, ethische en morele dilemma’s tot stand kwamen.

Hoofdstuk drie, “*Old School*” *Policing versus “the New South Africa”: Violence and Security in South Africa*, geeft een historische verkenning van geweld en veiligheid in Zuid-Afrika. Ik toon aan dat *policing* buiten de staat om al meerdere decennia bestaat in Zuid-Afrika. Tijdens de Apartheid, werkte de staat namelijk al samen met private actoren. Ik beschrijf dat tussen de staat en de particuliere beveiligingsbranche een actieve alliantie ontstond, dat resulteerde in een “*old boys’ network*”: een groep blanke mannen die bij beide organisaties werkten en daardoor de politieke, sociale en economische banden tussen de staat en de private sector consolideerde. Hierna analyseer ik hoe de context van geweld en veiligheid in post-apartheid Zuid-Afrika ruimte bood aan de staat om door middel van samenwerkingsverbanden met andere actoren, zoals de particuliere veiligheidsindustrie, misdaad te bestrijden. Ik beschouw hoe de Zuid-Afrikaanse staat een klimaat heeft gecreëerd waarin bijdragen van buiten de staat aangemoedigd worden. Ik analyseer ook hoe hedendaagse *policing* in Zuid-Afrika wordt gekenmerkt door contrasterende discoursen over de “correcte” manier van criminaliteitsbestrijding, met name met betrekking tot het gebruik van geweld. Ik duid dit als een geschil tussen “old school” *policing* en *policing* van “het nieuwe Zuid-Afrika”, en laat zien dat “twilight policing” een onderdeel èn gevolg is van dit geschil.

Het tweede deel van dit boek – *Setting the Stage* – bestaat uit vier hoofdstukken die de verschillende actoren en hun relaties met elkaar analyseren. In hoofdstuk vier “*The Promising Horse*”: *The Armed Response Sector*, bekijk ik diverse aspecten van de sector,

zoals de verschillende soorten bedrijven, de belangrijkste kosten van bedrijven, de diverse gebieden waarin zij werken, en de verschillende manieren waarop zij te werk gaan. Vervolgens analyseer ik drie kernpunten die de sector grotendeels vormgeven. Het eerste kernpunt betreft de disciplinaire maatregelen en vormen van toezicht die de bedrijven toepassen in de verschillende fases van dit beroep (zoals training en werving), hetgeen management en *armed response officers* verdeelt. Het tweede kernpunt betreft gender, namelijk hoe de sector een machocultuur (re)produceert als een collectief van mannelijkheid – een “mannenwereld”. Het derde punt heeft betrekking op de raciale hiërarchieën in de sector, gekenmerkt door de spreuk “Whites on top and Blacks at the bottom”.

In hoofdstuk vijf, “*Wanne-be Policemen*”: *Being an Armed Response Officer*, richt ik mijn aandacht op de *armed response officers* en beschrijf ik hun perspectieven, meningen en ervaringen. Ik analyseer hun motivaties, de kenmerken van een typische dag “op straat”, de verschillende middelen en bevoegdheden waarover zij beschikken, de beroepsrisico’s die zij lopen en hoe ze hun werk ervaren. Ik benadruk hoe *armed response officers* zich onderscheiden van andere particuliere bewakers en het best gezien kunnen worden als “*wanna-be policemen*”. Samengevoegd presenteren hoofdstuk vier en vijf een portret van de beroepscultuur van *armed response officers*. Daarnaast benadrukken ze hoe de sector als geheel de staatspolitie imiteert en hoe hun autoriteit en gezag is gebaseerd op het actuele gebruik van geweld en de mogelijkheid hiertoe.

In de volgende twee hoofdstukken ligt de focus op de interacties tussen *armed response officers* en andere actoren via “lokale beveiligingsnetwerken”. Hoofdstuk zes, “*It All Comes Down to Them*”: *Daily Interactions with the “State”*, bekijkt de relatie tussen de particuliere veiligheidsindustrie en de staat. Het eerste deel bekijkt de Private Security Industry Regulatory Authority (PSIRA), een quasi-staatsorgaan dat de industrie reguleert en in een wettelijk kader plaatst. Ik laat zien dat PSIRA een uitgebreid en toereikend systeem is, maar eveneens bespreek ik de vele fouten en punten van kritiek. Hierna bespreek ik de beoogde strategie van “*partnership policing*” van de post-apartheid staat waarin de particuliere veiligheidsindustrie een ondergeschikte en ondersteunde rol wordt toebedeeld. Hierna volgt de kern van dit hoofdstuk, namelijk de interacties tussen *armed response officers* en politieagenten. Ik beschouw hoe diverse factoren, zoals het delen van informatie, uiteenlopende doelstellingen en sociale connecties deze wisselwerking bepalen. Ik betoog dat zowel samenwerking als concurrentie plaatsvinden gedurende de momenten waarin de twee elkaar in het veld tegenkomen, vaak informeel en *ad hoc* – en hoe de grenzen tussen staat en private sector voortdurend bijgesteld worden. Daarmee toon ik aan dat politieagenten, als vertegenwoordigers van de staat, een actieve rol spelen in het plaatsen van *armed response officers* in het schemergebied. Dit impliceert dat politieagenten niet afwezig, maar juist direct aanwezig zijn in het sturen van de praktijken van *armed response officers*.

In het volgende hoofdstuk, hoofdstuk zeven, “*Getting Connected with the Community*”: *The Beneficiaries of Armed Response*, bespreek ik de rol van klanten en burgers. Dit hoofdstuk toont aan dat cliënten de “dominante spelers” zijn; zij bepalen grotendeels wat *armed response officers* doen. Dit komt voornamelijk door de verzadigde markt en bedrijven die opereren met een mentaliteit van “de klant is koning”, waarmee ze klanten een enorme hoeveelheid macht geven. Dit hoofdstuk begint met een algemene analyse van de vraag naar particuliere veiligheid en laat zien dat dit gevormd wordt door percepties van angst en (on)zekerheid, een negatief beeld van de staatspolitie, aanmoediging door de staatspolitie en marketingstrategieën van de bedrijven. Dit deel legt uit hoe *armed response officers* opereren als “onderhandelaars” tussen de verwachtingen van burgers en de (geconstateerde) tekortkomingen van de staat.

Ik analyseer vervolgens de interacties en relaties tussen *armed response officers* (en de bedrijven) en burgers, vooral klanten. Ik maak een onderscheid tussen formele en informele beveiligingsnetwerken, die ik vervolgens verder categoriseer in veeleisend (*high-maintenance*), samenwerkend en concurrerend. In de veeleisende netwerken hebben cliënten duidelijk de overhand; in samenwerkende netwerken werken de klanten en bewakers gezamenlijk en in concurrerende netwerken ontstaat er een machtsstrijd. Ondanks hun verschillen vergroot elk lokaal beveiligingsnetwerk de concurrentie in de sector. Dit moedigt de bedrijven en officieren aan om “meer” te doen, wat ertoe leidt dat zij steeds meer in de publieke ruimte opereren. Dit komt vooral door de groei van “collectieve projecten”, hetgeen verwijst naar zowel formele als informele regelingen waarin burgers samenkomen om collectief van *armed response* te profiteren. Via deze regelingen ontstaan er steeds meer “veiligheidsgemeenschappen” die door deze bedrijven worden beschermd. Daarnaast creëren deze “veiligheidsgemeenschappen” meer grenzen – zowel sociaal als fysiek – en *armed response officers* hebben het mandaat om deze grenzen als zijnde poortwachters te bewaken.

Het derde deel van dit boek – *Inside the Twilight Zone* – bestaat uit twee hoofdstukken. In hoofdstuk acht, *Performances of Twilight Policing: Public Authority, Coercion, and Moral Ordering*, analyseer ik “twilight policing” als een opvoering (*performance*) door de dramaturgische benadering van Goffman (1959) te hanteren. Hiermee laat ik zien dat “twilight policing” een “gezamenlijke opvoering” is die tot stand komt door het samenkomen van handelingen en processen van meerdere lokale beveiligingsnetwerken. Dit hoofdstuk benadrukt hoe de opvoering van “twilight policing” zowel uit publieke en privé elementen bestaat; gebaseerd is op het gebruik van geweld, of de mogelijkheid hiertoe; tot doel heeft om sociale en morele orde te creëren en een specifieke groep van “insiders” bedient, ten faveure van de sociaal geconstrueerde “outsiders”. Ik onderzoek de raciale en sociale constructie van de gevaarlijke en criminele “Ander”, die wordt gedefinieerd als de arme, zwarte man – de “Bravo Mike”. *Armed response officers* worden in dienst genomen om deze sociaal geconstrueerde bedreiging buiten te houden. Ik noem deze sociale constructie en de begeleidende

beveiligingspraktijk het “*Bravo Mike Syndrome*”. Dit hoofdstuk eindigt met een analyse op micro niveau. Deze analyse laat zien hoe “twilight policing” als heftig, onzeker en onberekenbaar wordt ervaren. Ik toon aan dat *armed response officers* zowel als “insiders” en als “outsiders” kunnen worden beschouwd. Dit creëert een spanningsveld omdat *armed response officers* zelf in een schemergebied werken tussen verbondenheid en uitsluiting.

Deze etnografie eindigt met hoofdstuk 9, *Expanding the Twilight*, waarin ik me verdiep in drie thema’s die dit boek samenbinden. Het eerste thema gaat over de verbinding tussen publieke en particuliere *policing*, waarin *armed response officers* private actoren zijn die zich steeds meer als de overheidspolitie gedragen en in publieke ruimtes opereren. Het tweede thema gaat over de sanctionerende en buitensluitende aard van “twilight policing” door het gebruik van geweld om autoriteit op te eisen en een sociale orde te creëren. Het derde thema gaat over de “gedomineerde” positie van *armed response officers* en hoe zij hun werk verrichten onder de pan-optische blikken van hun “vele bazen”. Dit hoofdstuk benadrukt dat “twilight policing” wordt gedefinieerd door onzekerheid en onvoorspelbaarheid. Dit komt terug in de term “twilight” dat verwijst naar een staat van onzekerheid en duisterheid. Ik eindig dit hoofdstuk met twee bevindingen die het “falende staat argument” bekritisieren. Ten eerste concludeer ik dat *armed response officers* bepaalde ideeën en voorstellingen van de staat (re)produceren. Ten tweede identificeer ik de staat als de “scheidsrechter”, de soevereine macht die beslist welke aanspraken op soevereiniteit gehandhaafd en gelegitimeerd worden. In dit hoofdstuk benadruk ik dat een analyse van hedendaagse *policing* zich altijd moet richten op de verstrengeling van verschillende actoren en daarbij dus verder moet reiken dan de publiek-private verdeling. Een dergelijke benadering, zoals het concept “twilight policing”, biedt inzicht in de complexe relaties tussen veiligheid, (on)zekerheid en geweld en draagt bij aan interdisciplinaire debatten over legitimatie en soevereiniteit.

Author biography



Tessa Géraldine Diphoorn was born on 21 September 1984 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. She studied cultural anthropology at Utrecht University (UU) in the Netherlands and wrote her bachelor's thesis on local reconciliation efforts in San Jose Chacayá, Guatemala. Her master's research in Conflict Studies and Human Rights, also at Utrecht University, focused on child soldiers in Sri Lanka. She returned to the Department of Cultural Anthropology as a PhD candidate in 2007. Her research explores the policing practices of a particular type of private

security officer, namely armed response officers, in Durban, South Africa, with the aim of gaining further insight into the complex relationships between policing, (in)security, authority, and violence. Between October 2011 and June 2013, she was a Marie Curie Sustainable Peacebuilding (SPBuild) Fellow at the Conflict Resolution Unit in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Sabancı University in Istanbul, Turkey. She is currently working as a lecturer on the International Studies Programme at Leiden University in the Netherlands.