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**TRANSFORMING ROBOCOPS? A CASE
STUDY OF POLICE ORGANISATIONAL
CHANGE IN THE DURBAN PUBLIC ORDER
POLICE UNIT**

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**Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
Faculty of Human Science, University of Natal, Durban.**

DECLARATION

I, Monique Michal Marks, declare that this thesis is my own work. Any work done by other persons has been properly acknowledged. The thesis has been submitted in the Programme of Sociology in the Faculty of Human Science at the University of Natal, Durban, for the PhD degree. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at any other university.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation provides a sociological description and explanatory account of the organisational transformation in the Durban Public Order Police (POP) unit following the transition to democratic governance in South Africa in the mid-1990s. In contrast to other more cursory commentary on police organisational change in South Africa, an in-depth case study is used to provide a close-in examination of the details of successes and limitations of particular aspects of the transformation project. Through the use of an ethnographic approach – supported by quantitative research methods – I explore the mechanisms that were used to bring about change in Durban POP and assess the extent to which this change process has been successful.

Extending the work of Janet Chan and Edgar Schein, I argue that for police organisational change to take place, there needs to be a shift in both the field (objective, historical relations or the structural conditions of police work) but also in existing 'police culture' (basic assumptions and values). Police organisational transformation can only be partially brought about through conventional mechanisms of change such as new policies, revised training, or even new entry-level recruitment programmes. Rather, fundamental shifts in assumptions and values requires a) changes in the way in which police work is structured and evaluated; b) daily experiences 'on the streets' that demonstrate that new policing responses achieve desired and positive outcomes; and c) a work environment that is supportive whereby all members feel acknowledged and where the diversity of members (and consequently of communities more broadly) is valued.

To empirically validate this argument, three key areas of the organisational life of Durban POP are examined. First, the extent to which the behaviour of members of the unit toward the public has changed following the implementation of new training and policy is closely examined. I argue that mechanical change in police behaviour was not difficult to achieve. However, this behavioural change was only partly accompanied by more fundamental changes in the basic assumptions that police held about their work and their environment. Changed behaviour was, as a result, contingent on immediate circumstances and on the extent of supervision and guidance provided to unit members by their officers. Second, in order to explain this low level of change, I examine the nature of management and supervision in the unit. Despite the emphasis in the South African public service legislation on participatory and professional management practices, police supervisors and managers had retained an autocratic management style. In addition, police supervisors and managers did not always provide sufficient direction to rank-and-file officers, much needed during times of police organisational change. Third, in further explanation of the

limited level of change, the extent to which pre-existing social cleavages (based on race and gender) that existed within the unit have changed is explored. Despite affirmative action and equity legislation and programmes, the unit continued to be plagued by deep racial and gender divisions which were reinforced by the structural make-up of the unit and the inability of middle management to challenge them and to provide alternative ways of organizing and interacting within the unit.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: THE CHALLENGE OF POLICE ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

Societies in transition from totalitarianism to democracy have it much worse. They must work with a police force that has always protected power at the expense of the people. The officials who have the authority to initiate reform are often the very ones most opposed to it. Moreover, drastic changes in political systems are fraught with social upheaval, including violence. Police officers are expected to combat increasing crime with outdated structures and strategies while respecting individual rights for the first time (Pustintsev, 2000: 79).

Reforming police organisations is indeed a daunting task, particularly when these organisations have long histories of authoritarian and partisan conduct. Police organisations are also typically bureaucratic in nature with strict rules and entrenched hierarchical structures which, many authors believe, make the project of change difficult (Rippy, 1990; Ray, 1995; Dean, 1995). Despite the difficulties associated with police organisational change, the public police throughout the world are undergoing an 'intense period of self-questioning' (Bayley and Shearing, 1996:586). They are, as Bayley and Shearing (2000) point out, re-examining their management styles, their accountability structures and mechanisms, their strategies, their organisational form, and even their objectives. Indeed, the entire project of policing is undergoing dramatic changes as private policing and community based policing enterprises are intensifying in both democratic and democratising societies.

Despite the fact that the 'state's monopoly on policing has been broken' (Bayley and Shearing, 1996:586) in recent decades, it remains vital for policing scholars to review the possibilities and limitations of (state) police organisational change. This is because so long as (relatively) sovereign states continue to exist, the public police will be mandated with the important functions of 'regulating public space, and processing that minority of crimes which can be cleared up, acting as the initial filter into the criminal justice system' (Reiner, 1992:270).¹ Moreover, while wealthier citizens and community groupings may be able to minimise their contact with the public police through their capacity to 'buy' security, poorer communities will continue to rely on the public police for most of their security requirements (Bayley and Shearing, 2001). It is for these reasons that it is important to theorise and evaluate attempts by the public police to democratise and clean up their acts.

1. See Chapter 2 for a more in-depth discussion as to why it is important to study the state police as an institution.

Pustintsev (2000) arrives at the conclusion in the quotation above having studied the (failed) process of police organisational transformation in Russia. He notes, quite correctly, that police transformation is extremely difficult to achieve, particularly within police organisations that are attempting to move from an authoritarian to a democratic disposition. The police in Russia embarked on a reform process in the late 1980s. This reform process, in principle, was geared toward ensuring that the police uphold human rights and the rule of law. However, Pustintsev argues, despite pro-change statements by police leaders and the signing of agreements by the Russian government, in recent years there has been much public indignation over the abuses and incompetence of the Russian police. During the first nine months of 1997 3 366 Russian police officers were disciplined for misconduct and 1 541 were arrested for serious crimes. There were 721 registered complaints of police brutality in St Petersburg alone. According to various human rights groupings there have been numerous cases of detention without cause and of the physical abuse of suspects held in cells (Pustintsev, 2000).

State change also impelled police organisational change in Central and Eastern European countries. In Hungary and Lithuania attempts at transforming the police followed the transition to democratic governance and economic reform. While it appeared that police reform was taking place in the early 1990s, by the late 1990s it seemed that police reform 'was running out of steam' (Koci, 1998:307). Police reform was geared toward police accountability, establishing a rule of law in policing and a commitment to human rights, yet the police in Hungary were found to be keeping members of the opposition under surveillance. There were also moves within the police in both Hungary and Lithuania toward greater centralisation and militarisation which, Koci argues, undermined the quest for civil liberties (Koci, 1998).

The need for change in policing bodies in societies that are in the process of transforming from authoritarian to democratic governance (such as South Africa) is essential. Internal security systems, the police in particular, are necessary elements in any democratisation process. As a central institution of the state, and an indicator of the quality of democratic institutions, the behaviour of internal security forces is an important part of a government's operational commitment to democratisation (Gill, 1994; Huggins, 1998).

In many ways, the police not only reflect the nature of the state, but are also responsible for the prevention or promotion of state change. Marenin (1996) argues that the police are 'major actors' in changing societies. They are involved in crucial activities such as the combating of crime, the protection of citizens and change agents, and the curtailment of threats to the functioning of society. Indeed, it could be argued that neither formal nor substantive democratisation has been accomplished unless and until internal security bodies themselves have been democratised, brought under civilian control, and have a concern for citizens' human rights. In large part, this is contingent upon the removal of discriminatory

practices within police organisations themselves. However, transforming police organisations has proven extremely difficult given their conservative nature and general resilience to change (Reiner, 1992; Weitzer, 1993).

Even in countries that have undergone dramatic changes in governance and have stated commitments to democracy, human rights, and equitable service delivery, police forces have retained their historical abusive and discriminatory character. The numerous cases of ongoing police violence in such democratising states as El Salvador, Guatemala, Mozambique, as well as Brazil and South Africa, demonstrates that democratic constitutions and elections do not translate automatically into democratic policing (Huggins, 1998a; Shearing, 1996; Seleti, 2000). Despite general societal and state attempts at democratisation, police systems tend to remain structurally and procedurally authoritarian and racist in their treatment of citizens of colour, and this includes their own police of colour (Du Toit, 1995). This has led more 'established democracies' to intervene directly by providing training and other forms of assistance to those policing agencies that are attempting to democratise. From 1994 to 1998, for example, the United States spent almost \$1 billion providing assistance to police organisations in Latin America. Their goal was to assist the police 'in reforming police agencies in aid of democracy' (Bayley, 1999:6).

The Mozambican case is another example of police resistance to the process of transformation. According to Seleti (2000), the 1992 General Peace Accord in Mozambique opened up new opportunities for the transformation of the police. A National Police Affairs Commission was also established to ensure that the police did not violate the democratic rights of citizens. In addition, the United Nations, as part of its peace building initiatives in Mozambique, was involved in monitoring the police. Mozambique also witnessed the opening up of the public sphere through increased press freedoms and a growth of political movements and other organs of civil society since the mid-1990s. Despite these various interventions and pressures for police reform, there have been continuing reports of police corruption and brutality. In June 1996, for example, the police in Mozambique tortured a suspect to death. The suspect, Frenque Luis Tchembene, was accused of stealing a minibus belonging to his employer. Tchembene became a suspect when he went to the police in Maputo to report the theft of the vehicle. The torture of Tchembene took place in front of his wife and three-month-old baby (Seleti, 2000).

Seleti concludes that independence in Mozambique did not give rise to 'respectable' policing. This, he argues, was because 'a combination of the colonial legacy of authoritarianism, African traditions and Marxist democratic centralism made Frelimo rule burdensome' (2000:358). The resulting consequence of these factors rendered the police extremely authoritarian, using corporal punishment for minor offences which included flogging and the purging and imprisonment of Frelimo opponents. Seleti, in trying to understand the doggedness of police brutality, argues that 'police identities in Mozambique are rooted

within a powerful social structure that reproduces hegemonic relations of inequality. The images of the police as corrupt are embedded in routines of social and political life' (1998:366).

Legacies of police routines and cultures as well as existing unequal social relations are not the only obstacles to police transformation in societies moving from totalitarianism to democracy. There are a host of other obstacles that also need to be considered. These include corruption, alienated publics, high levels of crime, a lack of resources and outmoded structures and organisations.² Rachel Neild (1999) has reviewed the abortive attempts at police reform in many countries from Latin America to Asia and to Africa. She concludes that common features contributing to these failures are the lack of money, lack of motivation, the resilience of paramilitary habits of old, and a generalised cop culture of incompetence in the face of high crime rates. The social context of poverty and disorder further complicates attempts at police reform.

It is not only police organisations trying to purge a totalitarian past that struggle with projects of police reform. Police reform appears difficult to achieve even in countries that have long histories of democratic constitutions and governance. The Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) is a case in point. In 1991 the LAPD came under heavy condemnation. A black citizen, Rodney King, was severely beaten by four LAPD officers while being wrongly arrested. The LAPD was accused of brutality and racism. The abusive (public) behaviour on the part of the LAPD led to a process of reform guided by the recommendations of the Christopher Commission which suggested a wide range of recommendations for reform. Included in these recommendations was the need for more community oriented policing, improved training and civilian oversight. Despite the reform process embarked upon, the LAPD has come into disrepute time and time and again.

In October 1999 the LAPD was again hit with a major scandal. Horrifying tales of misconduct and abuse of force by police officers based at Rampart police station were publicised. Rampart is a poor inner city neighbourhood that is populated by a mix of Latino immigrants and Korean shopkeepers and is home to many violent gangs. In response to the high levels of gangsterism and drug usage in Rampart, the local police decided to form a paramilitary unit which they called CRASH (Community Resources Against Street Hoodlums). Members of CRASH were accused of raping a woman while on duty, beating suspects to the point of severe injury and even death, fabricating evidence in cases of false arrest, planting drugs on suspects, theft of cocaine, witness intimidation and planting guns on unarmed suspects (*Los Angeles Times*, 22/10/1999). While these incidents had been taking place since 1997, the Rampart CRASH unit

2. All these factors contribute to the difficulty in transforming or reforming police organisations, but do not necessarily explain these difficulties. This thesis attempts, by means of a case study, to theorise and explain the limits and potentials of police organisational change.

had been protected by a code of secrecy and by supervisors who seemed to have turned a blind eye to abuse and misconduct taking place.³ In September 1999, the Chief of the LAPD convened a Board of Inquiry to assess the Rampart corruption incident. This Board of Inquiry concluded that the Rampart scandal 'devastated' the relationship between the LAPD and the public and indeed, 'threatened the integrity of the entire criminal justice system. Distrust, cynicism, fear of the police, and an erosion of community law and order are the inevitable result of a law enforcement agency whose ethics and integrity have become suspect' (*Board of Inquiry Final Report*, LAPD, 2000: 13).

These cases raise a number of questions about police reform: Why do police resort to old and unreconstructed modes of behaviour despite undergoing reform processes? What role do police supervisors and managers have in effecting police organisational change? In what ways do historical legacies and memories impact on attempts at police reform? What mechanisms would be most effective in bringing about police organisational change? Can police organisational change be effectively brought about when the personnel remain largely as before? This dissertation attempts to answer these questions through an examination of police organisational change in the Durban Public Order Police unit.

The need for police transformation in South Africa was highlighted in the early 1990s during the period of South Africa's negotiated settlement. The multi-party forum engaged in the negotiation process and debated how to 'dismantle the old undemocratic and repressive forms of social control in the society' (Levin, Ngubeni and Simpson, 1994:1). In August 1991, a new South African Police (SAP) Strategic Plan came into effect aimed at 'improving police-community relations by improving SAP's image, service and organisational efficiency' (Rauch, 1991:1). In 1994, the Safety and Security Green Paper was drawn up which prioritised democratic control over the police service; accountability of the police service; community consultation and involvement; demilitarisation of the police service; and the need to improve the quality and professional services of the police service (van Kessel, 2001). The Green Paper stressed that the police service must at all levels, including the higher echelons, represent the diversity (especially racial) of South African society. Creating a 'new' police service in South Africa also entailed amalgamating 11 existing police institutions into one national police service – an immensely complex task (van der Spuy, 2001).

The term 'police transformation' in the South African context has many layers. In the first instance, it refers to the need for the state police to reflect broader state changes from authoritarian to democratic

3. Rampart police station has been subject to an internal Board of Inquiry, an FBI investigation, a civilian police commission, and an investigation carried out by the Los Angeles district attorney's office. As a result of these commissions and inquiries two police officers have been fired, 20 officers have been relieved of their duties, and many more officers are under investigation. At the same time, 40 criminal convictions have been reversed because of discredited evidence and improper means of investigation. It is expected that over 4000 other cases could also be affected (*Time Magazine*, 06/03/2000).

governance. This requires a move away from a partisan and repressive police force to a police agency that can provide an impartial service with strict adherence to human rights principles. Such shifts demand change at three levels – structure, behaviour and values. At the structural level, the police service needs to become representative of the population it serves and be able to respond to both local and national requirements. At the behavioural level, the service provided needs to become community oriented, proactive and accountable. At the attitudinal level, community oriented policing needs to be translated into a philosophy (rather than simply a style of policing) and this involves viewing the public as ‘clients’ who should be treated with care and respect and deserving of the best possible service.

While the entire police service had to be transformed as part of the state democratisation project, the unit engaged in public order policing was viewed as one of the units most in need of fundamental change. This was because it was one of the most unrestrained and ruthless policing units of the South African Police. More generally, however, public order units are the most visible face of the police. They are responsible for policing public and collective events that are often high profile and attract much media attention. Second, the manner in which protest and demonstrations are policed is in many ways a reflection of the state’s commitment to human rights and to freedom of expression (della Porta, 1998). The Public Order Police unit in South Africa has arguably been the unit that has undergone the most comprehensive transformation process. It was the first unit to develop a new policy document outlining the objectives of change and the principles and procedures required to effect such change. All members in the unit participated in retraining programmes that were informed and evaluated by multi-national advisory teams.

The Durban Public Order Police unit embarked upon a process of organisational transformation in 1995, soon after the transition to democratic governance in South Africa. This unit, previously known as the Riot Unit and as the Internal Stability Division, was responsible for the policing of protest, demonstrations, and any situation deemed to be public disorder. As Chapter 4 outlines, historically public disorder was defined very broadly and the unit responded with brutal repression when called upon to intervene. The unit was also problematic structurally and ideologically. It was composed of mainly white men who had a strong allegiance to the apartheid government. Black officers in the unit were situated in the lower ranks of the hierarchy. The unit was also a heavily militarised and highly centralised organisation. Given all these problems, the newly elected democratic government decided that a ‘new’ renamed Public Order police unit had to be constructed. This unit was to be demilitarised/civilianised, community and service oriented, representative of the broader society, accountable and non-partisan, and committed to human rights values. The unit had to change its style from being repressive to tolerant, from reactive to preventative, from confrontational to consensual, and from rigid to flexible – in line with international trends in public order policing (della Porta and Reiter, 1998).

In this dissertation I examine the transformation process that took place in the Durban Public Order Police (POP) unit. I ask whether or not this process has been successful and if so why this is the case. I engaged with this topic by immersing myself in the Durban POP, finding out how rank-and-file and high-ranking police officers experienced, evaluated and responded to the transformation process. While a fair amount has been written about the police in South Africa, and even about the project of police transformation, no in-depth case study has been done which takes account of the experiences and perceptions of the police who are undergoing radical personal and organisational change. As van Kessel remarks:

In contrast to the scarce literature on policing in Africa, the history of the South African police has already been explored by several authors. Most wide ranging is the historical account by Brewer (1994), while Cawthra (1993) and Brogden and Shearing (1993) focus on the use of the police as the government's main tool in enforcing apartheid policies and on various strategies for change. Much of the literature is highly normative: it describes malpractices and human rights abuses and prescribes a new role for police in a new post-apartheid order. Less attention is given to actual organisational processes: what really happens, how and why? What is the perspective of various actors within the government, its policy think tanks, police management and SAPS rank-and-file? (2001:3).

Through participating in the daily life of Durban POP over a number of years, I was able to observe the organisational processes and dynamics in the unit. The use of observation is extremely useful in coming to grips with how organisations operate. As anthropologist Leonard Sayles commented, albeit in functionalist terms, as far back as the 1950s:

The observance of group sanctioned behaviour and attitudes 'fills out' the rationally conceived organisation. What is on paper an organisation becomes a 'living, breathing' social organism, with all the intricacies, emotions, and contradictions we associate with human relations (1957:145).

As a result of my participation in the unit, I was able to build amicable and respectful relationships with members of the unit across the ranking system. This allowed me to engage in both profound and casual conversations with members allowing me to gain insight into their worldviews, their perceptions, their basic assumptions, their frustrations and their concerns. Using an ethnographic approach, I was able to link micro-level interactional processes with macro-level structures.

Arising from my observations and conversations as well as a survey conducted, I argue, perhaps controversially, that police transformation is not necessarily difficult to achieve. The very authoritarian, bureaucratic and hierarchical nature of police organisations that would seemingly impede organisational change may in fact facilitate change. Police managers and supervisors are quite literally able to command and instruct desired forms of conduct. The distinct levels of status and authority that exist in most police organisations, if judiciously employed, have the potential to promote change at a speedier pace than most

other organisations. Police adhere (generally unquestioningly) to commands and instructions from above and if instructed to act and respond in new ways will most likely do so if they feel they have the necessary knowledge, skills and equipment. However, I argue, while a top-down approach to organisational change may be effective in the short term, change brought about in this way is likely to be mechanical, perfunctory and contingent on immediate circumstances. To achieve more enduring organisational change, I argue that the basic assumptions and values of police members need to change. Following the work of Janet Chan, I argue that police organisational change requires a fundamental change in existing police culture. As is outlined in some detail in Chapter 3, Chan (1996) provides one of the most comprehensive accounts of police culture and police transformation. Not only does she concretise what is meant by police culture, she also provides a route to comprehend how the formal and informal components of police organisations relate to one another in the change process.

Key to understanding police practice and values, according to Chan, is the different types of cultural knowledge that are held by police members. This cultural knowledge is deeply embedded and informs police rationales, understandings of actions, and ways of seeing the people they interact with as well as the methods used by them. Drawing from Schein, Chan moves away from vague conceptions of police culture arguing that culture refers to the very basic assumptions and values that the police maintain. For real and fundamental change to occur in police organisations, these core values and assumptions need to be transformed. However, change in cultural knowledge is not sufficient for police organisational transformation to occur. Chan argues, drawing on Bourdieu, that for lasting and comprehensive change to take place, there needs to be change in both the 'habitus' (cultural knowledge and established ways of perceiving and acting) as well as in the 'field' (objective, historical relations anchored in existing forms of power). Change in the habitus will never be complete or enduring if there is no change in the structural context where power relations are located and where laws are developed.

While using Chan's theorisation of police transformation extensively, I divert from Chan in stressing that the role of supervisors and managers is key to effective police transformation. I argue that paradoxically, perhaps, for significant change to take place in police organisations, what is needed is both directive leadership and participatory management styles. Directive leadership and supervision provides rank-and-file members with the guidance required for them to change their behaviour with confidence. Participatory management practices, on the other hand, allow police members to feel that they have a real stake in the change process as opposed to being mere 'Robocops' within a closed and rigid organisation. This in turn builds morale and commitment to the police organisation, crucial for organisational change. Participatory management traditions also have the potential to transform existing cultural knowledge pertaining to power relations and democratic practice.

The in-depth organisational case study of the Durban Public Order Police unit demonstrates that police organisational change is indeed possible to achieve. It shows, however, that change brought about through normative mechanisms such as training and policy is limited and incomplete. Such mechanisms do not give rise to new forms of cultural knowledge, nor do they fundamentally alter the organisational field. Consequently, outmoded and even reprehensible behaviour is resorted to by members of the unit from time to time. Social cleavages with accompanying stereotypes of social groupings remain unchallenged and this in itself threatens the transformation process.

Chapter 2 outlines the methodological approach employed in conducting the research. It outlines in some detail the use of both ethnographic and quantitative methods used.

Chapter 3 discusses existing theories on police organisations and police organisational change and charts the theoretical starting point which guides this dissertation.

Chapter 4 provides a detailed history of public order policing in South Africa. It provides the reader with an historical context required for understanding the nature of the Public Order Police unit at the point at which the transformation process was embarked upon.

Chapter 5 outlines the structure, activities and demographics of the Durban Public Order Police unit at the time of writing this dissertation. It provides the reader with an overview of what the unit 'looked like' five years after the transformation process began.

Chapter 6 discusses the two key mechanisms (new training and policy) that were employed as a means for effecting change in Durban POP. It argues that these traditional mechanisms for bringing about organisational police transformation are inadequate in ensuring lasting and deep-rooted change.

Chapter 7 explores the responses of the unit toward the public following the transformation process and evaluates whether or not behavioural change has taken place. It argues that there are clear indications that change has taken place but that there remains a tendency for members of the unit to resort to past forms of behaviour largely due to the preservation of cultural knowledge from the past.

Chapter 8 examines the nature of supervision, management and leadership in the unit. It argues that poor and outmoded performance indicators are used and that managers and supervisors are unable to provide adequate direction to rank-and-file members and are unwilling to incorporate more participatory forms of management. This in turn has impeded the project of organisational change.

Chapter 9 is concerned with the existing racial and gender cleavages within the unit. It argues that while the goals of racial representativeness has been achieved to some extent, gender representation remains a problem within the unit. Stereotypes about race, gender and ethnicity persist and this has led to deep social cleavages as well as movements from below within the unit. These deep social cleavages also threaten to undermine the transformation project given the need for unity and a shared vision of change.

Chapter 10 reviews the extent to which transformation has taken place within Durban POP and provides some suggestions as to how the police can facilitate organisational transformation.

CHAPTER 2

WATCHING YOU, WATCHING ME: GETTING MY HANDS DIRTY WITH THE PUBLIC ORDER POLICE UNIT

It is still relatively unusual for South African scholars to engage in participatory research with the police. As a result, a number of questions were frequently asked of me during this research process: How easy is it to access the police in South Africa? Are you not afraid to go on active operations with the police? How do the police understand your role as a researcher? How objective is your work if you have developed such close relations with the police through your research work? What do the police think about what you write?

These questions are all extremely important and constitute the very challenges of doing research on or in the police. They are questions, moreover, which are common to scholars of the police throughout the world. But, despite the very real compromises and difficulties (as well as great rewards) in researching the police, these questions are seldom addressed in the policing literature. This is odd given the obvious difficulties in carrying out research in an institution as closed and protected as that of the police. Brewer, however, argues that the relative absence of such discussions is not specific to those who research the police, but is typical of research in difficult settings. According to him, 'textbooks on research methods rarely mention the problems that arise when undertaking research on controversial topics or conducting it in sensitive locations' (1991:15). He adds that 'in the past, many researchers have tended to underplay the problems that arose in the process of their research in case they affected the evaluation of their results' (Brewer, 1991:15).

While the sociology of the police is a growing field, until the 1980s it was not considered an established area of sociology. Most of the materials on the police were to be found in writing of a legal, historical, political, criminological, journalistic or writings of an official nature (Greenhill, 1981).¹ But since the 1980s, there has been a rapid growth in policing research largely as a result of the debates and controversies which emerged in relation to the police at the time (Reiner, 1992a). These included increasing crime rates, the problematic policing of public disorder, and poor police-community relations. In the 1990s, policing research veered toward policy related concerns underlined by the quest for 'relevant' and 'utility' research (Rock, 1988). As the research focus has changed over the years, so too have the chosen methods for understanding the police.

1. Police studies in the 1980s were concerned with the causes and treatment of crime, police management, techniques, and the politics of policing. At this time there was also a growth in what has come to be known as radical criminology which is concerned with the social control of marginalised groupings and the class and patriarchal roots of crime and deviance. Radical criminology remained a strong tradition in the 1990s, particularly in Britain (Young, 1988).

Information on research methods used in the police setting can be unearthed from some of the key studies that have been done where the authors explain in great detail how and why they went about gaining an understanding into the 'ways of the police' (Holdaway, 1983; Brewer, 1991; Greenhill, 1981; Punch, 1975; Cain, 1973; Lundman, 1980; Reuss-Ianni, 1984; Van Maanen, 1988; Manning, 1977). Such accounts can be found from as early as 1964 with the seminal work of Michael Banton² who initiated the still strong trend of participant observation in policing research. This qualitative research tradition continues to dominate research on the police concerned with the nature of police work and police organisations, police-community relations, and the politics of policing. At the same time, however, those researchers on the police who are interested in police effectiveness/performance, police perceptions and perceptions of the police, and the relationship between crime and policing have tended toward the use of more quantitative methods.

This study makes use of both quantitative and qualitative research methods, but it places far more emphasis on the use of qualitative methods. This is because the study is essentially an organisational one concerned with the nature of one specialised unit's engagement with the public, the extent to which this unit has in fact transformed since the transition to democratic governance, and the basic assumptions, values and beliefs (or culture) that are held by members of the unit. But, there is also an interest in assessing and measuring the attitudes of members toward their historical role in the unit, the process of transformation, and their perceptions of the current functioning of the unit. The choice of methods used and how they are employed is the key concern of this chapter. But, first, two of the questions most commonly asked of police researchers such as myself will be addressed briefly: Why is it important to study the police? And how easy is it to access the police context?

Why is it important to study the police?

There are many institutions that a sociologist could choose to study in contemporary society. In societies in transition such as South Africa, there may appear to be more dynamic and pertinent areas of study such as the state itself, the economy, education, health, and even the family. Sociologists have tended to avoid studying the police, perhaps, as Punch suggests, because 'researchers have an antipathy for "repressive" and "authoritarian" institutions' (1975:83). Similarly, Radelet has argued that 'many people prefer to avoid contact with the police if possible. The outright hostility of some groups toward the police is a well-established reality' (1986:3).

The police, however, are 'a pivotal institution in society, performing a wide range of functions, and enjoying considerable influence' (Brewer, 1991:8). They are responsible for regulating social order and for enforcing

2. Banton (1964) made use of participant observation in studying the police. This, he believed, was the best and only way to gain real insight into police culture and the operational practices of the police. Since Banton, there has been a very strong trend of participant observation work amongst researchers of the police.

existing and newly invented laws and regulations. In so doing, 'what the police promise is a real, perceptible improvement in public safety as a result of their actions' (Bayley, 1996:9). It would be difficult for any member of society to argue that their own safety and the safety of the general public is not a primary concern. Whether the police do their job effectively, and whether they make a perceptible difference with regard to public safety is a very important question. Every society recognises that the police function is crucial to its survival (Critchley, 1967; Bayley, 1996). Whether we like it or not (and most of us do not) authority and repression are the basis of social control in a society, both at the level of the individual and the collective. The social order that results from social control and authority is a means to both the ends of justice and the sanctity of individual liberty in democratic societies (Radelet, 1986).

In carrying out their social ordering function, the police are differentiated from other civic institutions in their capacity to make use of 'legitimate' force and to invoke fear. Despite their often low status and social exclusion in many societies (such as South Africa), they hold enormous power. This has lead Bouza, an ex-police chief of the New York Police Department to comment that 'the cops on the street wield more power over our daily lives than the president of the United States...Cops tell us when to stop and when to go. They can question us or choose to ignore us. They can forbid or permit...They know much more about criminal law than most lawyers and readily develop a mastery of the handier sections...Cops also know that, as preservers of the peace and the protectors of life and property, they are called on to make countless decisions and judgements daily' (1990:3).

Studies of the police also inform us about the nature of society more broadly. While we may prefer to see the police as a grouping somewhat distinct from the rest of society, the values and attitudes of the police tend to reflect the socio-economic, cultural, ethnic, occupational and educational character of the society in which they are reared (Reiner, 1992; Bent, 1974). The police are very much a part of society and in democratic societies the laws they enforce are for the most part consented to. The police in democratic societies are 'ideally a living expression, an embodiment, an implement of the arm of democratic law. ...What the police officer does and how he or she does it is one weighty measure of the integrity of the entire legal system for each person with whom he or she comes in contact' (Radelet, 1981:7). Studies of the police can teach us much about the general values that exist in society and what is viewed as acceptable, correct, and tolerable.

The study of the police, however, does not only give us an inroad into the less tangible sociological interest in culture, values, attitudes and lifestyles, it is also an avenue for understanding modern organisations. In fact, much of the sociology of the police is located within the general field of organisational study. Police agencies are highly organised and bureaucratised and are ideally geared toward optimal efficiency and productivity. For

this reason, studying police organisations allows for critical analysis and comparative work as to the ideal structuring and managing of organisations to achieve stated objectives.

Police organisations, while conservative in nature, are under constant pressure to change to meet the challenges of changing demographics, new forms of governance, and economic shifts (to mention but a few). Given that police organisations impact so directly on people's everyday lives, the impetus for change in police organisations is often viewed as urgent. As a result, the study of police organisations can serve as a 'tool' for developing mechanisms for organisational change (Reuss-Ianni, 1984). In societies in transition, like South Africa, there is always a search for the secret to successful organisational/institutional change to which police organisations may provide useful insights and pointers.

The power that the police wield in society, their promise to provide security and protection, their microcosmic reflection of broader society, and the constant pressure for police organisational change, has led to a growing interest in researching the police (van der Spuy, 1989a). But the study of police organisations is not a straightforward enterprise, especially if one is to engage directly with the police as a source of knowledge. The main reason for this is that the world of the police is shrouded in both mystery and secrecy which is not easy to penetrate (Bouza, 1990). Perhaps the most important aspect of researching the policing is actually accessing and maintaining access to police organisations and members in the first instance.

How easy was it to access the Durban Public Order Police unit?

Despite the difficulties that most researchers face when wanting to access the policing milieu, Brewer (1991) notes that very few police ethnographers speak about the difficulties they encounter in doing research in police organisations. In reality, he says, the relationship between sociologists and the police is often a complicated and arduous one. Greenhill suggests that this is because police and sociologists are imbued with negative perceptions and stereotypes of one another: 'Police often see sociological work as ill-informed, and sociologists tend not to take seriously what the police do' (1981:103). This often leads to antagonistic relationships between sociologists and the police, and both parties may resort to discrediting exercises. Access then becomes difficult to negotiate. Ideally, Punch argues, there should be a positive and constructive engagement between the two institutions concerned - the police and the universities. Such an engagement would allow 'academics to scrutinise their theories in the "real" world, and policemen [to] test their practical experience against intellectual generalisations' (Punch, 1975:84). Such ideal relationships, however, seldom exist between the police and academics, particularly in societies that are characterised by social and political conflict and where the role of the police is highly contested such as South Africa and Northern Ireland (Brewer, 1991).³

3. Brewer (1991) also makes the point that in these societies, the units that are most difficult to access are those that have been involved in public order policing or riot policing. This is perhaps why there has been no real attempt (other than my own) for a South African academic to engage in participatory-observation based research with the units involved in public order policing.

It is often intimidating for sociologists with the goal of conducting some kind of research to enter the 'world of the police' for the first time. I recall wanting to reverse my car and drive away after entering the Durban base of the Public Order Police unit for my first introductory visit. I recorded these feelings in my research diary:⁴

05/04/1997

As I drove into the base I felt my stomach drop. What was I doing in a place that looked like a prison with lines of heavily armed vehicles (Nyalas and Casspurs) all around? Everywhere I looked I saw groups of strong-looking men with handguns, machineguns and batons attached to their bodies. When I got out of the car I felt as if everyone was asking each other what this small unfamiliar woman was doing in a place like this. I walked past the groups of men in uniform and shyly greeted them all. They returned my greeting and continued their activities as though I were not there. A smile came to my face as I entered the main building to introduce myself to the unit commander. This is going to be tough, I thought to myself, but it is going to be a challenge and I am going to enjoy it.⁵

My entry to the unit, however, had been softened by the existing relationships I had with various members of the police beforehand. For the two years prior to entering the research setting of the Public Order Police (POP), I had been working together with members of the SAPS and non-government organisations in a forum that was concerned with facilitating and building community policing in the province in which I lived.⁶ While this work had in no way involved the Public Order Police, I at least had some familiarity with the broader police body. Second, and perhaps more importantly, earlier in the year I had invited two members of the Durban POP to come and talk to my undergraduate class about paramilitary policing.⁷ Both the members who addressed my class were involved in training initiatives in the unit. One of them, Captain Mohamed, was the Head of Training for POP Durban. Following the presentation given to my class, I sat down and chatted with the two policemen about what was happening in the unit and how they had felt about addressing university students. A relationship of mutual interest and respect was established almost immediately. A week later Captain Mohamed called me and asked if I would assist the unit by doing an evaluation of the new training programme in the unit. He wanted me to assess whether their new in-service training programme was assisting in

4. Throughout my fieldwork, I kept a diary in which I recorded my observations, conversations and reflections. This will be discussed in some detail later in the chapter.

5. It is not unusual for ethnographers to feel estranged from the research setting. Van Maanen has gone as far as to suggest that,

to do fieldwork apparently requires some of the instincts of an exile, for the fieldworker typically arrives at the place of study without much of an introduction and knowing few people, if any. Fieldworkers, it seems, learn to move around strangers while holding themselves in readiness for episodes of embarrassment, affection, misfortune, partial or vague revelation, deceit, confusion, isolation, warmth, adventure, fear, concealment, pleasure, surprise, insult, and always possible deportation (1995: 2).

6. During this time I had also completed some research on the state of community policing in the province. This too was not my first encounter with researching or working with the police. In 1995, I was employed as a researcher at the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation in Johannesburg, where my research interest in the police was founded. However, the nature of my research had always been quick 'in and out' interviews, and I had never spent extensive amounts of time doing participatory research with the police.

7. At the time of researching and writing this dissertation, I was employed as a full-time lecturer in Sociology at the University of Natal.

transforming the operational conduct of the unit from being highly militarised and inflexible to the use of minimum force and the use of situationally appropriate tactics. Despite the lack of funding and my complete lack of knowledge about the unit, I agreed to conduct the research. The relative ease with which I entered the unit was also due to the political and organisational changes that were taking place at the time. As will be discussed later in this chapter, following the transition to democratic governance, state institutions that had previously been closed and protected from public scrutiny were instructed by government to operate in a manner that is both transparent and accountable to the public. This opened new spaces for researchers and observer bodies who wanted to 'investigate' previously protected organisations. Furthermore, the changes that were expected from public organisations tended to render their members both insecure and uncertain and as a result welcoming of so-called experts that could offer advice and direction.

I laid down a few preconditions before agreeing to do the research. First, Captain Mohamed and his training team would have to spend some time explaining to me what the new training objectives were and how they related to the overall change programme within the unit. Second, I would need to have access to both trainers and those in training for the purpose of conducting interviews. Third, I would need to be able to observe the training, both practical and theoretical, and if possible, accompany those in training when they were deployed in various operations. Finally, my research findings would be my own property, and the police would have to accept my autonomy as an independent researcher.⁸ These conditions were agreed to and in turn I had to accept that the police were not responsible for any harm that may result from my participating in field operations (though they would make every effort to ensure my safety). I was also asked to formally present my research findings to members at the college on completion of the research. It was mutually agreed that the research project would last about two to three months, and that the time I spent at the college was subject to the convenience of the trainers and the members in training.

Both the police and I benefited from this arrangement. I was awarded complete access to the police training college where I could begin a new area of research interest. The police on the other hand would receive an evaluation of their training programme. I also agreed to run sessions with the trainers discussing new trends in public order policing internationally.⁹ Ultimately, the police hoped to benefit from the research by gaining insight as to possible ways of improving the training they were providing. The creation of this mutual relationship proved to be invaluable both for the initial research, but also for my long-term engagement with the unit. It was extremely important for me to be able to offer useful information and knowledge to the police. This is not to imply that access was completely smooth and unproblematic. While Captain Mohamed felt

8. Lundman (1980), in writing about access to the police as a research setting, stresses the importance of the researcher gaining acceptance from the officials whose work is to be investigated. At the same time, he insists that the researcher must adopt a strict attitude condemning any undermining of basic research principles.

9. I provided trainers with any literature and information on public order policing and police training that I could find. They were also free to come to my office at convenient times and look for documentation that they thought would benefit them. Sometimes I felt that my office had become a police reference room and it was not unusual to see uniformed police officers walking in and out of my office at the

assured of the benefits of the research, these feelings were not always shared by other trainers or the members who were coming to the college for training.

Greenhill (1981) correctly notes that if sociologists hope to maintain effective access to autonomous organisations such as the police, they need to be able to show that the research can potentially benefit the organisation and that individual members will also be able to benefit from increased information and knowledge. While some of the trainers enjoyed hearing about the research findings and liked to discuss the contemporary literature on public order policing, there were others who remained sceptical about research in general. In many police settings, there is extensive and persistent negative imagery of the sociologist and academics in general, partly as a result of their unwillingness (perceived or real) to spend extensive periods of time observing the police in uncomfortable situations (Young, 1991).

The following exchange was recorded after an extensive discussion I had with the trainers at the college about the changes taking place in public order policing internationally. I had referred to some of the key debates in the policing literature on paramilitary forms of policing:

11/06/1997

While we were discussing some of the arguments that have been proposed as to whether there should or should not be a separate paramilitary unit in the police, I could see Sergeant Snel was becoming agitated. The following conversation transpired:

Sergeant Snel: Monique, I don't mean to be rude, but this is all a load of junk. What do people who write books in universities know about the way the police should organise themselves? There would be chaos in this place if we didn't have a specialised unit like ours.

Sergeant Peters: Ja, man. These people just know about theory. Have they ever been out in a crowd and seen what chaos can take place? Sometimes I think academics must do what they are good at and we must do what we are good at.

While formal access had been assured from the highest-ranking officer at the Police College (Captain Mohamed), this did not immediately translate into guaranteed acceptance and support from other members. Indeed, access in the police requires constant negotiation. Researchers have to negotiate access to different levels in the police, and to different police settings. Strangely, it was often those of lower ranks who were resistant to being observed and 'interrogated'. In hierarchical organisations like the police, members may feel that they are *instructed* to cooperate with outside researchers and as a result do not feel that their participation is voluntary (Ericson, 1982). When I perceived hesitancy or resistance on the part of lower-ranking members, I checked whether or not they felt comfortable and willing to participate. If they did not and continued to be uncomfortable after my informing them about the nature of the research, I made it clear that they were in no way compelled to participate in any individual interviews or discussions. For the most part, however, members were willing to participate and share their views, feelings and experiences. Many were in fact happy to have someone interested in what they had to say. But, throughout the research I had to find ways of ensuring that

university at all hours of the day.

rank-and-file police did not think that I was working on behalf of police management. I had to state this again and again when going out with members on operations, conducting interviews, and even when administering surveys. I also encouraged members to ask any questions they may have had about my role and purpose.¹⁰

My time spent at the college provided me with an invaluable inroad to the Public Order Police Unit. However, when I decided to extend my research beyond the college and to issues broader than those of training and transformation, I was aware that a whole new phase of negotiation would have to take place. To begin with, I had to get official permission to conduct the research from senior officers in the unit. In the police, it is vital to achieve 'credibility and co-operation from those whose work is under investigation or who are in any way subjected to actual or potential inconvenience by the research' (Greenhill, 1981:105). I was also aware that the opening up of the police to outside researcher was extremely new, and that high-ranking police officials would be suspicious of any research initiative. I therefore had to provide extensive information on the objectives of the research, the manner in which the research would be carried out, and what I intended to do with the research findings.

Earlier in the chapter I described my trepidation on first arriving at the Durban unit to meet the Unit Commander, Director Coetzee. I was fortunate in that Captain Mohamed had already spoken to Director Coetzee about me and had told him how invaluable my interaction with the training college had been. I was warmly welcomed by the Unit Commander, who then promptly asked me what I had found in my research at the college. While I was initially scheduled to meet the commander for half an hour, I ended up spending three hours talking to him about my own research findings and his own hopes and frustrations in the unit. I knew that despite my own time limitations, I had to spend as much time as was necessary gaining his trust in order to ensure wider access to the unit. I was in fact taken aback by the welcoming disposition of the commander toward me. Perhaps this was because, as Brewer suggests, 'the ethos with which the police authorities are imbued, has led to a recognition that social research can bring valuable results, so they have opened up their leviathan to strangers and specially commissioned specific pieces of research' (1991:16).

In South Africa not only has there been a move since the early 1990s toward greater police professionalism, there is also a new ethos that stresses the importance of transparency and openness.¹¹ Since the election of the democratic government in April 1994, the police have been instructed to open the organisation to outside scrutiny and oversight, and this includes awarding access to researchers from outside the police. This did not mean, however, that access was unconditional. Director Coetzee expressed some of his concerns about

10. Ericson (1982) states that in his experience of conducting fieldwork in police organisations, there was often confusion as to his identity as a fieldworker. Some police members believed that he was an official police evaluator. In my own experience, members perceived me as a change agent, as a police expert who was assisting with developing new strategies, or as a consultant to management. There were probably also members (particularly rank-and-file) who may have believed that my role was to uncover existing practices and problems for police management or other oversight bodies.

11. See the South African Police Service Act, 1995 and the South African Constitution, 1996.

outsiders like myself conducting research in the unit. First, he was anxious that I would publicise negative research findings about the unit. I had to assure him that this was not my intention and that my research would be used for purely academic purposes. I also assured Director Coetzee that I would regularly give feedback to him and other interested police members about the research findings. While this did not mean that I would alter my findings or analysis, I understood their need to check the accuracy of my reporting and interpretations. I had to promise him that I would at no point release information discussed in confidence to any members of the press or to anyone who may harm the unit.¹² I also had to protect the interests of rank-and-file members of the unit. This meant that my observations and conversation with rank-and-file members would not be reported to authorities in the unit. At times this compromised both my personal and political ethics, as I discuss below.¹³

At the end of our first meeting, Director Coetzee informed me that I was free to observe and participate in any way I needed to in the unit. He promised to facilitate my research in any way possible. Director Coetzee took early retirement from the unit in late 1999, but until that time, we spoke regularly (usually informally) and each time I completed a report or a paper about the unit, I gave him a copy and welcomed any feedback from him. As a symbol of my appreciation of my guaranteed and protected access, I also drew up a confidential report for the Director which explored all aspects of the unit, the positive developments and limitations. I also offered some tentative recommendations for dealing with some of the existing problems in the unit.¹⁴

The South African Police Service is a centralised organisation and I knew that permission to do research in the unit had to be obtained from higher authorities in the police. This meant gaining permission from the Provincial Head of Public Order Policing, Director Wiggins. Director Wiggins did not have the soft manner of Director Coetzee. He had spent almost his entire life in the police, and claimed to be the longest serving policeman in the SAPS who had been involved with public order policing. He tended to interact through bantering and joking, and at times I felt I would never get him to take me seriously. I decided that the best way to approach him was to join in with the banter. At the same time, however, I had to get him to take me seriously by making him aware that I had insight into the unit and into public order policing more broadly.

12. This emerged from experiences that Director Wiggins had had with the press where honest and open, yet confidential, conversations with journalists had been published without the consent or knowledge of the Director. I have noticed often in the police that there is a conflation between the role of independent researchers and the investigative press. Once again, I had to clearly define my role as a researcher attached to the university.

13. For example, as is documented in Chapter 7, I observed rank-and-file members severely assaulting and verbally abusing members of the public. Such behaviour contravened the new human rights philosophy that was meant to guide the conduct of members of the unit. Such behaviour was reprehensible but I did not reveal my observations to managers or supervisors in the unit as this would have contravened my research ethics of anonymity and confidentiality.

14. I spent about five hours discussing this report with the Director and two of his appointed officers at one point. The report was also used as a catalyst for some changes that were later implemented in the unit. This report has never been published or publicly distributed, even within the unit itself.

An hour after meeting him, we were already discussing the history and future of the unit. I informed him about the research I had been doing at the college. By the end of the first meeting, Director Wiggins gave me permission to participate in the activities of the unit and conduct any interviews I needed. Over the years I came to know Director Wiggins well. We developed a respectful yet pleasurable relationship. In 1999, Director Wiggins invited me to participate in a Provincial Transformation Team Forum he had established. When international guests and observers come to visit the unit, Director Wiggins made a point of inviting me to participate in discussions and activities organised with his guests.

My engagement with Director Wiggins was not always easy. There were many times when I found his manner to be dismissive, perhaps because of my gender. At the same time, however, a more informal dimension to our relationship developed over time. We would chat about our families, our travel, and broader political developments. Captain Mohamed and I also developed a relationship that combined professionalism and friendship. In November 1999, for example, I was invited to his wedding. We occasionally met for an informal chat over lunch or a drink. This informal aspect to these relationships facilitated rather than hindered my research. It resulted in a sense of familiarity, trust, and a genuine interest in each other's wellbeing. These types of relationships are not unusual in ethnographic research. Emerson et al (1995) note that ethnographers may choose between being distant or more intimate with the subjects of their research. This is dependent on both the researcher's personality and his/her understanding of what relationships will best facilitate the research.

This more friendly type of relationship even developed with officers whom I initially thought would be sceptical of my research and unwilling to engage openly with me. For example, when Director Coetzee resigned as Unit commander from POP Durban, a new commander was appointed temporarily. Senior Superintendent Meiring, an Afrikaans-speaking policeman with long service in the SAPS, was appointed as the acting Unit Commander. He had been socialised in apartheid policing and had never had the opportunity to meet with academics or international 'experts'. When he was appointed I was concerned that my access to the unit would be limited. Over the months that he acted as Unit Commander we engaged in many open discussions about his personal history and the history of the unit. This involved spending many hours chatting to him, even when I knew there were other more pressing things I had to attend to. However, I was aware that Senior Superintendent Meiring was a gatekeeper to the unit.

Senior Superintendent Meiring and I developed a friendly and respectful relationship and were frank in discussing our respective pasts and our different thought paradigms. He shared with me his involvement in apartheid policing and I told him about my past as an anti-apartheid activist, often at odds with the police. In December 1999, I left South Africa for the United States of America for four months. Superintendent Meiring

called me a few days before I left to wish me well. The following conversation, recorded in my diary, reveals the nature of the relationship that had developed between us:

24/11/1999

Senior Superintendent Meiring: Hi Monique, I was worried that you had already left before I could get hold of you.

Monique: I was intending to come and say goodbye to you all.

Senior Superintendent Meiring: I just wanted to tell you to have a good time while you are away and that we are really going to miss you at the unit.

Monique: Thanks so much. I have really enjoyed working with you. I hope that you have a good Christmas and New Year though I know that things will be hectic for the unit with the new Millennium celebrations taking place.

Senior Superintendent Meiring: Yes, it is going to be a very busy time, but I am looking forward to it. As you know, I am taking early retirement in January and I want to give the unit my best shot before I go. Anyway, I just wanted to give you my home telephone number so that you can call and say hello when you get back. Maybe you can come round and have some tea.¹⁵

The most difficult encounter I had securing access and permission was from the POP Head Office. I knew that I had to get permission from the Head Office in order to ensure long-term access to the unit and for my work to be recognised by the unit. Early on in my research I planned a trip to Pretoria to meet with the Head of Training and the National Commissioner of Public Order Policing. I decided that the best way to secure access at this level was not only to set out the principles and obligations of my research, but to also show that I had knowledge and understanding of the unit and of public order policing in general. I therefore arrived at the Head office with numerous papers and articles I had written and set aside extensive time to engage with police officials.

On arriving at the unit Head Office, I was immediately asked whether I had secured permission from the Head of Research in the SAPS. I had not. I had to call the research department and set up an urgent meeting to discuss my research and the possibility of access. This proved to be unproblematic, and in fact, my research was welcomed given that there was no other academic researcher in South Africa at that time with a specialised interest in public order policing.

When I returned to POP Head Office after gaining approval from the SAPS Research Department, I was once again struck by an overwhelming sense of alienation. I wondered around feeling unfamiliar and unknown. Some of the officers at Head Office were suspicious of my research and I had to explain my intentions and methodologies in some detail. I was told that access was dependent on permission from the National Commissioner who was a very busy man. I decided to wait as long as was necessary in the building until I had

15. I was very touched by his thoughtfulness and generosity. Most of my conversations with Senior Superintendent Meiring had taken place in a combination of English and Afrikaans. While my Afrikaans is not very good, Superintendent Meiring felt more at ease speaking his home language.

seen National Commissioner Cronje. After waiting for some time, Commissioner Cronje agreed to a short meeting with me.

Commissioner Cronje welcomed me to his office. I was completely intimidated and wondered what on earth I could offer him and the unit in return for secured access. I did not have to worry for long. The following exchange took place shortly after we were introduced:

05/02/1998

Commissioner Cronje: Monique, you don't know me but I already know you.

I was very confused and had no idea where I could have possibly met him before.

Commissioner Cronje: I have been curious to meet you. You see, I have already read some of the stuff you have written and have found it most useful. In fact, I used one of your articles in a meeting recently.

I had no idea which article he was talking about. He then went to his desk and pulled out a copy of an article I had written for the publication, *Crime and Conflict*. The article was entitled 'The case for paramilitary policing', which I had really written as a polemic for a research and academic audience.

Commissioner Cronje: I really enjoyed this piece and as I said, I have found it very useful, particularly in justifying why the unit is needed.

I must say that I was completely taken aback that the Commissioner was reading such publications and that he had even remembered who the author was. I immediately felt a sense of relief knowing that I was valued and that I was already viewed as having insight and understanding.

We chatted about the unit and my work, and Commissioner Cronje informed me that I had his blessing in doing my research. He merely requested that I keep him informed of my research and my findings from time to time. Since then, my relationship with the Commissioner has strengthened. I make a point of sending him a copy of all the reports, conference papers and publications I have written and welcome any feedback from him. At a meeting with an international delegation in November 1999, Commissioner Cronje thanked me for keeping him abreast and ensuring that he always has copies of my writings. This has proven to be extremely important in maintaining good relations with the Commissioner. A couple of months after meeting him, we had the opportunity to link up again in Durban at a gathering of POP officials from Durban, the Provincial office, and Head Office as well as a team of international experts on public order policing. Both Director Wiggins and Commissioner Cronje were at the gathering and Commissioner Cronje expressed his gratitude at my keeping him informed of my work:

13/15/1999

Commissioner Cronje: Hi Monique, nice to see you again. Hey Director Wiggins, this woman is the only researcher I know who sends me everything that she writes. Other people come into the unit and do interviews and then I never hear from them again. Monique, I received your survey results but they are not yet analysed, so I really don't know what they mean. Could you please analyse them and send me a report when you are finished? I would like to know what all of this means.¹⁶

16. I had recently completed an attitude survey with rank-and-file POP members. I had posted Commissioner Cronje the raw results for his interest and thought that he may be able to form his own analysis of them. Following the interaction with him at the meeting, I spent extensive time analysing and interpreting the results, which I sent to him immediately.

While it may appear that given the generally positive relationships I developed with high-ranking officers in the unit that access was simple and uncomplicated, this was not entirely the case. There were times when members at lower ranks were resistant to my research endeavours and made access at the more grassroots level difficult, though never impossible. This was perhaps because they felt that divulging information that was viewed by higher-ranking officers as being sensitive or potentially damaging to the unit could lead to some form of retribution at a later date. I thus had to adapt to the different research localities and learn a multiplicity of ways of ensuring access. Perhaps my most difficult experience in this regard occurred when I tried to administer a survey to a group of highly specialised (mainly white members) of the Durban POP. They made no bones about their distrust and disregard for outside researchers. I wrote the following in my research diary after a difficult encounter with rank-and-file members:

21/08/1999

What a scene! I went to do the long-awaited survey with the RDP Platoon.¹⁷ I knew this was an important but tough one to do. Most of the members in this platoon are white and from the old school of paramilitary policing. I walked into the seminar room and was confronted by 30 rather large, smoking, obnoxious, plain-clothes policemen. They had their firearms on the table in front of them and they were intimidating to look at. When Captain Padyachee, Head of Labour Relations, introduced me to the platoon and explained what I had to come to do, members told him that they refused to answer any questions or fill out any surveys. They just laughed and carried on smoking despite the pleas from Captain Padyachee to co-operate. I don't know where my bravery came from, but I thought, 'I can deal with these guys, leave it to me'. I felt that I had learned to speak the police language and to adapt to the different types of responses that I received. I also realised as a (white) woman, and not part of the police institution, I would be received slightly more openly than someone from within the police, or a male who may be seen as more threatening. I decided to joke around with them for a bit and let them have their fun. I then explained what I was doing, was firm but sympathetic, and had them all answering away in no time. By the end of the session, twelve of the members present volunteered to have individual interviews with me at a later point. I have to say though that for a moment I just wanted to walk out and abandon the exercise.

Open antagonism toward me did not happen often, but there were other access points that had to be negotiated, and sometimes abandoned. While most members of the unit became used to my frequent presence and my participation (or observation) during field operations, some of the commanders did not feel comfortable with my being present while they were in command. A few felt compromised by questions about my safety, and others felt uncomfortable being observed by me. As Ericson (1982) has noted, field workers doing research in the police perceive research as aimed at uncovering practices that will be publicly reported in a way that would conflict with the interests of the rank-and-file. When I sensed such hesitation and uncertainty I would opt out of participating in such operations. I did find, however, that once commanders became more familiar with me and the work I was doing, they eventually invited me to join them in the field; some even requested my presence during operations that they felt I would find interesting.

17. The RDP platoon is a specialized platoon within Durban POP. The role, function and history of the RDP platoon is discussed in Chapter 5 (overview).

In short, access proved not to be terribly difficult, but there was a constant need to renegotiate access and considerable effort and time had to be made in order to maintain positive and collaborative working relationship with the police at all levels. I had to constantly take care that both the police and I benefited from my access to the unit. Furthermore, I had to ensure that police members did not feel compromised by my presence and my research endeavors.

Choosing appropriate methods

There is no one 'correct' or 'appropriate' way to research the police. Within the broad discipline of Sociology, there are a variety of contestations as to the best approach to doing research. Lundman comments that 'some sociologists assert that the information provided by the interview and questionnaire is adequate. Other sociologists suggest that sound theory can only be built on by personal observations of social conduct. Still others are content that laboratory and field experiments are necessary ingredients of any overall research strategy' (1980:7). Some sociologists may even decide that a variety of research methods should be employed in order to discover the information and meaning that is necessary to fully research any particular issue or research setting. This may result in a combination of the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods depending on the phase of the research, the questions asked, and the theoretical starting point of the researcher.

I began my research as a qualitative researcher, and indeed, the bulk of my research is based on the qualitative methods of intensive interviewing and participant observation. I have some hesitation in calling myself an ethnographer, given my lack of formal training in the trade¹⁸ and the recent calls for analyses of encodation and semiosis (Emmerson et al, 1995; Manning, 1987a) for which I lack the requisite knowledge and skills.¹⁹ The approach I used, however, was in broad terms, ethnographic. Such an approach 'entails a gradual and progressive contact with respondents which is sustained over a long period, allowing rapport to be established slowly with respondents over time, and for researchers to participate in the full range of experiences involved in the topic' (Brewer, 1991:18). This study is concerned with the cultural interpretation of the Public Order Police unit in Durban during a period of considerable organisational change. Culture and fieldwork are thus coupled in this study, as is required of any ethnographic study (Van Maanen, 1995; Thomas and Marquart, 1987).²⁰

18. Van Maanen has asserted that most ethnographers have not been formally trained. Speaking for himself, and most other ethnographers, he contends that 'our appreciation and understanding of ethnography comes like a mist that creeps slowly over us while in the library and lingers with us while in the field' (1995: ix).

19. Wolcott (1995) has suggested that researchers be cautious in claiming that studies are ethnographic, particularly if they are not familiar with ethnographic literature.

20. There are, however, vast differences in the methods used and conceptualisations of 'culture' by those who define themselves as ethnographers. The particular conceptualisation of culture used in this study is discussed in Chapter 3.

The use of an ethnographic approach does not necessarily imply that quantitative methods and data are unimportant. I realised early on in my research endeavour that quantitative methods could reveal some interesting 'framing' information, particularly with respect to the attitudes of rank-and-file members toward their involvement in public order policing, the dynamics within the organisation, and the changes that have taken place since state democratisation. Quantitative data could also provide important basic information about who the members of the unit were in terms of length of service, reasons for joining, and their basic assumptions about their work and their environment.

I therefore decided to make use of both quantitative and qualitative methods, keeping in mind the different but complementary data that these methods would yield. Varying research methods may be used at different stages in the research endeavour and with different purposes in mind. As Walker suggests:

While qualitative and quantitative techniques may be employed during any phase of research, their different characteristics make them uniquely appropriate in certain circumstances... the inherent flexibility and interactive nature of qualitative methods have guaranteed their primacy during the preliminary phase of research. However, this is not to deny quantification a place in exploratory research and descriptive surveys often proceed ethnographic surveys... Often the two methods are used with different objectives... More generally, qualitative research can help interpret, illuminate, illustrate and qualify empirically determined statistical relationships (Walker, 1985:22).

A triangulation of both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to enable a study of cultural interpretation and a measuring of collective attitudes and opinions. The text moves between excerpts from a research diary, extracts from taped interviews and dialogues as well as survey results.

Who are you and what do you like? – Surveying the Public Order Police

While in many ways this research is a case study of the Public Order Police unit in Durban, I realised that a survey would be useful to collect original data 'for describing a population too large to observe directly... Surveys are also excellent vehicles for measuring attitude and orientation in a large population' (Babbie, 1989:237).²¹ I had already been doing participant observation and intensive interviews in the unit for about a year when I decided to conduct a survey with a representative sample of rank-and-file members of the POP unit in Durban.

The survey was carried out between April and November 1999. There were ten key objectives underlying the survey:

- To ascertain basic demographic information about members at the lower ranks.

21. However, I was always acutely aware of the limits of surveys. They 'cannot measure social action; they can only collect self-reports of recalled past action or of prospective or hypothetical action' (Babbie, 1988:255). The use of the survey could not substitute for providing a deeper understanding into the social life of the police, nor provide a total life situation that accounts for how respondents are thinking and acting, or the meaning they construct in their working environment. Surveys, I believe, also provide relatively superficial information with regard to complex issues and topics.

- To discover why and when members joined the police and the unit.
- To establish what members felt about the history of the unit prior to the 1994 democratic elections, and gain a sense of how the unit conducted itself prior to this date.
- To establish what members believed the role and function of the police and the specialised unit to be.
- To establish members' sense of commitment to working in the unit.
- To establish how members felt about the transformation process that was underway at the time the research was taking place.
- To establish whether members believed that real changes had taken place in the unit and how they viewed these changes.
- To establish what members viewed as the obstacles to transformation.
- To establish how members viewed crowds and public protest.
- To establish the nature of the existing relationships between rank-and-file members and unit management and commanders.

A purposeful sample was used and was stratified according to proportional ratios based on race and rank (at the lower levels). Time spent doing participant observation in the unit revealed to me the importance of race in terms of members' identities and experience.²² It became clear to me during my research in the unit that race was a significant identifier in the unit, and seemed to affect attitudes, behaviour and perceptions in all aspects of their working lives. When analysing the survey data, race was chosen as a key independent variable.

The surveys were self-administered to allow me the opportunity to explain the purpose of the survey, the construction of the questions, and how to answer the questions. The surveys were translated into Zulu so respondents could have the choice of answering in Zulu or in English. This was necessary because while all members spoke English fluently (even those whose home language was Afrikaans), there were some African members who were far more comfortable and conversant in Zulu, and who found reading in English difficult and time consuming.

I mistakenly assumed before conducting the survey that this would be an easy task. In fact, it proved very difficult to bring together large numbers of members at one time since they were always on call when they were at the base, and when there were high levels of collective action, members were usually in the field engaged in public order operations. I had to return time and again to the unit to administer the survey because at times Platoon Commanders could only volunteer eight or ten members. When, where and how the survey was administered was generally at the discretion of Platoon Commanders.

22. The issue of race as an identifier will be dealt with in some depth in Chapter 9.

When analysing the surveys, I made use of both univariate and bivariate analysis. The univariate statistics allowed for mainly descriptive inferences to be made about the larger population. I made use of bivariate analysis mainly for the purposes of comparing with regard to the independent variables used – race. I chose to make use of those statistics that had levels of significance between .01 and .001 to try to reduce any errors that resulted from the sample used.²³ The results of the survey are presented as percentage tables throughout the dissertation with the aim of providing a general frame or 'structure' to the more qualitative research findings.

There are limits to quantitative data, however. While it provides useful, statistical portrayals, these must always be interpreted, grounded and given human meaning, preferably 'direct face-to-face knowing' (Ericson, 1982). While the survey allowed for generalisable and comparative broad understanding of members' attitudes toward a variety of issues, this was not the heart of the study. Rather, the study is an in-depth organisational one, which has as its starting point the meanings, understandings, and belief systems of police participants themselves as agents in a process of organisational police transformation.

What does this all mean to you? – The use of qualitative methods

There are a few basic questions that underpin this study: Has transformation taken place in Durban POP? How effective have the mechanisms for change been? What are the obstacles to transformation in the unit? Has the behaviour of members changed in line with new policy and training objectives? Has there been a move toward external and internal democratisation of the unit? Is there an organisational sub-culture and if so, has this changed in any way? These questions ultimately relate to the nature of the organisation itself, and this study could best be characterised as an organisational study.²⁴

The stress on organisational studies by scholars of the police is based on the assumption that police behaviour results from both formal legal and administrative rules as well as the existing occupational or 'cop' culture. The police organisation then becomes an arena for action that is made up of a multiplicity of rationalities which in turn generates motivations for the police to understand and interpret their own actions and intentions, as well as those of others (Silverman, 1970). Police organisational studies, then, are as much concerned with the structural make-up of the police agency as they are with the perceptions, motivations and meanings of the men and women who work in these agencies. As a result, many of those who study the

23. Not all quantitative researchers are convinced of the usefulness of significance testing. Babbie provides four reasons as to why such testing can be misleading: '1) tests of significance make sampling assumptions that are virtually never satisfied by actual sampling testing; 2) they depend on the absence of non-sampling errors, a questionable assumption in most actual empirical measurements; 3) in practice, they are often applied to measures of association which have been computed in violations of the assumptions made by those measures...and; 4) statistical significance is too easily misinterpreted as "strength of association", or substantive significance' (1989,465).

24. Bittner defines organisations as '...stable associations of persons engaged in concerted activities directed to the attainment of specific objectives' (cited in Turner, 1975:180).

internal workings of the police draw on phenomenological philosophy and methods – a disciplined study of consciousness and of 'lived experience'.²⁵ Bittner (1980), for example, argues that any study of organisations has to take account of Weber's firm belief in the perspective of the actor in sociological inquiry and the need to study common-sense presupposition.

The only way to come to such an understanding of members of organisations is through direct interaction with them. Ericson (1982) argues that the best way to understand the organisational life of the police is through first-hand contact with the actors i.e. the police. He believes that researchers of institutions should submit themselves to the company of members in those institutions in order to understand the meaning and processes by which they are constructed. And, the best way to come to such an understanding is to observe day-to-day policing and in so doing, 'get the seat of your pants dirty in real research' (Park, cited in Holdaway, 1983:3).²⁶

Brewer argues that 'a great deal of the best police research is based on ethnographic methods of participant observation and in-depth interviewing' (1991: 18). There is indeed an established tradition of ethnographic research within the policing literature. Fielding has suggested that this resulted from a concern on the part of criminologists (particularly those studying deviance) with meaning and the consequent rejection of 'sterile conceptions of motivation found in positivist criminology' (1981: 2). There are a large number of ethnographic works on the police. These works reflect the multiplicity of ethnographic writing styles and approaches that exist broadly within the ethnographic literature. I will provide a few select examples of police ethnographic studies below.

Joan Wardrop (1999), an Australian anthropologist, creates a narrative of the different types of texts that police of the Soweto Flying Squad construct as they make meaning of their working lives. Wardrop, through a detailed recalling of her ride-alongs with the Soweto Flying Squad, makes use of what Van Maaning calls 'impressionistic tales'. Such tales 'startle the audience' (1995:102) through a reconstruction of events that make the fieldwork experience memorable. She makes use of long and continuous narrative texts which draw the reader into an 'unfamiliar story world and allow it, as far as possible, to see, hear, and feel as the fieldworker saw, heard and felt' (Van Maanen, 1995: 103).

25. Case studies of police organisations are relatively popular within the field of police studies. This is because there is a belief that the police are best understood through micro studies where they can be observed in their own 'natural context' (Sykes and Brent, 1983). Holdaway argues that 'small-scale organisational studies remain crucial and a continuing source of our understanding of the police...' (1983:16).

26. Some police researchers who engage in small-scale observational studies refer to themselves as ethnomethodologists. Ethnomethodology, according to Keel (1999) goes further than phenomenology because there is no shared sense of order – all that is shared are methods for making sense. Ethnomethodology provides a fundamental critique of science in that there is a suspension of a belief in a given objective reality of the world. Such studies are generally also concerned with discourse and language or 'talk' as a tool for understanding (Turner, 1975). There are others, however, who have a much broader definition of ethnomethodology. Brewer, for example, views it as a 'sub-discipline in sociology which focuses on the mundane and ordinary aspects of daily life, and explicates the methods, practices and techniques people use to accomplish everyday tasks' (1991:298).

Van Maanen's (1973) study of sergeants in the making in an American police agency makes use of a series of 'realist tales' (Van Maanen, 1995: 54). The tales he tells are for the most part matter of fact portrayals of the studied culture of the police in Union City. In the telling of such tales, the author tends to disappear from the text and the texts themselves focus on what is typical, everyday and mundane. Van Maanen's role as participant observer is discussed as methodological notes which assert both his professional integrity and status as a fieldworker.

There are also those criminologists such as Dennis Rodgers²⁷ who tell 'confessional tales' as defined by Van Maanen (1995). Rodgers (2001), in recalling his experiences in studying Nicaraguan gangs, focuses extensively on his role as a fieldworker. He writes at length about his emotions and personal experiences in the field showing how the field changed him and how he affected the field. Rodgers' tales are highly personalised and provide a fascinating and detailed account of stories of infiltration, dangerous and compromising encounters, and the intricacies of the relationships he developed with the members of pandillas (criminal youth gangs).

Peter Manning (1982) explores police communications in the British Police Department and the Midwest Police Department. In this study he seeks to show how messages were defined, coded, interpreted and acted upon. In so doing, he shows how meanings are not necessarily shared within an organisation and how meanings change over time. In order to understand the differences in connotative meanings, Manning (1987a) argues that ethnographers need to move beyond the generally descriptive focus of ethnographies. Descriptive fieldwork, Manning argues, 'hampers theory building and formalisation' (1987a:16). In advancing the challenges posed by postmodernism, he makes the case for an analysis of encodation, interpretation, semiosis, and changes in meaning and interpretation. The use of semiotics, Manning argues, 'allows for the formalising of analysis and a move away from the more chaotic, messy form that ethnographies generally take' (1987a:46).²⁸

I have made use of a number of ethnographic forms (as delineated by Van Maanen, 1995) in this study. 'Realist tales' are used to convey matter of fact accounts of observations and the retelling of conversations that took place. While my own voice and presence may be absent some of the tales I tell, my presence as a fieldworker is very much part of text. My fieldnotes include continual reference to my own feelings, insights and reflections on my role. 'Confessional tales' are woven into the telling of the 'story' of the Public Order Police

27. While Rodgers does not focus on the police in his study, his work is an excellent example of the use of 'confessional tales'.

28. Van Maanen (1995) provides a detailed discussion and critique of all these approaches to writing up ethnographies. He is particularly critical of those, like Manning who make use of textualised data and who thereby formalise the tales that are told. Those who tell formalised tales, he argues, 'make a field setting little more than a mock-science laboratory... There is more than a little theology involved whenever people are said to be acting on the basis of unseen and unknown forces' (1995:131).

unit in Durban. Including my own subjective experiences and responses in the writing of fieldnotes allowed for continual reflexivity (Brewer, 2000) about the problems and the difficulties of research context, my own role and location, and the very character of the police members who were part of the unit. The act of consciously noting these confessional tales helped me to make sense of the moral dilemmas I confronted in the field and to come to terms with the dangerous encounters I experienced in participating (particularly in night patrols) in the daily duties of the unit. I tried in recounting this story to create the 'necessary balance between introspection and objectification' (Van Maanen, 1995:93) by presenting myself as 'objective' researcher at times and as an unavoidably subjective participant at others. I have also tried to bring the reader into the world of the Durban Public Order Police by inserting impressionistic tales that recount the detailed activities and responses of the police during particular (sometimes shocking) events. These tales read somewhat differently from the more realist tales that I tell, but I have heeded Van Maanen's (1995) plea for ethnographers to include such tales in writing up ethnographies. Impressionistic tales add to the rich and textured nature (or 'thick descriptions') of ethnographic research.

The stories and tales that I tell would be of little value had I not taken into account the political, social and economic realities that bounded the Durban Public Order police unit. In this regard, my ethnographic account is a 'critical tale' (Van Maanen, 1995) and follows the tradition of Willis (1977) and Hall and Jefferson (1976). Whether or not I adequately and appropriately moved between these different types of tales is for the reader to decide.

Participant observation

The broadest term that can be used to refer to those, like myself, who 'get the seat of their pants dirty' is participant observation. What the participant observer hopes to do is immerse themselves in a host society (like a police organisation) and try as far as possible to see, feel, and even act as members of that 'society' (Walker, 1985). This involves a process of 'indwelling', of suspending one's own ways of viewing the world in order to understand the world of others (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994). This indwelling is seen as crucial by many policing scholars in the quest to gain real insight into the world of the police. Young (1991) believes that it is crucial to do participant observation in police research in order to explore the 'unspoken agenda' that determines many aspects of police practice. More importantly for the purposes of this study, it allows for an understanding of police culture which is crucial to any understanding of the police. In turn this allows the researcher to explore the ways in which culture (deep-seated assumptions and beliefs²⁹) is self-sustaining

29. The term 'culture' is a highly contested one and is often not well defined. The debates surrounding the use of this term, particularly with regard to police occupational culture, is discussed in Chapter 3. Reiner provides a widely accepted definition of police culture. In his view, police culture refers the values, norms, perspectives and craft rules that inform the conduct of the police (1992:109). I have chosen to adopt the more precise definition of culture provided by organisational anthropologist Edgar Schein. He argues that there are three levels of culture, namely artifacts, values and basic assumptions. However, he insists that 'the term culture should be reserved for the deeper level of basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by all members of an organisation' (1985:6). These basic assumptions, according to Schein, help a group of organisational members to cope with adapting to the environment and with integrating within the organisation. For an in-depth discussion of Schein's conceptualisation of culture with regard to police organisations, see Chan (1997).

even in the face of calls for change - the heart of this study³⁰.

Maureen Cain (1973) identifies another important, but rather different advantage of the use of participant observation. In her research work with the police she found that participant observation became a route to the possibility of doing any kind of research in the police. Through the process of participant observation, she was able to develop rapport with the police as the police became more familiar and comfortable with her in their environment. As a result of her participatory engagement, the police were more willing to participate in interviews and Cain was able to better understand the meaning behind what was spoken about in the interviews. Observation also provided her with a knowledge of the appropriate questions to ask, what direction the research should take, who the key role players were, and so on. Similarly, Ericson states that openness with the police was only achieved after 'endless hours had been spent in the privacy of the patrol car with no shift activity' (1982:50).

Participant observation was undoubtedly the most valuable form of engagement and investigation in this study. Without participating in the everyday activities, discussions, and events of the units, I would never have understood either the informal or formal interactions that took place. I would only have developed superficial relations with the police that would have rendered the interviews bald and possibly invalid. Instead, through my observation and participation I was able to enter the life-space of the unit, and develop substantive relationships with POP members of all ranks.

I cannot begin to say how many hours I have spent in the unit doing participant observation. The research process continued over three years, set in motion when I was asked to do an evaluation of the training programme of Durban POP. I began by observing classes and training sessions at the police-college where I would observe and take notes about the content of the teaching, and the interactions between 'students', and between the 'students' and the trainers. I joined platoons that were studying at the college when they were called into the field. There were a number of activities I observed these platoons carrying out during these times - managing crowds of students protesting outside the Department of Education offices; cordoning off a police station where black police were protesting the appointment of an Indian police officer; and even policing a group of policemen and women who had downed tools because of the slow pace of affirmative action processes in the SAPS. During these events, I observed the interaction between the unit and the communities they were policing. I also observed the relationships between those in command and rank-and-file members. I looked to see what procedures were being followed and to what extent members were applying what they learned in training when 'in the field'.

30. Those who are concerned with the need for 'scientific' and 'objective' research may argue that a deep commitment to participant observation may result in an over-identification and loss of objectivity. However, Greenhill (1981) has argued that concern with the principles of scientific method may result in a failure to appreciate the true significance of what is being studied.

While doing research at the college, I was invited to passing-out parades, to simulation exercises, and to social events that took place outside of working hours. During these times, I was able to observe and record the informal relationships that existed, for example, how the members from different race and religious groups related to each other, how they spoke about and represented the unit informally, and their preferred types of leisure. In the beginning I felt like someone who had to be minded, but after a while I became almost invisible to trainers at the college as I became more and more familiar to them.³¹ There were, however, some trainers at the college who felt self-conscious about being observed, and as a result I usually tended not to intrude on their classes.

My participant observation deepened as I steered away from a focus on the college to a concern with the unit more broadly. I established an arrangement with the Head of Public Relations, Captain Dada, with regard to my participation in daily operations.³² I would call Captain Dada in the morning and check what operations were taking place and whether arrangements could be made for me to join the unit in whatever activity they were engaged in. Captain Dada would also call me if he thought an operation was taking place that he thought would be of interest to me, and the officer in command felt comfortable with my 'going along'. I would usually arrive at the base before the platoon/section³³ was briefed by the commanding officer. After the briefing I would usually travel in one of the police vehicles to the scene of the event. I tried to be as unobtrusive as possible; for the most part, I played the role of observer-as-participant.

After any given operation, I would attend the debriefing (if any took place). This would also give me the chance to chat informally to commanders and rank-and-file members as to how they had felt about the operation, if there was anything that they felt could have been done differently, and so on. At times officers would ask me to comment on what I had thought of the operation and if there were any problems in their conduct that I had noted. In the beginning I felt uncomfortable about being asked these evaluative questions, but soon came to realise that these officers did not feel threatened by my observations and felt that I had useful insights.

From time to time I would be asked to be more of a participant than an observer and assist with some of the processes taking place. For example, on one occasion when I joined the unit on a raid of a high school (to look for weapons and drugs), I was asked to check which classrooms had not been searched, and alert the

31. Maykut and Morehouse (1994) believe that the researcher who is a participant observer should become more and more unobtrusive and invisible. When this happens, they state, the researcher calls less and less attention to them through participating in the ongoing activities of the setting.

32. I would not have been able to conduct this participatory research without the support and involvement of Captain Dada and those who worked with him, since they had some authority over operational commanders. They had also been given the go-ahead by the unit commander to assure access to everyday operations. According to Greenhill 'the close involvement of a senior officer in any research project [is] vital in achieving credibility and co-operation from those whose work is under investigation or who are in any way subjected to actual or potential inconvenience by the research' (1981:105).

33. The structure of the Durban POP unit is explained in the Chapter 5 which provides an overview of the unit in the year 2001.

unit to these. It was at times like this that I was seen as a plain-clothes member of the police. I would be asked by members of the public (like the teachers) or police from other specialised unit, what my rank was or which unit I was working with.

There were times when my role as participant (rather than observer) became compromising to myself and potentially to the unit as well. In May 2000, the administration of the University of Durban Westville requested Durban POP to come onto campus as students were on boycott and there had been minor incidences of violence reported. Student-administrative tensions were high and the administration was concerned that there would be an outbreak of conflict on the campus. Durban POP was called upon to monitor the situation and be on call to manage crowds should they materialise and if necessary make arrests. A series of meetings were convened between the administration and the police to decide on the best approach of dealing with the problem. The commanders in charge of the operation invited me to attend these meetings. When I expressed my hesitation given that I was not a member of the unit and therefore should not be party to the discussions, the commander in charge told me that he would appreciate my being present and that he did not think it would be a problem. Once in the meeting, he introduced me as an undercover agent for the unit. I was completely shocked, since this had not been agreed upon or discussed. Thereafter, the university administration kept calling on me for advice and information. I was even asked to attend a graduation ceremony as an undercover agent in case a public order problem emerged at the meeting. I spoke to the commander in charge and informed him of the problematic nature of my introduction. Thereafter I had to avoid all contact with the university administration.

There were times when I did not feel very safe despite the protective manner of most of the police toward me. One example of this was when I went with the unit to one of the hostels³⁴ where there had been an attack on members from the unit the previous night. I was well aware that many of the hostel inmates were heavily armed, and that there was a constant underlying tension between groups of hostel dwellers that supported particular political parties. The conflict between Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and African National Congress (ANC)³⁵ supporters has been very intense within the hostels for many years. I knew that the police (whom I was clearly associated with at the time) could easily be ambushed and attacked again. There was a very real feeling of antagonism between the police and the hostel dwellers and being in the hostel was precarious.

During one of my participatory encounters, I felt so afraid that I questioned my wisdom (and sanity) in engaging so deeply with the unit. The following excerpt from my research diary describes this event. I had joined one of the platoons on an all-night shift in one of Durban's most volatile and crime infested townships, KwaMashu:

34. The hostels and the unit's duties in these hostels is described in Chapter 5.

35. This conflict is dealt with in some detail in Chapter 4 which examines the history of this unit.

16/05/2000

The guys from the RDP Platoon arrived at my house at 6pm to pick me up for the night shift. There were two white Inspectors and one white Sergeant in the vehicle... They were armed with rifles, machine guns and side-arms and I knew I was in for a hectic night ahead. One of the Inspectors informed me that I would see many things in the course of the shift that would disturb me and that I would probably think that their conduct was 'out of order'. I was told that what I saw and heard should not 'leave the vehicle'; I was not to speak to anyone at the Unit about my observations, or the press. I was also told to get rid of any cameras or tape recorders if I had them. I said that I did not have either of these.

A second Inspector then explained to me what they were doing in Kwamashu township: The platoon had been in the township for the past seven months, and hoped to intervene in any way possible to fight the high levels of crime in the area. I started to worry a bit about my acumen in joining these guys on a night mission. I knew this particular platoon had a reputation of being both ruthless and reckless... The driver was driving at about 200km/hr. I felt completely unsafe. As we entered the township we were confronted by a sea of lights coming from the matchbox houses in amongst the darkness that characterise the African townships where there are almost no streetlights. Very few people were on the streets; most people were in their tiny houses or shacks. The township reeked of poverty – there were no proper roads, and there was a heavy smell from the lack of ablution facilities in the informal settlement areas. I was told that KwaMashu was a very unsafe area - shootings take place every night and often the police are the target... They did not seem in the least bit phased by this. On the contrary, they were excited and ready and waiting for action - they feared nothing.

We drove into an empty enclosed room (garage) to wait there for the rest of the platoon. The members got out of the car and explained to me how the night ahead was likely to pan out. **Inspector Botha:** Monique, I have to be honest with you, white women are a target in this area.

Monique: What do you mean?

Inspector Botha: They will see you and think you are a police person. They know that it is easy to overcome a female and steal her weapon. You are also a rape candidate.

I felt my heart beating very fast. I honestly wanted to go home at that moment but knew that I could not turn back. I had a 12-hour shift ahead of me.

Monique: What information would you like to give me to protect myself?

Inspector Botha: Firstly, I want you to put on this bullet-proof vest. It will be uncomfortable. It wasn't made for breasts.

Monique: How effective are these bullet-proof jackets? Obviously they don't protect your head which could be shot at.

Inspector Botha: To be honest Monique, they are a bit useless. A bullet can penetrate at close distance. Most police who have been killed in the area have been wearing bullet-proof vests. But, it is all we have for your protection. I also want to show you how to use an Uzi machine gun just in case you need it. If someone tries to shoot you, you just shoot back. It is a very easy weapon to use.

I was then shown how to use the Uzi. I became more fearful as the minutes went past. I had no desire to use a gun, and knew that I would be petrified to shoot anyone even if I was under attack. I told them this.

Inspector Botha: Well, you wanted to see what it is like out here. It is no joke in the field. We will try to protect you as best we can. Just stay close to me at all times. If there is a shootout, go and hide behind a bush or behind a shack. The informer will be with us. Just go with him. He will know where it is safe.

The rest of the platoon arrived and I was introduced to all the members. I sort of hoped that something would happen and we would have to go back home. But, there was no way these guys were going to let go of a night of action. I took a deep breath, had a cigarette, and braced myself for the night ahead...We got back into the vehicle and 'went looking for action'.... The police radio system was reporting that there was a stolen vehicle in the area that had been used for several hijackings. The driver stepped up the speed, and said 'let's go get them'. We drove through the darkness of the townships with the lights of the vehicle turned off (to surprise criminals, I was told). Both police in the front of the vehicle had their pistols pointed outside open windows...Another report came through on the radio. There was a kangaroo court in process in one of the informal settlement areas. We sped on through a maze of houses and back alleys. There are no street names in these areas, yet these cops knew exactly where we were going. They pulled up in a dark alleyway, and jumped out of the vehicle. The inspector told me to get out of the car and come with them. They rushed ahead and I sort of ran after them feeling completely unprotected. The next message arrived. There had been an armed robbery at a house nearby and we sped off again on our next mission... I was dying to use the toilet. I asked one of the women from the house where the robbery had taken place if I could use her bathroom. She took me to an outhouse at the back of the house. It was freezing and the door did not close properly. I had no option, so I used the toilet... When I came out of the toilet, I noticed that the police were very impressed that I went to the toilet at the back of the house. Through my 'tenacity', I had scored points with them. They could see that I had some familiarity with township life and that I could adapt fairly easily to new environments...It was by now 11pm. They decided to go down to a petrol station to get some coffee and something to eat. The following conversation took place on the way:

Sergeant Marais: It is fucking quiet out here tonight. Monique, it looks like you have jinxed us. There is nothing exciting taking place.

Monique: What do you hope to take place?

Sergeant Marais: A bit of shooting at least. That is what we live for. Tonight has just been child's play while we are waiting for more action.

While patrolling the road, the police spotted four guys on the pavement. They pulled the van to a stop and jumped out. I followed. They searched the four guys and found nine Mandrax pills. They hit the four young men and asked them where they had got the pills. They did not say. They got hit again. They pointed to the house behind which was in complete darkness. The police looked at the house and debated for a few seconds whether to penetrate or not. They decided to go ahead. They broke the fence and crawled through the hole. I was told to follow... A man and his girlfriend were found sleeping in the back of the house...They started to question the woman. They asked her about the drugs. She said she knew nothing. They turned to me and shouted:

Inspector Botha: Monique, search this women and see that she does not have anything between her legs.

What could I do? I took the woman to a separate room and searched her half-heartedly. I couldn't bear to humiliate her by searching between the legs. I told her it was fine and encouraged her to go back outside...We drove into an unlit area where an informer had arranged to meet us. I said a silent prayer to myself that the informer would be gone and we would not have to go into the area. No such luck. There he was hiding behind a wall. He got into the car and we then went to meet the other members of the platoon who had followed us in their cars. The informer said that he knew of two houses where there were guns. He would take us to them. He directed the police and we landed up on a dirt road in the middle of an informal settlement. We took some more winding roads and were surrounded by darkness and hundreds of little houses and shacks. It was deadly quiet. The vehicle lights were off and guns were pointed out of the windows. I swallowed hard to try to get rid of the fear I was feeling. I knew that I could not remain alone in the vehicle because this was even more

dangerous than going with the guys into the field. The informer told us to stop the car. We were in the middle of nowhere. He pointed to a house in the distance. There was no road, but rather a narrow footpath with shrubs on either side. I forced myself to get out of the car and to remain calm. I was given a two-way radio to hold and a flashlight. We crept through the dark along the path. We had to step over a stream of water. Two gunshots went off and we all crouched. I thought to myself, 'If I die of a gun wound it will be over quickly'. After a few minutes the police told us to get up and we continued walking. We got to the identified house. We were told to stay low... I thought I would die of fright as we walked through this unknown territory in the dark. We did not know if anybody was standing by the vehicles. Four police went ahead and checked the environment. We jumped in the car and drove off to the next house which the informer had identified... Another few winding roads in the darkness and we stopped once again. Back out of the vehicle and on our haunches we walked in down another footpath. This time there was not as much shrubbery and we were highly visible should anyone want to fire at us. I clung to the torch and to the radio... Eventually we crept back along the path and back in to the vehicles. We found out that one of the police from the other vehicle had been shot in his hand and had been taken to a nearby hospital. The police in my vehicle were amused.

Inspector Botha: Now he can join the team. We have all been shot now.

Sergeant Marais: Yes, but he was only shot in his hand and that doesn't count. It is minor. He just won't be able to pick his nose now.

They all burst out laughing. It was now about 3am and we still had three hours to go.

I did not back out of such occurrences. I realised that they were an important component of the work and experience of members in the unit, and that such experiences and contexts impacted deeply on the way they viewed their work given the dangers they confront daily. However, there were times when I found this participation extremely draining, and would have preferred staying in my office writing or talking to colleagues. At such times I had to really motivate myself to take a drive to the unit and abandon other activities for the rest of the day. As a participant observer, I knew that commitment and staying power were key to achieving my research goals. Once I was at the base and participating or observing, I was excited by the experience.

There were a number of things that worried me about the night out in KwaMashu (recorded above) aside from the danger I encountered. First, I felt morally compromised by knowing that many of the responses of the platoon were brutal and completely disregarding of the human rights framework that was supposed to guide police behaviour. Second, the very thought of holding a machine gun, even though I could not imagine using it, raised many issues about research ethics. I was not sure how I would respond if I really were in a situation where my life was threatened. As a researcher, I was unclear what the boundaries of engagement were given the possible consequences of placing myself in such a dangerous environment.

Like most researchers, I would generally choose to avoid engaging in dangerous fields (Lee, 1995). However, this was not always possible, particularly since I had chosen to study a paramilitary police unit whose responsibility was to create or impose 'order' in situations defined as 'disorderly'. Secondly, like Rodgers (2001), I believe that participant observers cannot always dissociate from acts of violence, even when such acts are considered unjustifiable and even iniquitous. The very members who engaged in acts of violence (not

an unusual occurrence in a police organisation) were the same people who were struggling with processes of personal and organisational transformation and who had allowed me to participate in the daily (sometimes exceptional) activities of the unit. Being in the field observing (and indirectly participating in) acts of violence provided me with the opportunity to understand an important facet of the organisational culture of the Durban Public Order Police which could not be adequately captured through the more indirect tools of interviewing or survey questionnaires.³⁶

Participant observation, even in exciting contexts like paramilitary police units, is not always exhilarating or glamorous. To maintain existing relationships and develop new ones, I had to spend a lot of time just 'hanging around' the unit. This meant endless hours in the offices of police officers talking about anything from how the unit was functioning, to family crises, to politics, to new personal business ventures. These informal interactions were crucial not only to building trust and familiarity, but to coming to grips with the everyday and more mundane thought processes of the police, as well as their everyday interactions with one another. It also involved playing a number of different roles simultaneously – researcher, friend, advisor, expert, and listener. I had to be wary of saying anything that could be viewed as partisan or that could in any way compromise the status or security of members of the unit or the unit itself.³⁷ It was also extremely important to attend events that took place outside of the working hours of the unit. As mentioned previously, I would attend parades and social gatherings that took place on weekends or in the evenings.

It was also through the more 'protected' activity of attending and participating in formalised meetings and workshops that I became a participant-as-observer. Here I engaged, almost as an equal, with more high-ranking police management about the present nature of the unit, its future plans and objectives, and the mechanisms for achieving these objectives. Attendance of these forums was crucial to the research endeavour. First, it provided me with a space to share my insights and observations with high-ranking officers with the intention that these would benefit the unit. This allowed me to feel that the relationship I established was one of mutual benefit rather than of my 'sucking information'. Second, such participation allowed me to keep abreast of the formal processes taking place in the unit more broadly with regards to policy initiatives, future planning and general evaluation. This provided me with a yardstick to measure how far the unit had come in its change process, and how far there still was to go.

36. I did not, thankfully, have to personally engage in acts of violence. However, there are ethnographers (few as they may be) who have had to do so. Rodgers joined a pandilla (criminal youth gang) and 'actively and directly participated in a number of violent and illegal activities such as gang wars, thefts, fights, beatings and conflicts with the police' (Rodgers, 2001:12). Rodgers believed that this engagement was necessary for him to consolidate his relationship with gang members in Nicaragua and to show that he identified with the barrio and was willing to 'expose [himself] to danger in order to defend it' (2001: 11).

37. Holdaway (1983) writes that in doing participant observation, there must be an obligation not to cause undue harm. Aside from the obvious reasons of not wanting to hurt those who have extended trust and hospitality, Holdaway believes the researcher should always prevent the creation of a belief that sociologists cannot be trusted.

As important as observing and participating was the process of writing a diary or taking field notes. The field researcher's time in any setting is transient, and it is therefore crucial that experiences are preserved in field notes. 'Field notes are accounts describing experiences and observations the researcher has made while participating in an intense and involved manner' (Emerson et al, 1995:5). After each interaction with the police (whether in operations, hanging around, conducting surveys or interviews, or attending meetings), I would head for a computer to record what I had seen, heard, perceived, or remembered. I would record in some detail the activities that took place and the circumstances of those activities. I would record any interactions that the police had either with myself, or other members, or the public. I recorded how members said things and what they expressed. I specifically recorded anything that indicated the meaning the police gave to an event or situation. Finally, I recorded my own feelings and responses to what I observed and my interactions with police members.

Taking field notes, or writing a diary, was not only important in terms of recording what had happened, how and when. It also provided me with an opportunity to reflect on what I had observed, and to link these observations to previous observations and to some of the more theoretical concerns that I had.³⁸ As a result, in my notes I would also write down the implications of what I had observed for the purposes of the study.³⁹

I generally did not write field notes while in the field. This, I believed, would have been perceived as intrusive, and would have broken the more informal nature of many of the interactions. It would also have made some of the police feel like they were being evaluated and monitored. Instead I preferred to be more a part of the setting and less apart from it. There were a few occasions where I took notes when I did not feel that the police were noticing and when I felt desperate to record something that was happening. For example, I took notes while waiting for members to complete the survey questionnaire because they were too busy to notice me doing this. I also took field notes when participating in meetings or workshops since in such circumstances it looked as if I was merely taking notes of the proceedings. For the most part, I would go to my office to write field notes after each significant interaction.⁴⁰ The more formal interviews were tape-recorded, but all other events and conversations were recorded as reconstructions after the fact. While in the field I would write down key words and statements to remind myself of exactly what was said and how it was said and I would make mental notes of what had to be recorded. The field notes are, I believe, literal accounts of what was done and said, though of course they are restricted by the imperfections of memory.

38. 'Writing field-note descriptions then is not so much a matter of passively copying down "facts" of "what happened". Rather, such writing involves active processes of interpretation and sense-making: noting and writing down some things as "significant"; noting but ignoring others as "not significant"; and even missing other possibly significant things altogether' (Emerson et al, 1995,8).

39. In some ways, these 'more reflective' notes could be conceived of as having an evaluative component. Once again, this would be out of character with ethnographic field notes where there is a preference for non-evaluation during this activity.

40. It is not possible for an ethnographer to record everything that is observed. Taking field notes will always be a selective process informed by the researcher's own interpretations, objectives, and the questions that frame the study.

Probing and checking information - conducting interviews

While participant observation allows for direct and invaluable contact between the researcher and those being studied, almost invariably, observation alone will be insufficient to understand what is being researched. Other techniques such as interviews (and photographs and documents) may be used alongside observation to 'cross check the hypotheses generated by observation and perhaps to provide a better understanding of the context' (Walker, 1985:6). I decided to make use of in-depth (usually unstructured) interviews with the police in order to find out how they as individuals felt about their experiences in the unit. I wanted to discover individual feelings and perceptions of their jobs and their responses to the transformation process. I also wanted to further probe some of my observations as well as generalities that came out of the survey. Interviews were also useful to probe and query stereotypes that prevailed in the unit with regard to race and gender as well as the nature of crowds. Through the interview process, I was able to get individual accounts of the relationships that existed between rank-and-file members and between rank-and-file members and police management. The interviews also allowed me to 'tap into' those members who did not feel comfortable to discuss issues with me more publicly, i.e. during informal public exchange. Through these in-depth interviews I was able to conduct conversations with individual police where they could relate in their own terms their experiences and attitudes.

In total I interviewed 50 members of the unit in Durban and at POP Head Office. I interviewed members from all race groups and from all ranks within the unit. I also made a conscious effort to interview as many women police officers in the unit to understand why they are so under-represented and the difficulties and challenges they faced in joining and participating in the unit.⁴¹ I felt that while the research focused on members from Durban POP, it was crucial to interview some of the police at the Head Office. I considered them to be key informants who could guide my understanding as to the development of new policy, the nature and objectives of the new training programme, and the overall goals of the unit with regard to the transformation process. There were also key informants who had been involved in public order policing for many years and were able to inform me of the history of the unit and its predecessor organisations, and the extent to which change had taken place.⁴² These key informants also provided me with important documentation and informed me of events that were taking place in the unit.

I began the interview process at the training college where I conversed with members who were in training as

41. The issue of gender representation in the unit is dealt with in Chapter 9.

42. Much of the documentation about the history of the unit had been destroyed early on in the country's negotiation process. Police were anxious that documentation of their historic activities would be used against them in the new democratic order. Also, given the lack of press freedom during the apartheid period, public information on the police was very scarce. It was therefore important to probe the memories of police who had been involved in the policing of public order over a long period. This is a controversial way to 'rebuild history'. There are often discrepancies and inconsistencies in how events are relayed. As Passerini warns, 'oral sources are to be considered, not as factual narratives, but as forms of culture and testimonies of the changes of these form over time' (1980:4). Memories are selective. All tellers have their own point of view and perspectives on what actually happened (Schrager, 1983).

well as the trainers. Most of these early interviews were formally structured and set questions were asked.⁴³ As I became more familiar with the themes that needed to be investigated and more confident in the field, I made use of unstructured interviews. The unstructured interviews allowed for a more relaxed approach and greater flexibility to the interview process. The length of the interview ranged from one to four hours. Some members were interviewed more than once if clarification was needed or if I felt that any particular person would hold interesting and insightful views on any particular topic.⁴⁴

Not all members felt comfortable with the interview process. Some members of lower rank were anxious that what they said would be fed back to unit management. I had to assure them that this would not be the case and that the interviews were anonymous and confidential. Usually, after a few minutes in the interview, members began to feel more comfortable. But, there were a few who only gave the answers that they thought would be acceptable to me or to management. There were those members who felt that the interviews were taking them away from important work that they could be doing in the field, or from training. With these members I tried to make the interview as short as possible. There were also those members who perceived the 'formal' interview as a mechanism for getting their grievances heard and for 'lodging complaints' usually against the unit commander or other commanders in the unit. In these instances I had to be very careful not to commit myself to any comments or insights that would have added fuel to what the members already felt or believed.

I selected respondents in a number of ways. I identified those I considered as key informants or whose input I felt was crucial and directly asked to interview them; they were for the most part more high-ranking police in the unit. With regard to rank-and-file members, I would inform the head of Public Relations or Labour Relations about the profile of the members I wanted to talk to (race, gender, rank, function), and they would organise individuals with these characteristics to be interviewed. When conducting the survey, I asked those members who would be willing to do an individual interview with me to write down their names and contact details. I would then contact them at a later date and organise an interview. Interviews took place in a number of places – my car, armoured vehicles, boardrooms, officer's offices, and even at a pub near the POP Durban base. I recorded the interviews with a tape recorder, which was viewed as unproblematic by most members. All interviews took place in English and this did not seem to be a problem for any of the members interviewed.

43. Burgess argues that structured interviews are an inappropriate means of doing qualitative research since they place the interviewer in an unnatural and controlling position. He suggests that interviews should be perceived as 'a conversation with a purpose' (Burgess, 1984:102).

44. Maykut and Morehouse describe the informal interview as follows: 'With one's focus of inquiry clearly in mind, the researcher tactfully asks and actively listens in order to understand what is important to know about the setting and the experiences of people in that setting. This purposeful conversation is not scripted ahead of time. Rather, the researcher asks questions pertinent to the study as opportunities arise, then listens closely to people's responses for clues as to what to ask next, or whether it is important to probe for additional information' (1994:82).

Aside from the individual intensive interviews, one focus group was held with police at POP Head office who worked in the department that deals with incident reporting. They were responsible for collating reports, statistics and graphs about the types of incidents the unit responds to, as well as whether the incidents take place with or without injury to persons or damage to property.⁴⁵ Such records allow one not only to see what types of incidents have been taking place since 1994 (before which proper incident reporting was not done) and what behavioural changes have taken place with regard to crowds and the police. From this focus group I was able to gather important information on the changing nature of crowd events and the policing of these.

Focus group interviews aim to bring several perspectives into contact at one time. Group interviews are useful for helping the researcher to explore a topic that is new or for which little information is available. Group interviews also provide a forum for participants to become familiar with the researcher before agreeing to do individual interviews. It is a chance to check out the researcher (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994). The interviews, conversations, focus groups and observations were an experiential mosaic which provided varied and sometimes contradictory information. The survey conducted provided me with shared perceptions and attitudes held by members of the unit.

Writing up and sharing information – democratising research

If, as Greenhill suggests, proper access and 'fair research' on the police requires being able to give something back (especially knowledge) then it would seem that participatory research is an important route to follow. Holdaway (1983) insists that the use of proper feedback mechanisms and involving the police in commenting on and evaluating his research work was extremely important and greatly increased the validity of his research. Since I share the perspectives of both Greenhill and Holdaway, an important component of the research was sharing the findings of the research with the police at regular intervals, and allowing them to comment on the research findings and provide their own understandings, interpretations and critique. Most often, I would give reports and papers I had written to police officers with whom I was in regular contact and had amicable relations. They would read what I had written and we would then make a time to discuss my findings and their comments. In so doing, I was able to clarify aspects of my research and these interactions provided another route to understanding the point of view of the police themselves. This act of member validation also assisted me in establishing mutual and candid relations between the police and myself; this, I believe, increased the legitimacy and validity of the research.

In the past, the police in South Africa were often excluded from such processes (especially by more left-wing researchers and academics); this rendered them powerless with regard to knowledge production on the

45. Incidents where there is damage to property or injury to persons recorded are referred to as Crowd Management Unrest. Incidents where there are no reports of damage or injury are referred to as Crowd Management Peaceful. The unit no longer distinguishes between illegal and legal crowd events.

police.⁴⁶ As a result, I considered the police a 'disempowered' community, particularly the rank-and- file, and felt that democratising the research should be an important part of the research process. Muller and Cloete (1987) argue that groups outside the academic community have been excluded from the important process of the generation and validation of research. As a result they advocate a process whereby academics engage with the knowledge of local communities and by doing so, empower these communities. I tried to do this with the police whom I considered as a 'community' in their own right.

While for the most part I shared research findings and received feedback from higher ranking police officials, I also made my writings and reports available to rank and file members at the unit by leaving copies with police administrators. I posted papers I had written to some of the police I interviewed when they requested to read my work. Most police appreciated my inclusion of them in the research process, and I would spend hours discussing their point of view once they had read my work. We did not always agree on the 'facts of the matter' or interpretations and while their points of view were always taken into consideration, I asserted my academic 'right' to have differing interpretations and points of view.

The police appreciated that my findings and interpretations differed from their own and that as an academic researcher I had to situate the texts within a socio-political context, and make use of concepts and theories as a tool for understanding. While the texts and testimonies recorded provided the starting point of the research, they had to be read 'with a critical eye and with enough knowledge of the context to make it possible to shift the gold of true evidence from the bulk of ideology, poor memory, and wilful misleading that occurs' (Bozzoli, 1991:489).

Despite my attempt to 'democratise' my research, there were a few occasions where police expressed uneasiness toward my work. One incident comes to mind. In late 1999, a meeting was held between a team of international advisors, members of POP from all units in KwaZulu Natal and the Head office and I was invited to participate in the meeting. I was asked to evaluate a new programme that was being established in the unit. The suggestion in fact came from the National Head of Training. One of the Directors half jokingly commented: 'Don't you think Monique has criticised us enough?' The National Commissioner Cronje responded: 'Yes, but we have learned a lot from her research. We need outsiders like her to show us the things we don't see. I think it is a good idea for her to be involved in this project.'

This research can also be seen more broadly as being directed toward organisational development and policy making. Cunningham (1993) states that those who research organisation should aim to help them improve and change – research on organisations is thus not an end in itself. Some, like Cunningham, refer to such research endeavours as 'action research' - a term referring to a spectrum of activities that focus on research,

46. From the late 1970s, there was a strong tradition on the part of left researchers in South Africa of making research accessible and popular, but this was not extended to those who were associated with the apartheid state.

planning, theorising, learning and development. 'It describes a continuous process of research and learning in the researchers long-term relationship with the problem' (Cunningham, 1993:4). Although I would hesitate to term my own research as action research, my research has a longer-term goal of understanding the problems of change and problems that are relevant in real settings. It requires the support and co-operation of those studied which in turn provides greater access to a wider variety of relevant data.

Putting yourself on the line – publicising the research

Perhaps the greatest difficulty in researching the police is making one's findings public. As Holdaway (1983) has stated, this is often the most compromising aspect of research work in the police. Having developed relationships with police members in a difficult environment, the researcher does not want to break levels of trust by exposing negative or detrimental things about the police organisation. Similarly, Young (1991) has stated that publishing research on the police has moral and political implications. Loyalties to the police may emerge and writing anything at all can be extremely difficult. Young observes that 'the insider finds it hard to bite that hand that feeds' (1991:10). It is especially difficult when research comes to be seen as espionage by the police.

There is no doubt that a difficult path has to be negotiated when publishing or reporting research findings on the police. Researchers of the police have to make use of meaningful and possibly compromising information, while at the same time they have to be conscious not to break confidences or bring any harm or disrepute to the individual police and the organisation itself. As a result there are observations that were made and conversations that were recorded that do not form part of writing up of the research. To break such confidences and to be unconcerned with the consequences of publicising the research would have destructive consequences of destroying established relationships and de-legitimising the research in the eyes of the police. However, such cautions are limited through the use of a participatory research approach and an evident commitment on the part of the researcher to the ongoing development of the police organisation.

Police ethnographies that involve spending extensive time with the police in a variety of circumstances can give rise to a number of ethical dilemmas on the part of the researcher. This is particularly the case when researchers, such as myself, observe members of the police engaging in acts which can be defined as excessively forceful, abusive of human rights, or even illegal (Westmarland, 2001). Such information (where participants commit serious transgressions) is referred to by Thomas and Marquart as 'dirty information' (1987:81). Deciding whether or not to 'blow the whistle' on the police is a difficult choice to make. As Westmarland has noted, 'ethnographers potentially tread a thin line between going along with police behaviour – colluding through inaction when unnecessary force is used – and "blowing the whistle"' (2001:527). Revealing 'dirty information' can have a number of serious repercussions which include professional discreditation, social stigma, lawsuits, criminal charges and even the death of informants (Thomas and

Marquart, 1987:81). Ethical codes do not always provide the answers to morally compromising situations (Punch, 1986).

Like Reiner (2000) and Van Maanen (1978), I felt that my primary concerns were to safeguard access to the police organisation and to protect the confidentiality of the individual police officers who provided me with crucial information, either through conversations with them or through observing their everyday interactions. At no point, therefore, did I report to authorities in the police about the 'wayward' behaviour of individual police officers. While some of my observations of such behaviour are documented in this dissertation, the aim in doing so was to reflect on the motivations of police officers and the contexts in which this troubling behaviour occurred and not to bring the organisation or its members into disrepute.

In publicising this research, I have tried to assure the confidentiality and anonymity of all members of Durban POP as well as other respondents. All names used are fictional and some dates have been changed in reporting observations that are controversial and compromising.

Conclusion

Researching organisational change in the Durban Public Order Police unit demanded a variety of research methods. While both quantitative and qualitative methods were used, neither of these would have been profitable had I not immersed myself in the organisation from the outset.

Police organisations are generally closed organisations, and this is especially the case with regard to paramilitary units in a country that has a recent history of authoritarian governance. As a result, gaining access to the unit required a constant process of negotiation within and between the ranking system. There were, however, three factors in my favour in assuring access. First, I had an established working relationship with the training department of the unit prior to beginning this research. Second, as a woman researcher I was viewed as 'safe' and intrepid, both valued qualities within police occupational culture. Third, I had resources (information and academic skills) that the police could tap into if they so wished. These three advantageous attributes made my entry into the unit less difficult than would be expected.

The Durban Public Order Police unit became very familiar to me over a period of three years. I would spend many hours every week simply hanging around the unit's base talking to a variety of members and observing their interactions with one another. I observed training sessions and sat in on a variety of meetings and forums that took place in the unit. I also joined the unit when they were out 'in the field' both when engaged in crowd management work and in crime prevention operations. There were times when this involvement felt extremely compromising, particularly when I was required to become more of a participant than an observer. There were numerous examples of this such as when I was asked to help drug searches on suspects or expected to

leopard-crawl on the ground carrying torches and radios during weapon raids in the townships. Once 'in the field' it was often difficult to place limits on degrees of participation as stated above.

Participant-observation was invaluable not simply as a tool for understanding the experiences, responses, interactions and interpretations of members of the unit (both as individuals and as a collective), it also allowed for the forging of familiar relationships which made interviewing and conducting surveys less difficult than it could have been. Many members of the unit would have resisted participating in long interviews or filling out survey questionnaires had they not seen me 'hanging around' the unit and participating in a variety of events. Furthermore, if they felt that I had no real understanding of how the unit operated, they may have been less forthcoming in the information that they shared. Strong resistance to the interview and survey processes would have greatly weakened the research endeavour. The interviews provided invaluable information about individual members' personal and work histories, their past and present experiences in the unit, their feelings about the transformation process in the unit, and the basic assumptions and stereotypes that constitute their world-view. The surveys, on the other hand, provided important framing information with regard to perceptions and attitudes about the work that members were engaged in and about the environment (organisational, social and political) in which this work was situated.

The nature of this research, however, is not unproblematic. Personal and political ethics were compromised when I became aware of disreputable and unlawful behaviour on the part of sections of the unit, but decided not to act upon this information. Second, the close relationships developed with many of the police officers during this study may raise concern for some about the 'objectivity' of this research endeavour. However, it is my belief that what some would call 'litigious allowance' was made that ultimately added to the validity and reliability of the research.

Immersing myself in the daily life of Durban POP allowed me to develop a deep understanding of the internal workings of the unit and of individual members' worldviews, assumptions, values and fears. These understandings had to be interpreted and systemised. This required a theoretical framework for understanding how police organisations operate and how they change. This framework is the substance of the chapter to follow.

CHAPTER 3

THEORISING POLICE ORGANISATIONS AND POLICE ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

...policing lacks many of the professional characteristics that are needed for creative adaptation to the shifting circumstances of modern life. Its organisational culture is inimical to the mobilisation of the best that is available in its personnel in terms of intelligence and commitment (Bayley, 1994:73).

The quotation above suggests that not only are police organisations somewhat peculiar, but also that they experience difficulties in adjusting to new circumstances and conditions. However, police organisations are not in essence dissimilar to any other organisation in society, and existing theories of organisational change are applicable to the police. All organisations, including the police, experience numerous changes in their life cycles. These changes are not always dramatic or fundamental but all organisations are continuously compelled to adapt to changing environments and to improve performance (Mangham, 1979). There are a number of environmental factors that motivate the need for organisational change:

The world in which organisations exist, and will be operating for the rest of this century, is continuously in change: change in relationships among nations, institutions, business partners, and organisations; change in the make-up of the haves and the have-nots; change in dominant values and norms governing society and our institutions; change in the character and culture of wealth producing organisations; change in how work is done; and change in priorities about how we spend our time and our lives (Beckhard and Harris, 1987:1).

Police organisations operate in this same environment. They are, in fact, perhaps more than other organisations, required to demonstrate adaptability to changed environments and an ability to respond to new demands. They are expected to constantly develop new ways of dealing with key social issues of crime and public disorder. As the most public face of the state, they are also under constant pressure to demonstrate a concern with best performance possible and reflect changes in government and forms of state.

In the past three decades, state police agencies as far apart as South Africa and North America have shifted toward a policing style that emphasises working partnerships with 'client' communities, problem solving rather than reactive policing, and increased accountability and transparency. Internally, police organisations are trying to introduce more participatory forms of management, less hierarchical organisational structures, and increased representivity of minority groupings (Reiner, 1992; Marks, 1997; Marenin, 1996; Mainwaring-White, 1983). These trends have been spurred on by three generalisable factors - global trends towards

privatisation¹, shifts toward democratic governance, and the realisation that traditional police strategies have been ineffective in the fight against crime (Bayley and Shearing, 1996).

Change within police organisations can come about either as a result of environmental or internal organisational dynamics. In Australia, change processes began in the 1980s following evidence and charges of corruption (Chan, 1996). In Canada, police transformation was viewed as urgent given the rapidly changing nature of Canadian society, particularly the growth of multi-culturalism to deal with growing diversity and consequently there was the need for a revised recruitment and training modules. In the Netherlands, substantial changes were introduced in 1994 in the police service after an investigation found that there was a severe lack of co-ordination and widespread inefficiency. And, in El Salvador, far-reaching changes were initiated as part of a political agreement during the process of democratisation; the existing police force was disbanded and a new and reconstructed police force was formed in 1992 (O'Rawe and Moore, 1997).

Despite the worldwide changes that are constantly taking place in police organisations, police organisational change is often viewed as extremely difficult, if not impossible, to effect. As we shall see below, the very nature of these organisations, both at the formal and informal level, is viewed as an obstacle to change. Rippy (1990), for example, writes that police officers are often resistant to change because they are familiar with an organisational form which stresses stability and strictly enforced, standardised ways of behaving. Frontline police officers, Rippy argues, perceive themselves as negatively affected by changes in rules, policies and regulations, and hence, amongst such police, there is a 'knee-jerk' resistance to change of any form. Police organisations engender a pragmatic style of behaviour that involves a preference for doing things the way they always have been done rather than to try out new ways that have not been tested or 'proven' to be effective.

Goldstein, focusing on the informal dimension of police organisations, contends that change efforts in police organisations are often not very successful because too little attention is paid to police culture that has the capacity to 'subvert reform' (cited in Mastrofsky et al, 1993:331). In fact, Goldstein argues, the biggest downfall with regard to attempts at police transformation is that 'the architects of change have failed to recognise the power of the police subculture, the effect it has on change, and the need, therefore, to deal with some of the factors that contribute to its strength' (1990:29). In particular, the conservatism of cop culture manifests itself in police preference to leave things as they are rather than engage in projects that will bring about a new social ordering of society.

The theorisation of police transformation is also extremely limited. Those scholars who do deal with this difficult

1. Privatisation of the public sector has been extensive since the 1970s and the privatisation of security has become a massive industry worldwide. Two forms of private policing have emerged - a private security industry that now outnumbers the public police in most developed countries, and the growth of voluntary community crime prevention initiatives. Police agencies now compete with one another for effectiveness in service delivery and private sector discourse is popular within public police organisations (Reiner, 1992).

subject have tended to limit their writings to suggestions that arise from generalised studies of police organisation and practice (Bayley, 1994; Brown, 1993; McBeth, 1993; Sykes, 1986). These contributions are often policy oriented and can take the form of suggestions aimed at practical interventions which the police can employ (Jones, Newburn and Smith, 1996).² Mastrofsky and Urchida have gone as far as to say that within the policing literature organisational theory is not well developed and that 'there is a hesitancy to generalise a priori about the general direction of change without empirical investigation' (1993:354).³

This chapter examines the nature of police organisations in an attempt to understand why there is a generalised belief that they are 'tough' to change and why police members are resistant to change. Thereafter, the current theoretical contributions to understanding police transformation are explored. In so doing, a revised approach for understanding police transformation is developed. There are three components to this approach. First, it is argued that change in police organisations may not be as difficult to achieve as is often claimed and expected. The very bureaucratic, rule-bound and hierarchical nature of police organisations that many view as an impediment to change, may in fact make change in these organisations easier than in other organisations. If police members are instructed to change, they must comply. The very conservatism and rigidity of police culture can be used to advance organisational change in the police. Second, change in police organisations is usually circumstantial, superficial and limited to the behavioural level that is far more pliable than the less easily transformed level of assumptions, dispositions and values. Third, key to developing a new occupational culture in the police is change in the organisation of work and in the social relations that exist within the workplace.

The nature of police organisations - built to resist change?

All organisations have both formal and informal dimensions and scepticism with regard to change within police organisations stems from an understanding of both these dimensions. Very few policing scholars consider the possibility that perhaps the very characteristics that bind and stabilise police organisations could be viewed as catalysts of change.

Police organisations are usually conceived of in Weberian terms - as typically rational bureaucratic entities that are stable and resistant to change (Albrow, 1970; Thompson and Hugh, 1990). They are said to operate on a strict militaristic ranking system and there is a strong emphasis on rule-bound behaviour enforced through a variety of disciplinary consequences (Bayley, 1994; Manning, 1977; Vollmer, Peper and Boolson, 1951). In

2. For example, Sykes (1986) has called for the use of increased automation in police work. McBeth (1993) has suggested a move away from old styles of management.

3. Reiner (1992) has, however, tried to outline the key strategies that have been used to transform police organisations into more effective and efficient organisations. He suggests that there have been five key approaches to increasing police effectiveness and efficiency. These include the 'reactionary solution' - simply increasing manpower and resources; the 'radical solution' - increasing systems of accountability and oversight; the 'reformist solution' - a resuscitation of the virtues of Peelian policing; the 'managerialist solution' - focusing on improving the calibre of police management; and most recently, the 'consumerist solution' - viewing the public as clients requiring the best possible service, borrowed from private sector ideology. Each of these solutions, Reiner finds, has their own set of limitations.

South Africa, for example, the police have been described as a 'quasi-military institution' (Rauch, 1994). This is typical of 'African police forces which tend to be centrally organised and directed' (Harlan and Austin, 1981:22). Such conceptualisations of police organisations in South Africa and internationally, are hardly surprising given that leading police authorities have always made use of classical organisational theories in constructing police agencies. They emphasise 'specialisation, limited spans of control, unity of command, elaborate policy and procedure, and position descriptions' (Kykendall and Roberg, 1982:242).

Perhaps one of the best ways to gain insight into the structuring of police organisations is via police leaders' accounts of what the organisation should look like and how it should function. August Vollmer, former Chief of Police in Berkeley and an early protagonist of police reform in the United States, for example, wrote of what he believed to be an ideally structured police force. A police organisation, in his view, 'implies authority, discipline, unit of command, and subordination of individual interests to the common good' (Vollmer, Peper and Boolsen, 1951:21). Furthermore, Vollmer stipulated, police organisations should have clear divisions of labour, and police work should be segmented.⁴

In reality, the classical Weberian model of organising the police has led to many negative (probably unintended) consequences. First, police organisations tend to cherish form rather than content and as a result prioritise doing things right rather than getting the right thing done. Second, they reward those who follow the rules rather than those who achieve results and assume risks (Bayley, 1994). This leads to reluctance on the part of police members to go beyond the call of duty and to be creative in their work. Third, police members have a tendency to be more concerned with stated process than with the actual goals of an intervention. This in turn leads to over-conformity of police members to rules and regulations, and to reactive rather than proactive responses to problems. Fourth, relationships within police organisations become depersonalised and lower-rank participants tend to see laws and regulations as imposed from above and as stripped of moral meanings (Van Heerden, 1982). Compliance on the part of low-ranking police officers may then result from purely instrumental incentives such as promotion, increased responsibility, or an opportunity to be in a command position.

Bayley (1994) makes the point that the very structuring of police organisations is a barrier to achieving police objectives. The way they are typically organised is, he argues, is counter-productive to their main task - crime prevention and combat. For example, there is no real evidence that the strict division of labour and specialisation leads to greater effectiveness. Second, police managers are in general committed to 'elaborate hierarchies of command, an insistence on compliance, and punitive supervision based on detailed rules' (Bayley, 1994:60). They also deplore making mistakes and being blamed for wrongdoing. These factors make

4. The need for segmentation and a high division of labour is based on an essentialist understanding of men who, Vollmer et al (1951) argue, differ in nature, capacity, training, skill and interest; improve their ability by specialisation; find difficulty in doing more than one type of work at a time; can never be in more than one place at a time (Vollmer, Peper and Boolsen, 1951).

it extremely difficult for lower-ranking police members to learn from their mistakes and even to take responsibility for their actions. Third, unlike other professionals like doctors, lawyers and teachers, discipline in the police is generally not linked to accomplishment. Instead, it is linked to punitive humiliation that the organisation inflicts on its members. This, together with the low status awarded to police work in general, means that officers often suffer from low morale and an instrumental approach to work, both of which do not bode well for organisational development and progress.

Each of these consequences of the 'Weberian' organisational modelling of police organisations limits change processes which require innovation, motivation and broad participation from organisational members. Maintaining strict adherence to laws and procedures and the stifling of innovation and creativity are generally viewed as hindering organisational change and have led scholars of the police to conclude that police organisations are inherently conservative. Bureaucratic police organisations, Van Heerden argues, demonstrate a commitment to 'the retention of proven ideas, methods and practices. Conservatism has a stabilising effect, but when it degenerates into inflexibility and fails to keep pace with changes in the external environment, it can have an adverse effect upon goal attainment...' (1982:114). Van Heerden (1982), Goldstein (1990), and Rippy (1990) have valid concerns with regard to the rigidity and rule-bound nature of police organisations and the difficulties that are likely to be encountered during change efforts, both at the collective and individual level.

This dissertation proposes that there is, however, another more optimistic way of viewing the relationship between the formal component of police organisations and the capacity to bring about change. The very fact that lower-ranking police officers are bound by rules, legislation, and lines of command means that behavioural change initiated or instructed from above is easy to achieve.⁵ It is unlikely that those of a lower rank would knowingly and visibly resist or ignore such instructions. While changed behaviour may be instrumental and based on extrinsic reward systems, commands and instructions could be an important starting point for police transformation.⁶ The typical organisational structure of police organisations lends itself to the initiation of change efforts from the top-down. The real issue to be investigated is how to ensure that behavioural change is enduring and meaningful for all police members of all ranks.

The view of police organisations as classically Weberian modern organisations is at any rate simplistic and has been revised. Police organisations, some argue, are 'mock' or 'symbolic' bureaucracies and that it is only at first sight that police organisations 'seem bureaucratic in a strict Weberian sense' (Johnston, 1988:52). While

5. This organisational form is very different from other, more 'civilianised' organisations that allow for a greater diversity of opinions and an open display of disagreement and dissent. Universities, for example, encourage freedom of thought and debate.

6 . This is not to argue that rule tightening should be used as a mechanism for change. Rather, it is an appeal to consider the very structure of police organisations itself as a tool for organisational transformation, not purely as an obstacle.

there is a strict division of labour, a clear hierarchy of ranks, and a distinct career structure, there is a deep occupational culture which intervenes and shapes what 'real police work' is. This point is generally applicable to critiques of Weberian accounts of organisations which tend to underplay, if not ignore, the role of human agency within organisations, and the less formal components which are central to all organisations (Turner, 1971; Albrow, 1970).

An issue which seems to be of specific relevance to police organisations is that there are high levels of police officer discretion within police organisations. This wide discretion is supported by the law (which provides much room for interpretation) as well as the day-to-day operations of policing (where there are often very low levels of supervision and where individual police officers are expected to make on-the-spot decisions) (Pike, 1985; Reiner, 1992; Bent, 1974).⁷ Such discretion deflects from the ideal type of modern organisations where there are strict lines of command and clear distinctions between superiors and subordinates.

High levels of discretion can also serve as an impediment to police reform imposed from above in line with a managerial control model of organisation which dominates police organisations.⁸ High levels of discretion and autonomy in police organisations have meant that supervision of rank-and-file police members is difficult to achieve. Close and directive supervision is, as will be argued below, key to ensuring that changed behaviour is maintained consistently within the organisation. But, while it may be useful, even expedient, to initiate police transformation from above (given the general adherence to commands and the ranking system), this is not likely to be sustainable if the process is ultimately not inclusive of all members of the rank system. As is argued in Chapter 8, police organisational transformation that is enduring paradoxically requires both a more participatory style of management (so that members do not feel alienated from organisational processes) as well as comprehensive systems of supervision during routine work (to limit autonomous individual and small group decisions and interventions).

Police organisations continue to follow rational bureaucratic models of operating, but the notion of police organisations as 'pure bureaucracies' is flawed as it ignores the multitude of informal dimensions that operate within these organisations. As Manning argues:

...the symbolic imagery of the police as a bureaucratic-professional paramilitary organisation is not entirely consistent with the actual processes and patterns of social interaction that can be observed in police departments. Rational/legal models of police operation do not sufficiently reflect the range of behaviours and procedures that can be uncovered through careful field observation (1977:140).

7. The practice of police discretion is a defining characteristic of police organisations, rather than a deviation from it.

8. This is not to deny that ultimately, despite high levels of discretion and the challenges posed by informal cultural dimensions, police organisations remain essentially hierarchical structures with functional and geographical divisions, and a clearly defined membership (Chan, 1999). Furthermore, police autonomy is always restricted by bureaucratic controls (Ericson, 1982:55).

Police organisations are as much about formalised dimensions as they are about patterned negotiations. There are always, within police organisations, complex sets of interaction and arrangements, and as a result the actions taken by the police are often less driven by rules than by police officers' own 'common sense theory of policing' which comes to bear in any given situation. This common sense is made up of basic assumptions, police culture and task demands (Manning, 1977). The police role, function and conduct are always mediated by the day-to-day experiences of policing and the informal relationships within the organisation.

The informal dimension of police organisations is as important, if not more important, in shaping police behaviour and organisational change than the more formal dimensions. In recent decades, the informal dimension of police organisations, in particular the concept 'police culture' has received much attention from police scholars, as has been the case within organisational studies more generally (Blyton and Bacon, 1997; Winslow, 1998).⁹ Organisational culture is now viewed as perhaps *the* key factor in understanding organisations and is conceptualised as:

an entity, something with near autonomous existence in organisational life that can be analysed in meaningful terms. Researchers in this perspective view culture as powerful enough to explain the very structure of everyday organisational life and would suggest that one start with culture, rather than power relations or institutional forces to understand organisational life (Smith, 1989:418).

Conceptualisations and studies of occupational culture have become dominant preoccupations of the sociology of policing (Brewer, 1991). The widespread use of the term 'police occupational culture' emerged primarily from the observation by police scholars that laws and court decisions are limited in their ability to shape the behaviour and decisions of the police. Skolnick, one of the earliest policing scholars, argues that legalism and formalism are mediated by police culture (cited in Ray, 1995). Reiner, building on Skolnick's conceptualisation contends that the legal framework governing policing is permissive, and 'leaves considerable leeway for police culture to shape police practice in accordance with situational exigencies' (1992:108). Police culture has the potential to subvert, deflect, and distort managerially defined structures, directions and practices. Law and policy are not obliterated by police culture but are refracted in one or another direction depending on whether or not they resonate with the existing police culture.

What exactly police culture is and how it plays itself out is a topic of much debate and contention within the policing literature. There are many typologies of police culture. Holdaway maintains that there are certain 'essential features' of police culture. These include a 'perception of the world as a place that is always on the verge of chaos, held back from devastation by a police presence. People are naïve and potentially disorderly in

9. In broad terms, occupational culture is seen as providing organisational members with a sense of identity and as facilitating commitment to the organisation. Such an identity helps in the reduction of uncertainty, and as a result, organisational cultures are enduring. As Scot and Lane (2000) put it, occupational culture is 'inherently sticky' it binds people to an organisation and creates a 'community' of members.

all situations; control, ideally absolute control, is the fundamental police task' (Holdaway, 1989:65). Bayley (1996) is equally pessimistic in his approach to what he calls the police 'occupational ethos'. While police workers claim to be professionals, they are in fact more like blue-collar workers who resist taking responsibility and require constant supervision. Instead of embracing discipline and accountability, they resent these and view them as punishment. They work for monetary incentives and resent working where there are no clear material rewards. This ethos is reinforced by the environment in which police work that is somewhat dangerous, 'sleazy', and awards the police with low social status (Bayley, 1996).

McConville and Shepherd (1992) argue that all police organisations to a greater or lesser extent share a definite and common police culture. In their view, given that police perceive themselves as the 'thin blue line' separating chaos from order in society, the core of policing is often aggressive and action centred. There is a quest for speed and excitement that leads police to resist more predictable and less adventurous forms of police work. Some have even argued that the a common police culture emerges because police organisations attract a particular 'personality type' - someone who is generally from the lower middle class, is usually white, has a penchant for action, and holds conservative values (Bent, 1974).

The notion that there is a common police culture and that there is a police 'personality' have been challenged. Reiner, who has arguably developed the most influential model of police culture, or what he calls 'cop culture', argues that police culture is 'neither monolithic, universal or unchanging' (1992:137). The form that police culture takes is dependent on the kind of people who make up a particular police organisation, the types of situations and problems that are confronted, the philosophies of police organisations, and the wider cultural beliefs that are held in society. Even within a single police organisation 'lines of fissure' exist in the occupational culture which can be detected between different sub-groups of police based on rank, race, function, religion, and gender (Brewer, 1991).

While Reiner (1992) writes that cop culture is not monolithic, universal or static, he believes that there are certain core characteristics. These shared characteristics arise from the nature of the police work and include:¹⁰

- **A sense of mission:** police view their work not merely as a job, but as a vocation. They see themselves as carrying out an important mission to protect innocent victims from evil forces that could harm them.
- **Cynicism:** the police are exposed to the harrowing side of society and thus become hardened and bitter.

10. Despite the core characteristics identified by Reiner, he is the first to acknowledge that there are variations within police occupational culture. These variations, he argues, are less the result of individual attributes than they are 'reflections of power structures of the society policed...The power structure of a community, and the views of its elites, are important sources of variation in policing styles' (1992:137).

- **Hedonism:** police work is viewed as fun, exciting and challenging.
- **A search for excitement and action:** routine work is viewed as a low priority. Police enjoy work that is action oriented and thrilling.
- **Machoism:** there is a strong masculine ethos in police organisations and hence a display of sexism and intolerance for sexual deviance from heterosexuality.
- **Suspicion of outsiders:** the police are always suspicious of the outside world and are constantly on the lookout for danger and signs of trouble.
- **Isolation from society:** the police are isolated from the rest of society, both at work and outside of the workplace. They tend to find it difficult to interact with people who are not a part of the policing world. As a result the police are often perceived as impersonal authorities. The isolation of the police leads to intense solidarity between members within the organisation.
- **Moral and political conservatism:** the police hold a conservative outlook of the world in line with dominant ideologies in any given society. They value stability and order and are uncomfortable with any threats to the status quo. As a result, police may be antagonistic toward individuals and groupings that challenge a given order in society. Police members also hold prejudiced and stereotypical views of members of society. There is also evidence of police support for right wing political groupings in some countries.
- **An emphasis on pragmatism:** the police see themselves as having to get a job done with the least fuss possible. They are generally anti-theoretical and concrete in their thinking and shy away from innovation and experimentation, preferring to stick to tried and tested practices and principles.

The core characteristics of pragmatism, conservatism and isolation have led to the view that police culture is an obstacle to change. The pragmatic nature of the police suggests that they prefer to do things the way they always have rather than try out new ways that have not been tested or 'proven' to be effective. The conservatism associated with police organisations seems to indicate that the police embrace things as they are rather than actively engage in a new ordering of society. The stereotypes and prejudice common within police organisations renders the police intolerant of incorporating new (mostly minority) groupings into the police, and reinforces the differential treatment of the communities they serve.

Police culture is considered to be enduring since it is 'a patterned set of understandings which help police officers to cope with and adjust to the pressures and tensions which confront the police' (Reiner, 1992:109).¹¹ Police work involves a number of facets that renders coping mechanisms necessary. These features include the:

11. The use of the term occupational culture has become so widespread in organisational literature that Smith argues that it is now approached as 'an entity, something with near autonomous existence in organisational life that can be analysed in meaningful terms' (1989:418).

ever present physical danger; the vulnerability of police officers to allegations of wrongdoing; unreasonable demands and conflicting expectations; uncertainty as to the function and authority of officers; a prevalent feeling that the public does not really understand what the police have to 'put up with' in dealing with citizens; a stifling work environment; the dependence that officers place on each other to get the job done and to provide for their personal safety; and the shared sense of awareness, within a police department, that it is not always possible to act in ways that the public would expect one to act (Goldstein, 1990:30).

Reiner's conception of cop culture has been very influential amongst policing scholars, and this includes those who have studied the police in South Africa. A number of accounts of police culture in South Africa make use of the broad framework and characteristics provided by Reiner.

Steytler (1990) and Brogden and Shearing (1993) have made use of Reiner's conception of police in trying to understand the immense brutality of the South African Police in the years between 1984-87. Steytler argues that such behaviour was the result of both the existing cop culture that was essentially racist and militaristic, as well as the permissive legal framework that existed at the time.

Similarly, Brogden and Shearing (1993) argue that police behaviour during the apartheid era was the result of both the normative expectations and practices of the police (police culture) within the South African Police, as well as by the formal rules that governed policing. Both were geared essentially toward the maintenance of white domination. However, police culture, they suggest, is the key 'agency that controls and directs police behaviour in South Africa...' (1993:42), much as in the rest of the world.

Brogden and Shearing concur with Reiner's core characteristics of police culture, arguing that the SAP police culture contains 'all the elements universally found among rank-and file police' (1993:43). But, they argue, in order to understand police culture in South Africa more profoundly, it is important to understand the Afrikaner host culture that fed police culture. This host culture embraces three important discourses:

- **A religious discourse:** policing was portrayed as a sacred mission to ensure the survival of the Afrikaner community. The 'calling' of the police was to promote the order of racial segregation, thus nurturing good Christian values and order.
- **A political discourse:** South African society was depicted as under threat of a communist onslaught that was to be stopped at any cost.
- **A subsidiary discourse:** the actions of the police were considered to be underpinned by scientific police technology and knowledge. The police were depicted as experts whose actions were guided by professional training and ethics.

This discourse of white rule became embedded in police culture through processes of recruitment, training and

indoctrination. The role and activities of the police were determined by dominant ideology and by the objectives of the (white) political elites in South Africa.¹² Police culture became the 'culture of Afrikanerdom' (Brogden and Shearing, 1993: 57).

Despite the popular usage of the concept 'police culture' in the policing literature, a number of problems have been raised regarding current conceptions of cop culture.¹³ In the first instance, it is argued that 'police culture' has become overused and reified as a concept. Fielding, for example, claims that the term police culture is 'extremely slippery and unuseful' (1989:86). He argues that the assumption that all new police recruits are subject to and imbibe police culture is simplistic. New recruits, Fielding argues, do not enter the police as ideological blank slates - they enter police organisations as individuals with their own world-views and experiences. Individuals may accommodate or resist police culture; when police culture (whatever this may be) is introduced to the new police recruit, he/she decides what to internalise. But, even when aspects of cop culture are internalised, they do not in any direct way determine police behaviour. Culture only shapes attitudes and predisposition; it does not determine them. The extent to which cop culture influences individual police officers, and the form this influence takes, is dependent on each officer's experience of his/her work, as well as his/her existing motivations and commitments.

Fielding's contribution is extremely useful since it alerts us to the fluidity and malleability of police culture. It also forces us to explore simultaneously the impact of collective features of policing on the individual police officer as well as how the individual officer influences and responds to the organisation. Police actors in this view are actors (not cultural dopes) who negotiate and rework existing norms, values and practices in police organisations. But, Fielding argues, they do this within the existing organisational and symbolic framework of the organisation.

Herbert (1998) is also critical of the widely used conceptions of police culture. He argues that there is an erroneous tendency to view police culture as autonomous and to undervalue the importance of formal rules, policies and laws in determining police behaviour and in providing boundaries. Police culture itself, he believes, is composed of both the informal and formal aspects of policing that cannot easily be separated from one another. In Herbert's view, police culture is based on multiple normative orders or sets of rules and practices. Normative orders are oriented around a central value. One of the key normative orders of the police is a basic valuing of the law. The law structures police action and is a point of reference for behaviour. The law also acts as a regular source of justification for the police¹⁴, and cannot be seen as separate from police culture. Such

12. These accounts of police culture pertain to the period prior to the democratic transition which took place in South Africa in 1994. Since then, no substantial account of a 'new' police culture has been documented.

13. Some of these criticisms resonate with those lodged at the usage of the term 'occupational culture' within the broader field of organisational studies.

14. Herbert (1998) has developed five other normative orders which include bureaucratic control; adventure/machismo; safety; competence; and morality. These are based on research conducted in the Los Angeles Police Department. Normative orders may change and their prioritisation may change from time to time. For change to take place in police organisations, normative orders need

an account of police culture directly challenges most conceptions of police culture that tend to too sharply distinguish between the formal and informal aspects of police organisations.

There is a further criticism of conceptions of police culture that is applicable to organisational theory in general. The use of the term occupational culture is for the most part extremely vague. Schein, a leading anthropological organisational theorist, has gone as far as to refer to culture as the 'missing concept in organisational studies' (1996:229). Culture, he says, is taken for granted and tends to refer loosely to norms, values, and ways of thinking and reacting. However, he argues, bodies of values, traditions, orientations, styles of thinking, or ways of doing business are really the artefacts of culture (Van Buskirk and McGrath, 1999). While culture incorporates these elements, there is a far more deeply embedded (perhaps less conscious) element of organisational culture. For Schein, this refers to the 'set of shared, taken for granted implicit *assumptions* that a group holds. It is this level of culture which determines how it perceives, thinks about, and reacts to its various environments' (1996:236). Culture needs to be understood as deeply embedded assumptions and beliefs which become entrenched in memories, stories, and 'tried and tested' practices in the field.

Unlike values and norms, which are relatively perceptible, assumptions are seldom questioned. Members of an organisation may then not even be aware of their culture until they are confronted with another one. Culture exists at a deep level and bringing about cultural change in an organisation is therefore difficult (Hendry, 1999). Attempts at organisational change have to move beyond statements of value change to a fundamental challenge of more basic suppositions about the world and about the workplace which organisational members share (Schein, 1996).

Schein's contribution to the conceptualising of organisational culture is extremely important, particularly when trying to understand the nature of police organisational change. The fact that culture is deeply embedded and rooted in assumptions and beliefs that are difficult to change means that real organisational change has to involve fundamental challenges to the most basic beliefs and assumptions which are held (and nurtured) by organisational members. As I argue below (and explicate in Chapter 7), failure to transform these beliefs renders organisational change mechanical, situational, and irresolute.

Very few accounts of police culture take into account the deep level components of police culture. Della Porta (1992; 1995; 1998) and Chan (1996;1999) are two notable exceptions. Della Porta views police culture as integrally bound to the nature of the knowledge that police hold, both about their own work and about the environment in which they work. In a paper about public order policing and the Italian police della Porta argues that the way in which police make strategic choices in their daily work is dependent on the knowledge that they

to be redefined.

hold that shapes police culture:

We may assume that as in other spheres of social life, the activity of the police to control public order is influenced above all, first by the professional culture of the police, that is the images the police hold about their own role - or to put it another way, of the totality of assumptions, widespread among actors, relative to the 'cause' to which they are committed - and second, by the environmental culture of the police, that is the totality of assumptions they hold about external reality (1995:2).

Police professional culture includes the codes that police are expected to adhere to which in turn refers to the use of force and its legitimacy, when to respond to a given situation, and what policing methods should be employed. Police environmental culture includes how the police view the public (crowds, racial stereotypes etc), and the social and political order (della Porta, Pizzorno, and Szakolezai, 1992). It is crucial to examine police perceptions of their own role and of the external reality - these make up the key components of police knowledge. Police knowledge is the real foundation of policing, and is fundamental to the collective identity of the police and acts as a filter for the types of practices the police employ. The police do not act strictly on the basis of rules and regulations as would usually be the case in ideal type bureaucracies (della Porta and Reiter, 1998).

Della Porta is keen to assert that any understanding of organisational culture and police practice must be seen in the context of the organisational structure and the broader political, social and economic environment. This is because the political culture and the conditions of policing bring about the development of a particular police culture (della Porta and Reiter, 1998). Police culture provides a long-term underlying influence on policing styles and practice. For example, on-the-spot decisions in crowd management situations are often determined by stereotypes that the police have about particular groups of people and situations. These stereotypes are often congruent with dominant political discourse. Such stereotypes can become 'guidelines for police interventions' (della Porta and Reiter, 1998:14). At the same time, while police culture is resilient, it can change if there are historic turning points (such as dramatic shifts in government) and if the police environment changes (della Porta, 1995).

Della Porta (as well as her co-authors) implicitly makes use of Schein's notion of basic assumptions and beliefs as central to police culture. Her work enables us to note the importance of police self-perceptions and their constructions of the external reality in terms of their everyday practice. This understanding, however, must always be contextualised within the organisational framework of the police as well as actual structural conditions of the environment.

Janet Chan, I believe, provides the most useful account of police culture.¹⁵ She explicitly adopts Schein's

15. Chan bases her work on police culture and police organisational change on a study of change in the Australian police. A transformation process was set in place in New South Wales (NSW) by Commissioner Avery who attempted to wipe out corruption and inefficiency in the

approach to organisational culture arguing that organisational culture is deeply embedded and difficult to change. Like Fielding (1989) and Herbert (1998) she believes that the link between police culture and police practice has been assumed but not theorised. She concurs with della Porta in stating that police culture should be viewed as shared organisational knowledge shaped by a given political and social order. Police culture, she contends:

...contains basic assumptions about descriptions, operations, prescriptions and explanations about the social and physical world. At the same time, members of a group operate in a particular social and political context that consists of certain structural arrangements of power, interests and authority. Police practice is then the product of interaction between this shared knowledge and the structural conditions (1999:105).

This cultural knowledge informs police rationales, understandings of actions, ways of seeing the people they interact with, and their use of tactics and strategies.

Borrowing from Sackman (1991) she identifies four dimensions of police cultural knowledge:

- **Axiomatic knowledge:** This refers to the basic rationale for policing and why things are done the way they are - the police mandate. This would relate most closely to what Reiner calls the police 'mission' (1992). In South Africa, for example, during the apartheid era the rationale for policing was based on the quest to maintain white domination and the suppression of any internal resistance to the state (Shearing and Brogden, 1993; Cawthra, 1992).
- **Dictionary knowledge:** This refers to the categories police hold about their environment (for example black townships, white suburbs, or sporting events) and the people they come into contact with (for example blacks, environmentalists, trade unionists, and drug dealers). For example, as Chapter 4 argues, prior to the mid-1990s, any protest or demonstration in South Africa was viewed by the police as irrational and threatening, while participants were viewed as dangerous and vulnerable to mob rule (Manganyi, 1990; Posel, 1990; Marks, 2000; Brewer et al, 1988). Black townships were deemed by the police to be perilous and therefore in need of forced external stability. White suburbs, on the other hand, were viewed as civilised and in need of protection services.
- **Directory knowledge:** This refers to how police go about doing their work and the processes that should be followed - the methods that are used. Chapter 4 illustrates that prior to the transition to democratic governance in South Africa, regular policing involved brutal control, and almost all methods to attain this control including the use torture, death squads, and detention without trial were viewed as acceptable, even desirable (Hansson, 1989; Prior, 1989; van der Spuy, 1990; Steytler, 1989).

- **Recipe knowledge:** refers to the menu of acceptable and unacceptable practices in particular situations or what is normative - police values. The police in South Africa have a historically lacked any valuing of human rights and believed themselves to be all-powerful and immune to any form of recourse or accountability.¹⁶

Each of these four dimensions of cultural knowledge is fundamental to the way in which police go about doing their work and the choices they make. They endure because they emerge as ways of coping with and understanding the external environment and they are reinforced time and again either because they provide good solutions to problems or because they assist in reducing anxiety in uncertain situations.¹⁷ Newcomers to the policing occupation 'typically learn the culture through anecdotes and "war stories" told by more senior officers' (Chan, 1999:112).¹⁸

Chan (1996,1999) also insists that a nuanced approach to understanding police culture must be accepted. She makes four important points in this regard - most of which are in fact not new:

- **Culture is not monolithic:** As Reiner (1992), Schein (1985), Manning (1978) and others have noted, police culture is not uniform or universal. Not only are there differences in police culture between police forces, but also within police forces. These internal differences in cultural knowledge may be based on a number of cleavages such as rank, race, and function, depending on the composition of the organisation. Police organisations are, after all, 'culturally and structurally diversified' (Chan, 1999:116). Chapters 7, 8 and 9 demonstrate that race is an important cleavage within Durban POP and some basic values and assumptions diverge among members of the unit according to the racial/ethnic grouping that they identify with.
- **Police are not passive in the acculturation process:** Following the work of Fielding, Chan insists that police officers do not passively imbibe police culture; the individual police officer interprets his police culture in the workplace. A sound theory of police culture, Chan argues, 'should recognise the interpretative and active role of officers in structuring their understanding of the organisation and its environment' (1996:112). Officers are active decision-makers but are at the same time guided by the assumptions they learn and the possibilities that exist. Like Shearing (1995), Chan notes that culture is not simply transmitted via training and the internalisation of

16. Each of these four dimensions of police cultural knowledge in relation to the police in South Africa is discussed in more detail throughout the dissertation. The dissertation will also explore and evaluate any changes in cultural knowledge that may have occurred in the six years following the transition to democratic governance.

17. Schein (cited in Chan, 1999), however, makes the important point that while problem-solving based learning is positive and rewarding, anxiety avoidance learning is negative and defensive. Anxiety-avoidance learning may also result in the police guarding their 'time-honored' rituals, beliefs and assumptions. Many of the more negative aspects of police culture, it is argued, are learned as a result of anxiety-avoidance mechanisms as opposed to through innovative problem-solving strategies.

18. Shearing suggests that for police organisational change to occur, the 'stories' that the police tell must change.

rules. Instead, police develop sets of stories that guide them in the seeing the world and acting upon it. Chapter 7 shows how important stories and memories are for police members and how they shape the actions and reactions of the police.

- **Police culture cannot be viewed as isolated from the social, legal and organisational context of policing:** In understanding police culture, it is important to examine the interaction between the field (objective, historical relations or the structural conditions of police work) and the habitus (cultural knowledge, established ways of perceiving and acting). In fact, police working under particular structural conditions develop and maintain particular sets of cultural assumptions. Chapter 4 provides an account of the historical context that shaped public order policing in South Africa, while Chapter 6 examines the important political and legislative environment which compelled change in public order policing. These two chapters demonstrate that the policing environment both embeds and challenges cultural values in police organisations.
- **Accounts of police culture should allow for the possibility of both change and resistance:** Police culture should not be seen only as an impediment to change. Culture should also be viewed as a space for creativity and new kinds of interpretation. However, since police culture is a 'deep phenomenon', change is not straightforward. Managers should also not assume that they can impose and manipulate cultural change. This dissertation demonstrates that police organisational change is possible, but that it is limited by deeply held values and assumptions as well as by environmental constraints.

While it could be argued that many elements of Chan's conceptualisation of police culture are borrowed, she offers a synthesis of the most critical aspects of the literature dealing with this issue. Most importantly, she diverges from simplistic and shallow accounts of police culture and in so doing provides a useful inroad for thinking about the possibilities and limits of change of police organisations.

The possibilities and limits of police organisational change

Brogden and Shearing (1993) argue that there are traditionally two approaches as to how to transform police organisations. The one is to tighten the rules and legislative framework, and this approach focuses on the formal component of police organisations. The other gives primacy to the informal component of police organisations and proposes the need to 'meet police culture head on and attempt to change it directly' (1993:96). For the most part, rule tightening is viewed as an inadequate mechanism since police culture is resilient and rules and laws do not, on their own, lead to a transfiguration of culture. However, as I have argued above, given the importance of rules and regulations to police organisations and their members, it is crucial to see how these can be 'exploited' in bringing about change.

It has already been mentioned earlier in this chapter that behavioural change initiated or instructed from above

is arguably easy to achieve in police organisations since rank-and-file police members are unlikely to openly resist such instructions. The formal structuring of police organisations provides police managers and supervisors with considerable power and influence. As a result a top-down approach to police organisational change must have some value. Police managers and supervisors are quite literally able to command and instruct desired forms of conduct, at least in the immediate term. In fact, the distinct levels of status and authority that exist in most police organisations, if judiciously employed, have the potential to promote change at speedier pace than in most other organisations. It therefore makes sense to suggest that change should be initiated from above and that police leaders should provide focal ideas as to where the change process is heading, what is to be achieved, and how to achieve it. Police leaders are also in a good position to break down old and dysfunctional practices and to encourage new and appropriate ones. These changes from above can be brought about through changes in policy and training and be reinforced via disciplinary and reward systems.¹⁹

However, there are definite limits to a reliance on a top-down, management-defined change process. Police culture, as already noted, while not fixed is deeply embedded and can subvert change initiatives. It is for this reason that serious attention needs to be paid to cultural change when considering mechanisms for lasting change in police organisations.

Most scholars of the police have in fact paid greater attention to the informal component of police organisations - cop culture - in understanding and promoting police transformation. Conceptualisations of cop culture are central to the literature that deals with police transformation, so much so that Shearing has commented that:

Almost every discussion of the transformation of the way policing is provided considers the issue of police occupational culture...Equally universal is the conclusion that for policing to be transformed, this culture must be reshaped in ways that will promote policing that conforms to the law...There is near universal agreement that if policing is to be reshaped then the culture of the police must be transformed (1995:54).

Despite the widespread use of the concept, however, very little has been written as to exactly how change in police occupational culture is to be achieved. In part, this could be the result of the poor and conflicting notions of police culture in the first place, or the view that police culture provides stability to the organisation (Reiner, 1992; Fielding, 1989; Herbert, 1998). It is thus to Chan's conception of police culture that I will now turn in trying to develop a framework for change.

Chan argues that change efforts in the police are often unsuccessful and that this is hardly surprising given the 'embeddedness of cultural knowledge and the ineffectiveness of cosmetic efforts such as policy statements

19. This point is argued in more detail in Chapter 8. It should also be noted that Schein (1987), whose conception of organisational culture is used extensively in this dissertation, also advocates a top-down approach to police organisational change.

and operational guidelines in challenging assumptions and changing attitudes' (1999:131). But, before examining Chan's recommendations with regard to police transformation, a prior question needs to be considered: How exactly do we evaluate organisational change in the context of enduring, deeply embedded organisational culture?

Evaluating change processes in police organisations is a complicated task for two reasons. First, police organisations have limited mechanisms for measuring performance and for defining 'good policing'. The issue of performance indicators in police agencies has received much attention in the police literature and is a source of much debate, as we will see in Chapter 8. Second, evaluating change processes within the police is complicated since it involves examining both internal organisational dynamics and processes as well as the success of the police in dealing with the public and in preventing public disorder and crime which is extremely difficult to measure.

The difficulty in assessing organisational change is not unique to police agencies. How exactly one goes about evaluating whether or not change has taken place in any given organisation is a complex issue. While it is relatively easy to assess whether structural change has taken place, it is more difficult to assess whether individuals have changed, and whether change has occurred in the more informal components of organisations. Change may also take place unevenly, and may exist in some areas and not in others.

Organisational theorists Ogbonna and Harris (1998) make an important contribution to the debate on the measurement of change in organisations. They suggest that there are three aspects of organisations that need to be examined in assessing change efforts - changes in the material manifestations of the organisation (the structure); changes in the behaviour of organisational members; and changes in the values of the members of the organisation. While behavioural and structural changes are somewhat easy to observe, evaluating change in values (including assumptions and beliefs) is more complex.

Ogbonna and Harris argue that value change is difficult to achieve. Organisational values can either be 'reinvented', 'reinterpreted', or 'reoriented'. Reinvention refers to the 'recycling of existing values so that they are presented as aligned with newly espoused values' (Ogbonna and Harris, 1998:290). Existing values become camouflaged in the rhetoric of new values, but new values are not readily accepted. Reinterpretation refers to the development of ideas that are modified but are broadly in line with existing and espoused values. New values then are partially accepted and there is a maintaining of at least some aspect of the old existing values. Finally, reorientation refers to the 'seemingly unquestioned adoption of newly defined values replacing existing value sets' (Ogbonna and Harris, 1998:291). For the most part, Ogbonna and Harris observe, members of an organisation undergoing change either reinvent or reinterpret existing value systems.

The distinctions between the different levels of change suggested by Ogbonna and Harris are important for two reasons. First, their work suggests that behavioural change may result from compliance rather than from commitment to a new value system. Second, they demonstrate that change at both the structural and behavioural level does not automatically translate into changes in the value system or the basic assumptions held by organisational members. Organisational change may be extremely fragile if value change does not occur or is partial.²⁰

Top-down and limited rule-tightening approaches to change together with the embedded nature of cop culture would seem to indicate that many change processes in police organisations result from compliance, and are limited to the levels of structure and behaviour. How then can more systematic and genuine change be brought about in police organisations?

Chan's conceptualisation of police culture suggests that what is needed is 'deep level' change. This would require change in the cultural knowledge of the police and by implication, change in the most basic assumptions and beliefs of police members. While change in cultural knowledge may not directly translate into structural change (which is at any rate easier to achieve), it would translate into both behavioural and value changes.

Chan suggests that the axiomatic cultural knowledge of the police is the most important target for change in the habitus, given that it encompasses the rationale that police hold about their work. This involves changing assumptions about the very objective and mandate of policing and such change is usually instituted from above. Axiomatic knowledge is crucial since it forms the basis for policing strategies and methods. There are a number of ways in which change in axiomatic knowledge could be achieved. There needs to be a clear statement of new objectives and principles and the reasoning behind them; the reasoning for the existence and functioning of the police organisation may need to be redefined. New desired outcomes need to be developed that can be appropriately measured. In moving toward a more democratised form of policing a number of basic assumptions regarding the police mission need to be asserted. These include 'a strong commitment to protect the constitutional rights of citizens; to adhere to legal constraints on the use of police authority; to restrict the use of force, especially deadly force; and to use the least restrictive alternative in dealing with troublesome individuals' (Goldstein, 1990:153).

While it may be relatively simple to make statements and commitments to new mandates, missions and rationales for policing, mechanisms for ensuring and maintaining sustainable change in the methods and strategies employed (directory and recipe knowledge) need to be developed. Police need to be made aware of the positive impact and consequences of new ways of doing things and achieving outcomes. This requires positive feedback from police managers and supervisors when changed behaviour is attempted, and if

20. There is a third important contribution from Ogbonna and Harris' work. Their work provides a possible model for evaluating organisational change.

possible, positive reinforcement from the recipients of police services. Police need to be made aware that new methods do in fact work. This often requires a fundamental rethinking of systems of reward and of indicators of 'good' performance (Bayley, 1996) and will be discussed at length in Chapter 8.

It is equally important, however, that change in dictionary knowledge accompanies change in axiomatic, directory and recipe knowledge. New ways of defining and viewing situations police find themselves in and the people they come into contact with may automatically emerge from the positive results of changed methods and strategies. However, as Chapters 7 and 8 show, the beliefs and stereotypes that are held about groups of people and their circumstances are often very difficult to transform and are often reinforced by the numerous reference groupings and socialisation agencies the police may have. There are a number of ways in which this could be achieved. Police need to work in ways that compel them to interact directly and intimately with the vast range of people that they serve. Second, police organisations themselves need to reflect internally the society in which they work - external democratisation requires internal democratisation.

Sustained behavioural change in police organisations, I would argue, also requires close supervision. Earlier in this chapter it was noted that a key feature of police organisations is the high level of discretion and autonomy that exist. Change in values, beliefs and assumptions is difficult to achieve and takes place over an extended period of time, and behaviour can easily revert back to old and established forms so long as existing cultural knowledge persists. Rank-and-file police officers (especially in the early stages of transformation) require proper guidance and oversight when carrying out police operations that require sensitivity and deliberation. Goldstein (1990) argues that frontline supervision is most important since the experiences police have of their daily working lives is highly dependent on the degree to which supervisors at this level provide valuable and reliable direction. This means that wherever possible, frontline supervisors should be visible and present when rank-and-file members are 'on the job'.

All these changes in cultural knowledge or the habitus need to be supported by change in the field. Chan has stressed that police culture can in no way be separated from the social, political and economic context in which it develops, nor from the structure and composition of the police organisation itself. If the field is not changed in support of changes in the habitus, the habitus will revert back to old practices. For example, if supervisors instruct police to perform in ways that are contradicted by policy, or what has been learned in training, police members may refuse to abide by these instructions. Institutional racism within the police organisation may make it extremely difficult for police members to change their ways of seeing and behaving towards minority groupings in the community. If there are no oversight mechanisms and systems ensuring police accountability, police abuse of power and misconduct may continue unpunished despite attempts at developing new value systems within the police organisation itself. Change in the field and habitus reinforce and influence one another and it is for this reason that Chan concludes that it is 'unproductive to debate whether rule-tightening

or changing culture is more important' (1996:131).

Changing police culture by changing work organisation and relations

I have placed emphasis on the need for close supervision of police and have also proposed that the early stages of police transformation directed at changed behaviour could most effectively be initiated via a top-down approach. At the same time, however, in order for police to engage with new value systems and assumptions, an environment needs to be created where all police members, regardless of rank, are able to actively participate in the change process. Excluding rank and file members from information and decision making around change processes is likely to leave them feeling disillusioned, manipulated, frustrated and lacking in motivation (Washo, 1984). While most police members will probably comply with instructions to change behaviour, they will do so grudgingly (Brown, 1993). Some, however, may completely resist change if they feel that organisational change poses a threat to self-definition and self-esteem which in turn could lead to ego-defensiveness and even to overt opposition to change (Hogg and Terry, 2000).²¹ Such feelings of resistance often emerge from feeling alienated from processes of change or a lack of clarity as to where the process of change is heading.

Involving rank-and-file police in decision-making and the implementation of change processes runs contrary to traditional management practices in police organisations, which tend to follow rational bureaucratic models of operating. Typically within police organisations communication flows downward, rank takes priority over knowledge, and there are a multiplicity of rules, and directives and regulations covering every aspect of activity. Rank-and-file members are treated like children who are ordered about without explanations and they are 'required to ask permission even when exercising the slightest initiatives' (Bayley, 1996:64). Put more forcefully, 'the dominant form of policing today continues to view police officers as automatons'²² (Goldstein, 1990:27).

Delineated ranking systems are likely to always characterise police organisations. Kraska and Kappeler have in fact argued that the police and the military have to be understood in 'a common framework' (1997:14). However, there have been attempts within some police organisations (mostly in Western Europe and North America) to move toward more participatory forms of management (Rippy, 1990; Goldstein, 1990; Bayley, 1996). Some police agencies, like the London Metropolitan Police, have taken a conscious decision to try to follow a corporate management style in an attempt to further professionalise the police and build the status and morale of police officers (Reiner, 1992).

21. Casey (cited in Strangleman and Roberts, 1999) argues that employees in an organisation may adopt a choice of three attitudes to organisational change: colluding, capitulating, or defensive. The colluders are those who simply go along with what Casey calls the 'designer culture' and are usually high flyers in the organisation. The capitulators are those who accept the new culture out of pragmatism rather than out of commitment to a new culture. The defenders are those who are hostile to the new cultural changes.

22. For Goldstein (1990) this means that officers are expected to conform, are treated impersonally, and rewards are given to those who conform and comply in an unthinking way.

The shift toward more participatory forms of management, however, is not only important as a means for reducing resistance to change and increasing police performance. Change in management style and practice is crucial to changing organisational culture. Wilms (1996) has argued in this regard that real commitment to changed culture can only come about if workplace practices and relations are transformed. Wilms studied four American workplaces undergoing major organisational change. He found that those workplaces that had shifted towards management styles which encouraged independent and co-operative work, broad participation in decision-making as well as mutual respect and trusting relationships were able to change with greater ease than those that did not. Change mandated from above has a limited impact; 'serious restructuring must be embraced fully by employees at all levels of the organisation' (Wilms, 1996:284).

The key to successful organisational transformation in the workplace (both in the private and public sector), Wilms believes, is the creation of new management-worker relationships. Transformation requires 'fundamental changes that can emerge only after the systems of production and the underlying cultures have been altered' (Wilms, 1996:282). Any cultural change in an organisation requires change in the way in which organisational members relate to one another. The move toward participatory, person-centred management does not simply involve a change of heart on the part of management. It requires a completely revised way of organising the work process and this in turn leads to change in the entire occupational culture - a change in values, assumptions and ways of coping:

Introducing participative management requires organisations to improve interpersonal competence of their managers, as well as a change in values so that human factors and feelings come to be considered as legitimate; developing an increased understanding among and within groups to reduce the underlying tensions, discord and defensiveness; developing team management; and viewing the organisation as an organic system of relationships marked by mutual trust, independence, shared responsibility and conflict resolution through training or problem solving (Bennis, cited in Brookes, 1965:140).

New work relations will create some degree of instability within organisations (that may be uncomfortable for organisations) that value stability and order such as the police. Police organisations generally follow a paradigm that views change as following an orderly and deterministic approach. Change in this view should be incremental so as not to disrupt the orderly and stable character of organisations (Kiel, 1994; Meyer, 1979).²³ The move from an authoritarian to a participatory model of management is not a simple one, particularly when hierarchical, exclusive styles of management have yielded desired outcomes in the past. However, instability leads to questioning and to the creation and exploration of new kinds of answers.

Kiel (1994), an advocate of a 'non-linear' paradigm of organisational change, argues that for change efforts to

23. This view of change is not only the result of management conservatism. Members of organisations themselves may resist large-scale

be effective, the existing forms and structures of organisations need to 'break up'. Disorder, variation, and instability should not be viewed as a threat, but as providing the potential for positive change. What is needed are 'qualitative shifts and discontinuous breaks with past methods, mind sets, and strategies...disorder allows for the exploration of various possibilities until a new form of organisation or new ways of working is achieved' (Kiel, 1994:45). Others who follow this view argue that managers of public organisations in particular, should regard themselves primarily as change agents driven by a constant need to excel and improve. A good public manager accepts and even welcomes uncertainty, and views change as an opportunity to grow, learn, improve and energise the organisation (Evans, 1996). Key to this approach is change in work structure of the organisation away from traditional hierarchies toward more flattened work structures that allow for information flow and communication.²⁴

The principle of participatory management for effective organisational change has been popular in theories of organisations and of work for the past two decades (Bekhard and Harris, 1987; Ahnre, 1994; Wilkinson, 1989) in Western Europe, Japan, and the United States of America, and even in South Africa (Adler and Webster, 2000). It is believed that 'when members of an organisation are allowed to participate in decision making that relates to changes in their work environment, they are more positive toward change than those who are simply ordered to change their work processes' (Johanson, 2000:393). For members to feel committed to organisational change and to organisational effectiveness more broadly, it is important that they feel a sense of ownership in the organisation. This involves an understanding that the future of an individual within an organisation and the future of the organisation itself are inextricably linked.²⁵ The dominant message in organisational theory regarding management is that democratic leadership is far better both in terms of increasing morale and productivity, and in terms of improving communication and decision-making.

Participatory management is new to most police agencies and recommending a move to this style of management is likely to raise one key question: Does participatory management undermine the rank and command system in police organisations? The ranking system (ideally) is based on skill, expertise, and most of all, authority. None of these should be undermined by new systems of management. If there is agreement on the credentials that place a person in a position of authority (rather than power), a management style which is open and inclusive should serve to further legitimise authority. This has the potential to lead in fact to greater trust and respect and a willingness (rather than grudging compliance) to accept instructions.

Goldstein (1990) has argued that during times of transformation in police organisations (such as the shift

and fundamental changes in organisations.

24. Kiel acknowledges that the invitation to managers to invoke chaos is unlikely to be accepted with much enthusiasm

25. This is perhaps easier to achieve in the private sector where in order for organisations to be prosperous, they need to be able to meet the demands and needs of targeted clients. They also need to be competitive in terms of service and product delivery. In the public sector, where productivity is more difficult to measure and outcomes are not easily quantified, excellence in service delivery becomes a shared

toward problem oriented policing), an opportunity is created to rethink management issues and styles. Change efforts, he proposes, are highly dependent on the involvement of the rank-and-file. There are a number of problematic characteristics in the work relations of most police organisations that need to be dealt with. These include the boredom and lack of challenge associated with most police work; the lack of dignity awarded to low-ranking police officers; the feeling on the part of police officers that they are achieving little; and the lack of opportunity for upward mobility. These problems can be alleviated if police members feel a sense of importance, self-worth and the freedom to think and act independently within acceptable boundaries; helping members to see the benefit of their work and providing positive feedback; and creating clear career and promotion pathways. This cannot be separated from ensuring the 'active participation of employees in the development and implementation of policies and programmes' (Goldstein, 1990:154). This would not involve the obliteration of the authority of supervisors and managers, but rather the fostering of creativity, mutual respect, and open communication between all ranks in the police organisation. This demands that supervisors play a role as facilitators and guides and this requires them to have constant contact and support with rank-and-file members.

Conclusion

Changing police organisations is a difficult, though not an impossible, task to achieve. It is, arguably, relatively easy to *modify* police behaviour in a very short period of time given the structuring of police organisations based on strict rules and hierarchy, and a police culture that encourages compliance. However, behavioural change from above and rule-tightening, while useful and even effective in changing behaviour in the short term, brings about behavioural change that is both superficial and precarious. Long term and more sustainable police organisational transformation demands a fundamental change in existing police culture and in the organisational and environmental field in which the police work.

Real organisational transformation involves changes in structure, behaviour and value systems. What needs to be averted is a reversion to old and problematic ways of doing and seeing things within an organisation. Following Chan and Schein, I have argued that the entire culture of the police organisation needs to change, but that culture needs to be understood not vaguely as ways of acting, values and norms. Culture needs to be understood, rather, as deeply embedded assumptions and beliefs which become entrenched in memories, stories, and 'tried and tested' practices in the field. Without fundamentally changing these embedded assumptions, values and beliefs any attempts at change will be short lived and perfunctory. Transforming deep level culture involves changing the very knowledge base that police have of their mandate and objectives. This in turn will lead to fundamental rethinking, in a comprehensive way, of methods and strategies. Linked to this, the knowledge base that the police hold of their environments, the various groups that exist in society and their own organisation has to be fundamentally altered too. I argue that the very structure of police organisations

concern and responsibility of the organisation.

(typically) lends itself to an initiation of such changes in knowledge bases from above but that the use of top-down change processes must be reinforced by reward systems and appropriate performance indicators. Police supervisors and managers also need to ensure that the changes that are proposed 'work' in the field and yield positive outcomes.

Added to this, and once again following Chan, I have argued that police will easily revert to old ways and practices if the field in which the police operate fails to support this change. Hence, rules, policies and the structure of the organisation need to change too. New ways of thinking must, however, be supported by broader environmental changes in the law and in power relations. I have also added two new dimensions to Chan's conceptualisation in arguing that (particularly in the early stages of police transformation) close and directive front-line supervision is crucial. If such supervision is absent the high levels of police discretion and autonomy that are characteristic of police organisations, could undermine change processes. Furthermore, the lack of such supervision may leave police members feeling uncertain as to what the appropriate ways of behaving and responding are, particularly during periods of transition.

Finally, following general trends within theories of organisational change, I have argued that what is required is movement away from the typical organisation of work and management practices in the police. This requires a shift toward participatory forms of management whereby police members of all ranks have a stake in decision-making, in restructuring and even in the way in which police work is evaluated. A change in the nature of work in police organisations represents not only a change in structure, but also in the culture of the organisation. If we are to expect the police to change their behaviour toward the public in line with democratic and human-rights based principles, these values must be reflected internally in police organisations as well. Participatory forms of management also serve to build commitment, morale and common purpose within organisations, all of which are crucial to the success of organisational transformation.

CHAPTER 4

FROM GREEN TO BLUE: A HISTORY OF PUBLIC ORDER POLICING IN SOUTH AFRICA

Public order policing in South Africa has changed over time, and is indicative in each period of the pertaining relations between state and society more generally. Accompanying the transition to democratisation in the early 1990s there was a liberalisation of public order legislation and new, internationally accepted, methods of policing public order were introduced. Prior to this, however, broad definitions of public disorder loomed in legislation and policing policy. During the reign of the repressive and intolerant apartheid government, public order legislation seemed 'to include all political activity outside of the narrow limits which the state [considered] legitimate, where "political" in itself was defined widely to include economic, industrial and social activity' (Brewer et al, 1988:178). From the introduction of formal apartheid in 1948 until the early 1990s, almost any collective activity, particularly of black South Africans, was considered as potential disorder, and as a result, the definition of public disorder included industrial disputes, work stoppages, peaceful demonstrations, stay-aways, funerals, prayer meetings, motorcades, and even carol singing. The consequences of these broad definitions were far-reaching in terms of the policing approach and response. Brutal and partisan public order policing became customary and proved difficult to change despite changes in the political arena in later years.

This extensive chapter examines the history of public order policing in South Africa from the formation of the South African Police in 1913 to the transformation process of the specialised unit involved in such policing which began in 1995.¹ In each period, incidents have been purposefully selected to illustrate the nature of both protest and policing. The chapter aims to convey the nature of the state, political protest and resistance, and the policing of public order over the decades. This history provides an important backdrop for understanding the ethos, make-up and disposition of the organisation - and the individuals who comprise it - responsible for the policing of public order. In turn, this sets the scene for understanding the potentialities, limitations, and difficulties in transforming this organisation and its members, which is my concern in this dissertation.

1. No comprehensive documentation on the history of public order policing in South Africa exists and as a result the information in this chapter is drawn from a number of sources - interviews, secondary literature, recent police documentation, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Reports. While I hoped to make use of police documentation in compiling this information, I was informed by police officers at the South African Police Service Head Office that most of the relevant documentation, particularly pertaining to the years 1960-1994, was destroyed by police members during the transition period. They were concerned that these documents could be incriminating.

Public order policing in context

Public order policing is shaped by a number of factors (D.Waddington, 1996; Lofthouse, 1996; Jefferson, 1990). These include the nature and changing nature of the state; the configuration of crowds and protests; the existing cleavages in society; the organisational make-up and structure of the police; and the international context of policing. While each of these factors is important, in the South African case the political ordering of society played a primary role in determining the character of public order policing over the decades. As governance became increasingly authoritarian and discriminatory from the 1960s, the state experienced a massive crisis in legitimacy and used any means available to regulate society in accordance with its own objectives. Policing, and public order policing in particular, became highly politicised as resources and energies were concentrated on the silencing of protest and resistance. This only began to change in the early 1990s with the transition to democracy and this political shift included guaranteed rights to the freedom of expression and protest. The opening up of the political arena meant that there was a space for international trends to impact on the once closed system of policing.

Despite the political and social peculiarities of South African society and politics, the history of public order policing in South Africa cannot be viewed as discrete or as distinct from international trends in public order policing. Many of the concerns pertaining to public order policing in South Africa have been a source of disquiet within established democratic countries. Indeed, no discussion on public order policing would be complete without paying some attention to the controversy that surrounds such policing pertaining to its (inherent) paramilitary nature and the state's utilisation of paramilitary policing during periods of fragile political hegemony.

The policing of public order became a significant academic and public concern in western democratic societies from the 1970s. This period witnessed growing inequality and reduced life chances, and public protest resulted. Specialised, military-like units were created within policing bodies to deal specifically with public order problems. These units received special training in riot and crowd control, were equipped with sophisticated and lethal weapons, had a more military-like command structure than the regular police, and operated as squadrons (similar to military platoons) as opposed to operating on the basis of individual discretion as is characteristic of regular police bodies. The creation of these units became a hot area of debate and contestation in the policing literature. On the one hand, Peter Waddington (1991; 1999a) argues that the creation of such specialised bodies should not be too alarming since what makes state policing unique as an occupation is the mandated use of force. Waddington also contends that the specialised training, equipment and pre-planning associated with such units minimise the potential for damage and injury during crowd events. However, there are other scholars of the police who argue that these specialised units are paramilitary in nature, and that this is contrary to the contemporary emphasis on policing as consensual, service bound and community oriented (Kraska, 1999).

Tony Jefferson (1990), following a Gramscian approach, argues that paramilitary policing emerged as a result of the loss of hegemony of so-called liberal democratic states. Paramilitary policing (which he

equates with public order policing) plays a crucial role in suppressing collective action which ultimately emerges from social injustice. Furthermore, Jefferson argues, the very presence of paramilitary units that are heavily armed and visible, have the potential to amplify, rather than diffuse, public disorder. The police, in Jefferson's view, should be the servants of the public and should assist in creating social justice rather than safeguarding inequality and injustice through forceful means. Waddington, on the other hand (who is at the same time both more pragmatic and more conservative than Jefferson) believes that an outright condemnation of paramilitary policing is neither productive nor feasible. He argues that 'so long as the threat of social disorder exists and it remains the duty of the police (as opposed to some other body) to suppress it, paramilitarism has some value' (1991:154).

The views associated with Waddington and Jefferson both have value. As was mentioned earlier, there is a definite correlation between the state's crises in legitimacy and the increasing tendency toward the militarisation of the policing of public order in South Africa. This paramilitary response, as this chapter will show, did not obliterate public protest and demonstration. Rather, police-civilian confrontations became more confrontational and violent (Olivier and Ngwane, 1995), and the crisis in hegemony intensified. At the same time, however, as this chapter demonstrates, the policing of crowds, is far more unpredictable and hazardous when police have not been specially trained and equipped. In a society like South Africa where public protest and the potential for public disorder are a given, specialised public order policing units are viewed by many as essential.²

States, whether authoritarian or liberal-democratic in nature, have shown a tendency toward an increase in paramilitary policing. In fact, there is internationally a paradoxical growth of both community and paramilitary policing (Kraska and Kappeler, 1997). This tendency is clearly evident in South Africa where while recent policing policy is geared toward community oriented and consensual policing, a highly specialised paramilitary public order unit has been retained. Despite the transition to democratic governance in 1994 and the nefarious history of public order policing in South Africa, there has been no attempt to disband the specialised units that have been responsible for the policing of public order, but rather a commitment to 'transforming' them.

Early beginnings - a particular type of ordering

It is during the first half of the twentieth century that the policing of public order in South Africa moved in the opposite direction to places like Europe, particularly Britain. In Britain, from the 1930s to the 1960s, the police were concerned to develop an image of friendly protectors and of crime fighters. There were very few bans on public protest, and when crowds needed to be policed, inoffensive push-and-shove methods were

2. The contestation of paramilitary public order policing is not just an academic enterprise. The formation of specialised units for public order policing has received much public condemnation and protest. The reasons for this are numerous and include the excessive use of force by such units which in some instances has led to the death of both participants and non-participants during public protests and demonstrations (Rollo, 1980); the escalation of violence due to the presence of paramilitary groupings (Jefferson, 1990; Critcher, and Waddington, 1996; Steytler, 1989); as well as the over-policing of minority groupings who are most likely to engage in public protest (Keith, 1993). At a more general level, however, it is believed that paramilitary policing is an antithesis to the 'bobby on the beat' image of a civilianised police force. As Reiner states, public order police are disconcerting since they are 'less a part of society, more apart

used. A very different picture to this, however, emerged in the colonised world. In these countries, the state police was the agency most responsible for enforcing the laws of the colonies, regulating population groupings, and protecting settlers and their property. Crime became a secondary concern as most energies were directed at controlling local populations and repressing any form of resistance disorder (Killingray and Clayton, 1989).

When the SAP was established in South Africa in 1913 it was shaped by colonial society and frontier wars. The new national police force had a disciplinary ideology and a distinct militarised administrative body (Nasson in Killingray and Clayton, 1989). The organisation of the police was that of 'policeman-cum-soldier'; there was an emphasis on military discipline, a confrontational thrust, and extensive paramilitary type training in riot control and counter insurgency (van der Spuy, 1990). Policing during the early century was also shaped by what van der Spuy has called an 'emergent ethnic and political mobilisation of Afrikaner nationalism' (1990:90). Few institutions, particularly the police, were able to escape this influence. So began a struggle within the SAP between Afrikaner nationalism and British settler rule. While the early police bodies were largely made up of men of British origin, by the late 1920s, the majority of rank-and-file policemen were drawn from rural Afrikaner communities. This led to internal fragmentation, and contested loyalties within the police.

This inner strife between British colonial rule and Afrikaner nationalism, however, masks a more important feature of policing in South Africa which pervaded the police from its inception until the 1990s - the complete intolerance and repression of black resistance. Indeed, it could be said that the history of policing in South Africa is the history of public order policing. 'It is a history of the policing of large collectivities of black people, such as black industrial strikers, tribal groups at war, factions on the mines' (van der Spuy, 1990:92), as well as black demonstrators and protestors. Very little attention was paid to 'normal' crimes, particularly when black persons were victims.

Violence and confrontation have always characterised policing in South Africa. Since the outset of state colonial policing, this has meant the assertion of state control over what was defined as 'unruly black mobs' threatening the colonial order. This violent response is largely the result of a 'commonsensical' knowledge which dominated the thinking of the police in South Africa. The police maintained that South Africa constituted a law-abiding and civilised white constituency, and a primitive, unruly black population. Consequently the police view has historically been one in which crowds of black people 'have no rational faculty of mind or emotional core. It is simply a collectivity of puppets orchestrated from the outside' (van der Spuy, 1990:94). In this view, protestors, demonstrators and the likes were all prone to vandalism and orgies of violence. Consequently, the police responded to black communities with brutality, aimed at halting pending anarchy.

From the 1920s, the police played a key role in the ordering of South African society through their

from it' (1988:6).

enforcement of segregation laws. The 1923 Urban Areas Act stipulated that black people were only allowed to reside in urban areas if they were 'economically active', and that they should be viewed as a labour reserve at the disposal of whites (Posel, 1991). So began the formalising of spatial segregation of racial groups, and the police were instructed to ensure that black people remained within their designated areas by arresting any person who did not have a 'pass book' which authorised them to be in the urban areas. In 1948 the Nationalist Party (NP) was voted into power by an essentially white electorate. The strategy of the NP over the next two decades after its entry into power was to ensure the segregation of racial groupings in South Africa and to institute white domination. A number of policies were introduced in the 1950s which formed the cornerstone of apartheid, including the Population Registration Act (1950), Job Reservation and Separate Amenities Act (1953), the Group Areas Act (1950), and the Bantu Education Act (1953).³

The promulgation of these Acts provided the impetus for massive urban protest and boycotts led by formal political organisations such as the African National Congress and the South African Communist Party (Marks, 1993). In 1952, the ANC decided to embark on a Defiance Campaign to challenge apartheid segregation and white supremacy. The government responded to this campaign by making mass arrests and conducting raids on the homes of those people involved in resistance politics at the time; 8 500 people were arrested and sent to prison. But, arrests and raids were not the only responses. The government also promulgated the Criminal Law Amendment Act (1953) which determined that 'any person who committed any offence by way of protest, or in support of any campaign against the law could be sentenced to a whipping of ten strokes, a fine, three years in jail, or a combination of any of these penalties. Upon a second conviction, whipping or imprisonment as well as a fine were obligatory' (Karis and Carter, 1977:6). The Act also allowed for the serious punishment of anyone who used 'words' calculated to cause someone to commit an offence as a means of protest.

A second Act, the Public Safety Act (1953), empowered the Governor General to declare a state of emergency if he thought public order was under serious threat. During such states of emergency, a person could be summarily arrested and detained; the government's only obligation was to submit the names of those detained to parliament within 30 days (Karis and Carter, 1977). The police, of course, were the group ultimately responsible for making these arrests.

Despite the government's intolerant response to protest and demonstration, the Defiance Campaign was revived in 1955. There were three main wings to this campaign - boycotts of Bantu Education, anti-pass protests, and demonstrations against forced removals and relocations. Yet another Act restricting civil liberties was promulgated. The Riotous Assembly Act (1956) authorised the minister to act whenever he was satisfied that a person was 'promoting feelings of hostility between whites and non-whites' (Karis and

3. The Population Registration Act aimed at the official classification of all South Africans as belonging to a particular ethnic or racial grouping. The Group Areas Act aimed at locating all residents of South Africa in residential areas defined for particular racial and ethnic groupings. The Separate Amenities Act stipulated that facilities and amenities (transport, leisure, toilets, beaches, etc) were only to be used by particular racial groupings. The Bantu Education Act introduced separate mass education for black people that would essentially render them as semi-skilled labourers.

Carter, 1977). Furthermore, meetings of more than ten Africans were prohibited unless special permission was granted beforehand. During this period, meetings were seldom prohibited, the police actively harassed black people who were not carrying passes, arrested them for minimal or no offences, and forcibly removed thousands of black families.⁴

In 1956, 156 prominent activists were arrested and charged with treason. For the next four years, the state tried to prove that they had been involved in a countrywide conspiracy to violently overthrow the state. The trial ended on 29 March 1961 and the accused were found 'not guilty' (Lodge, 1983). However, the stage had been set for more systematic repression of any form of protest and mass organisation in the 1960s.

The 1960s - zero tolerance of protest begins

Internationally, the policing of protest in this decade witnessed some interesting changes. British police cultivated an image of friendly civilianised police officers. Even until late 1968 'the dominant image of policing political protest ...was of lines of bobbies with arms linked, pushing and shoving against lines of demonstrators, with whom they were in "eyeball-to-eyeball" contact' (Jefferson, 1990:1). This consensual, non-forceful policing, according to Jefferson, was possible because the post-war period in Britain was one characterised by political stability and an emphasis on compensation. The state, having implemented Keynesian model of economics, focussed on the provision of a welfare net and on employment creation. People of all classes came together believing they had a stake in the system and a conviction that the government was legitimate. This 'golden era', however, began to crumble toward the end of the 1960s as inflation increased, economic restraints were introduced, and hegemony began to crumble.

Elsewhere in the world, public order policing had begun to take more militarised forms. In the United States, specialised units, the Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) units, were formed to deal with potentially dangerous situations. They were copiously trained, wore military-like uniforms, and carried automatic weapons (Brewer et al, 1988). Protests and demonstrations were heavily policed, in turn giving rise to riotous situations. During the Detroit riots of July 1968, 7200 people were arrested, and 43 were killed. Most of those killed and arrested were black. In France, the Compagnie Republicaine de Securite killed five demonstrators in 1968 (Roach and Thomanek, 1986). In China, the police, often together with the military, were called in to restore order by force during the period of the Cultural Revolution (Brewer et al, 1988). While governments were called into question in each of these countries, particularly by minority and dispossessed groupings, it was in South Africa that state legitimacy was most in question and the policing of protest was essentially despotic.

In South Africa, the policing of public order during the 1960s was essentially shaped by the agenda of the nation state, rather than by international trends or organisational exigencies. The 1960s in South Africa was

4. Within a few years, 58 000 people were forcibly removed from their homes and relocated in other outlying areas (Karis and Carter, 1977).

the period of 'Grand Apartheid' as the National Party government attempted to consolidate its domination through a strategy of divide and rule. The main project of the state during this period was to achieve 'Afrikaner hegemony' (Uys, 1989:206) through the economic and social promotion of Afrikaners, and the 'separate development' of other racial and ethnic groupings. The main thrust of all 'native policy was that Africans had no rights in the urban areas, and could never expect to get them' (Stadler, 1987:103). Africans were allowed into urban areas only for the purposes of their labour. Associated with the denial of rights to settle in the urban areas, was the denial of any civil rights, particularly the right to expression and protest. Any resistance to Prime Minister Verwoerd and his government would not be tolerated.

In April 1960, the ANC and the Pan Africanist Congress were banned in an attempt 'to repress all forms of opposition, although non-violent and legal, in the country as a whole' (*Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report*, Chapter 3:163). In 1963 and 1964, almost the entire leadership of the ANC and PAC within South Africa (including Nelson Mandela) were arrested, charged with high treason, and sentenced to life imprisonment. A clear signal had been sent out that protest, demonstration and resistance politics more broadly, would not be tolerated (Ellis and Sechaba, 1992). Despite mass arrests and the banning of political organisations, the liberation movement continued to mobilise around protest against the pass laws and against Group Areas Acts that confined black people to designated urban areas under restrictive conditions. It was during this period that the ANC established its military armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe, as well as an underground campaign to counter the repression of the state.

As a result of the Verwoerdian policies and ideology, the activities of the police were essentially shaped by the assumption that Africans were rightless subjects. The entire thrust of policing in the 1960s was geared toward 'law and order', and the police played the most central role of all institutions in upholding the apartheid social order. The police were the 'primary instruments of state power' (van der Spuy, 1990). They enforced influx control regulations and political repression. The combat of 'communism' and 'terrorism' were the key duties of the police, and the police responded ruthlessly against those engaged in mass protest and demonstrations.

The Sharpeville massacre was the key protest event that demonstrated that the apartheid government would not tolerate any form of collective resistance. On 21 March 1960, a crowd of 20 000 township residents gathered in Sharpeville to protest against the pass laws. A police line of about 70 men was formed and they were given an order to load their firearms in preparation to shoot. Without the actual order to shoot, police fired into the crowd and 69 protestors were killed, most of them being shot in the back (Jeffery, 1991).

Following the Sharpeville massacre, the police prepared for an internal war. The Terrorism Act of 1967 was passed and this allowed the police to conduct themselves as if they were in a state of war (Dippenaar, 1988). The combating of terrorism proved to be not only an internal police function. Police were also deployed on the borders of South West Africa (now Namibia) as a means of ensuring internal stability. The

combating of terrorism was simply portrayed as part of the police primary function - the combat of crime.

During the early 1960s, given the banning of political parties and the imprisonment of political leaders, there were relatively low levels of public protest against the apartheid state. 'The main threat to the political system was deemed to be from the liberation struggles and nascent democracies in neighbouring states resulting in large numbers of policemen being posted for duty on South Africa's borders and beyond...' (Rauch and Storey, 1998:4).⁵ As a result, during the 1960s, no specialised units were established to deal with public order problems.

The embryo of specialised units emerged in Durban in the early 1960s in the form of mobile units. The first mobile unit in the country originated in Durban under the command of Captain Visagie (Barnard, 2000). Captain Visagie was at the time based in the Durban Area Commissioner's office. In 1963, Visagie proposed that there was a need for members who were trained specifically for the containment of riots. In the Durban Area elected members from all the stations were trained in riot control and were called upon 'when the need arose' (Barnard, 2000:28). These selected members got together once a month to train in formations and drill at the old Wentworth Mobile Stores Unit. According to Barnard, given the 'foresight' of the Durban Area Commissioner's office, Durban SAP were available to be called upon to deal with riotous situations in the late 1960s. For example, according to Barnard, 'when the first shots were fired in the former South West Africa in 1966, and South Africa had to send in police members, the men of the Durban Mobile Unit were the only ones trained for this type of conflict. They made up more than 50 per cent of the members called up to Pretoria to undergo bush war training, presented by the South African Defence Force Parabats'.⁶ Other similar such units began to be established throughout South Africa, but this was not part of a broader plan within the South African Police. They arose due to local needs and there was no uniformity between these localised mobile units.⁷ As Rauch and Storey have commented, 'each Division was more-or-less left to its own methods of crowd control based on local conditions and knowledge' (1998:19).

During this period, there were three key Acts which governed the policing of riots and public order:

- The Riotous Assembly Act 17 of 1956. This Act conferred wide powers on magistrates and to the Minister of Justice to control and prohibit public gatherings. Section 2(1) of the Act enabled a magistrate with the authorisation of the Minister of Justice to prohibit a public gathering if

5. Mobilisation against the apartheid state during this period took the form of an underground campaign. In 1961, the ANC established a separate armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) which initiated a sabotage campaign directed at government installations.

6. This information was contested by General Marais, one of the first members of the Mobile Unit. According to Marais, the first mobile unit was established in Umtata in the early 1960s. He argues that this was because of the high levels of 'faction fighting' in the Transkei area at that time. The unit was based in Umtata and serviced the whole of the Transkei area. The unit was made up of about 145 men at the time. This information was provided by General Marais in an interview in September 1999.

7. Interview with General Marais, September 1999.

he/she were of the opinion that it represented a serious threat to public peace. 'The Minister of Justice had wide (and practically unchallengeable) discretion to prohibit particular public gatherings from taking place, or to prohibit a particular person from attending a public gathering...Once prohibited, mere attendance at such a prohibited gathering was not an offence, but all actions relating to the organisation of a prohibited gathering were criminalised' (Rauch and Storey, 1998:9). If a prohibited gathering did take place, the police were empowered to disperse the gathering by force.

- The Suppression of Communism Act 44 of 1950. Section 9(3) of this Act awarded the Minister of Justice absolute administrative powers to prohibit a particular gathering, or to ban gatherings generally in any area and for any period specified by him. The size or location of the gathering (including indoor meetings) did not limit the Act's application.
- The Public Safety Act 3 of 1953, gave the police wide latitude in terms of their application of the legislation and provided the police with impunity for their actions against those engaged in protest or demonstration. This Act provided indemnity against civil or criminal prosecution for members of security forces who acted in 'good faith'. In practice, this meant that members of the police and the military were placed above the law and rather than members of the police being responsible for providing evidence for the legitimacy and legality of their actions, the 'onus was on the victim to show that a policeman acted in bad faith when he fired recklessly into a crowd, or failed to fire a warning shot, or neglected to use less drastic forms of "coercion"' (Haysom, cited in Rauch and Storey, 1998:17).

These three Acts (enacted in the 1950s but most ardently enforced in the 1960s) provided an extremely permissive legislative framework for the use of force in crowd situations. Consequently, extreme force was used by the police as a matter of course. The policing of protest in many ways was based on principles of warfare. Protests were seen to be organised by communist agitators who needed to be silenced in the most 'effective' manner possible. The legislation and practices which emerged in the 1960s with regard to the policing of public protest set the stage for public order policing for the next two decades.

During the 1960s, members of the SAP, particularly those active in the mobile units, were also called upon to do border duty on the Rhodesian, South West African, and Angolan borders. The experiences of border duty appear to have been very traumatic for many of the members who were part of the mobile units. One of the white inspectors from POP Durban who was part of the early mobile units was clearly very troubled by his experiences of border duty:

Border duty started in the 1960s. We were sent to Rhodesia and to the Angolan border. Our mission was to combat terrorism. You would do foot patrol and look for spoor. We had to watch for terrorists coming across the border. If someone shot, we wouldn't think twice, we would shoot back. In those years, we were just put into a situation. But, to be honest, I

have tried to put those things behind me. I want them to be out of my mind...I would really prefer not to speak about border duty, please. It is a very sensitive issue. It is something we will only talk about amongst ourselves...In a way, I think that it was not fair to put us on the border. We really did become the first line of defence against the terrorists. This should have been the job of the military. The politicians were just playing with our lives. But, what could we do? It was just another part of the job we had to do. Anyway, we had to ensure that the country was free of terrorists.⁸

While the Inspector quoted above was not prepared to talk about his experiences on the border, it is clear that he was traumatised by his time on the border. It would also seem that he did not feel that border control duty should have been the responsibility of members of the police.

General Marais who was also part of the mobile units in this early period, also remembers border duty as extremely traumatic. During an interview with him in September 1999, he informed me that the most disturbing event he could recall took place on the South West Africa border where the police were operating jointly with the Defence Force:

We were informed by a commander in charge that we were about to be approached by a group of Umkhonto we Sizwe [ANC armed wing] operatives. As a group of men appeared in the near distance, we simply ambushed them and shot them all. When the bodies were brought back to camp, it was clear that all six people that were killed were in fact innocent herd-boys from the area. No investigation was ever done with regard to this incident.

The involvement of members in border duty from the 1960s meant that these police were engaged in essentially military activities where deadly force was employed automatically and such responses were seldom investigated. The experience of border duty most likely resulted in a belief amongst members that the police were fighting a war with no boundaries. The 'threat' came from both outside the country and from within and similar tactics could be used in dealing with these threats to social and public order within South Africa. Military responses to public order problems were consequently viewed as both legitimate and necessary.

Natal was a key site of political activism during this period. A military high command of the ANC's military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), was established in the Natal region and the 1961 sabotage campaign began with an attempt to bomb the Durban offices of the Department of Bantu Education in December 1961. The Durban post office, telephone services, tax offices and a railway line in Durban were also damaged in this campaign. As a result of these activities, Natal was particularly hard-hit by the imposition of restrictions, bannings, detentions, arrests and banishing orders (*Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report*, Chapter 3).

8. Interview with Inspector Du Plessis, June 2000. Du Plessis joined the Mobile Unit in the late 1960s. At the time of interviewing, he was a member of POP Durban.

The 1970s - a turning point for protest policing

In the 1970s, the policing of public order came under the spotlight internationally as the policing of crowds became more brutal and paramilitary specialised units multiplied. This was true of both developed and developing countries. The Israeli police and military, threatened by the internal resistance of Arab Israelis responded forcefully to public demonstrations. In March 1976, for example, Arabs protested against the expropriation of land in the Galilee and the Negev areas. Six demonstrators were killed when the military were called in to assist with the policing of the crowd (Brewer et al, 1988). In the United States of America, public concern was expressed with regards to the growth of SWAT units which were viewed as having a militarising effect on policing in general (Kraska and Paulsen, 1997).

In Britain, academics and communities were horrified by the heavy-handed response of the police to public protest and demonstration. A few key incidents are cited in the literature. In 1974, a university student, Kevin Gately, was killed during an anti-National Front demonstration at Warwick University (Gregory, 1996).

In 1975, large-scale violence erupted between the minority communities and the police during the Notting Hill Carnival. The violence was sparked off by a massive presence of highly mobile and heavily armed police units, the Special Patrol Groups (Rollo, 1980). The police were accosted with a hail of stones and bricks, and the police (being inadequately equipped and poorly trained) had to grab dustbin lids for protection. In April 1979, a civilian, Blair Peach, was killed when police tried to handle a counter-demonstration of the black community in Southall against a National Front meeting.

A number of British scholars of the police tried to explain this change in the structure and response of the police to demonstrations and protest during this period. Gregory (1986) argues that it was due to an increase in IRA activity and terrorism, serious and widespread industrial disputes, and the eruption of race related conflict that gave rise to this response. Jefferson (1990), however, explores the causes of this protest in the first instance and how these causes informed the response of the state. The explanation, he says, lies in the crisis of hegemony confronting the British state from the late 1960s as unemployment grew and the Tory government with its law-and-order politics was elected into power. Police militarisation was both a symptom and an outcome of a breakdown in hegemony.

In South Africa, too, the state entered into a period of real economic and political crisis. 'By the mid 1970s, townships were facing a crisis of reproduction: inadequate urban services, rising unemployment as a result of the recession, and declining real wage levels as inflation rose' (Swilling, 1988:4). The neighbouring states (Angola and Mozambique) all attained political independence as a result of popular liberation movements, and this re-inspired a resistance movement within South Africa. The Black Consciousness Movement became a strong force, and opposition political organisations were revitalized. The emergence of the Black Consciousness Movement represented the 'collapse of any significant belief among Africans in the possibility of a liberal resolution to the South African crisis' (Stadler, 1986:171). In the workplace too, resistance intensified and the black trade union movement expanded, paving the way for new and liberalized industrial policies.

The state responded to this crisis with a two-pronged strategy. On the one hand, efforts were made to try to legitimise the political and social order - political organisations were remodelled, and opportunities in education and the economy were increased for blacks. On the other hand, 'the state's repressive apparatus was strengthened, and both the military and police acquired expanded powers and resources' (Stadler, 1987, 161). Both these strategies, while seemingly contradictory, were aimed at restoring state control, and ending internal resistance to state authority. Neither of these goals was achieved and the challenge to the state became more severe.

By the early 1970s the police in South Africa began to see the need for a 'specialized capacity to control unrest' (Rauch and Storey, 1998:5) owing to the growing resistance to apartheid during this period. Mobile units were then formed in most areas throughout South Africa. These mobile units were based at Divisional level and were commanded by an officer at Divisional level, usually of the rank of Major. This Divisional head would command the mobile unit over and above the other work he was responsible for. General Marais explains how these Divisional Mobile units operated:

Each Divisional head had a number of vehicles and some equipment which was placed at a store somewhere to be used when the need arose. When trouble came, it was the Divisional Officer's job to mobilise members. The districts would then be informed and would have to allocate members who would be sent out. There was no ongoing and specified training for these members. Nobody belonged permanently to the mobile unit. It was all very ad hoc at the time. Members would be called to operate in the mobile units, they would be equipped and sent out to the trouble spots. They would then come back to their stations.⁹

At this time members were still not permanently based in the mobile units. This began to change after the June 1976 Soweto Uprisings which represents a turning point for the policing of crowds and public disorder.¹⁰ When thousands of Soweto school children took to the street on 16 June 1976 to protest the use of Afrikaans as the medium for instruction in schools, the South African Police were caught completely unprepared. They used automatic weapons to counter the protest of school children and almost 1000 people were killed in the six months that followed the initial protest. On the July 23, 1996, Murphy Morobe presented a statement to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission concerning the behavior of the police in Soweto on 16 June 1976 and the chaos that ensued as a result. He recalls:

The police came out with the dog and let loose the dog that came charging at us...It was a real dog that bit some of the students there and I think that really raised the anger of the students that we were not doing anything that we thought warranted that kind of reaction from them...That dog was then killed by students who sought to protect themselves from

9. Interview with General Marais, September 1999.

10. The 1976 Soweto Uprising is considered as a watershed in South Africa's political history more generally. Following the 1976 rebellions, which spread throughout South Africa, national and international attention was directed to South Africa's political structures (Swilling in Frankel, Pines and Swilling, ed, 1988). From this time onward, the South African state was faced with an ever-increasing crisis of legitimation as well as escalating opposition in the townships.

it. At that time the police started opening fire, you know, and sure there was taunting of the police...Once the shooting began it was at the time that other schools were approaching us from the back of the police that were perched at on the hill facing us...it was the first time that many of us had experience of teargas...One of the things that always remains a painful one was the fact that most of those policemen that came out of the van were actually black policeman...There was no attempt whatsoever, you know, to tell us to disperse...It was a matter of them stepping out of their vehicles, taking positions alongside their vehicles and sending the police dog into us. He might have shouted, you know, but any well trained policeman who respects human life would know that he or she would have to do that in such a way that the people for whom that announcement is meant, hear it (<http://www.truth.org.za/hrvtrans/soweto/morobe.htm>).

According to Rauch and Storey (1998), the SAP was not equipped to deal with a domestic uprising of the scale of the 1976 uprisings. 'The policemen who faced massive protest marches at the time were ordinary police officials drawn from nearby stations, possessing no special skills in training or handling crowds' (Rauch and Storey, 1988:10). The excessive force used by the police and the enormous human costs that resulted from this gave rise to public outcry from all sectors of South African society. It became clear to the police that the dynamics in the black townships had changed and that the South African Police would have to rethink their riot control structures and strategies.

A commission of enquiry chaired by Mr Justice Cillie was established and members of the commission concluded that 'so far as manpower, equipment and mental attitude were concerned, [the police]...were completely unprepared for such a mass demonstration' (Cillie Report, cited in Jeffery, 1991:28). Given the poor preparation, intelligence and capacity of the SAP with regard the 1976 uprisings, it was decided that the SAP required easily identifiable and mobile Riot Units which would be able to respond swiftly and effectively to future instances of collective action.

As was the case in the 1960s, regular police members at station level were identified and instructed to be part of these units. Those chosen were often the most violent, undisciplined, and unproductive policemen whom station commanders felt were dispensable.¹¹ There were no formal selection criteria at the time, and the decision as to who would constitute the riot unit was left solely to the discretion of the Station Commander. The selected members were from all race groups, but the command structure was entirely white.

The selected members fell under the command of a Divisional Commander, and each Division was allocated a number - the Durban division came to be called Riot Unit 9. Following the 1976 Soweto uprisings, each Divisional Commander was instructed to send a few commissioned officers on a six week course at a new SAP training base at Maloeskop, a farm in the Eastern Transvaal. These officers were trained as instructors and were responsible for training other members around the country about crowd or riot control. This 'train-the-trainer' approach represented the first attempt at a planned implementation of decentralised training in riot or crowd control.

11. Interview with Sergeant Nzimande, Chatsworth Training College, August 1997.

According to General Marais, the first Durban West Riot Unit District Commander, the training received at the course at Maloeskop Police College was 'very basic'. According to him, the South African Defence Force was centrally involved in the training course and conducted training in counter-insurgency. Marais claims that some of the trainers were sent to Israel for training in counter-insurgency where they learned 'how to do things like chase a bus and how to attack a bus'.¹² Members who attended the course were taught how to use the equipment that was available and were informed about the specific acts that pertained to 'riot control'. There was little training in the use of strategies or formations. According to Rauch and Storey 'the content of training was broad, including everything from tracking terrorists, to sniper training. It focussed almost exclusively on the use of force, and the majority of training time was concentrated on training police officers in the use of weapons and equipment they would be issued with in the riot units...In short, the aim of the training was to ensure that a member would emerge from the course with the knowledge of what gatherings should be dispersed, when to disperse them, and how to use weapons to disperse them' (1998:26).

The equipment available at the time was also very limited. The vehicles that were mostly used during this time were Land Rovers since this was prior to the introduction of armoured vehicles. Members were issued with steel helmets, kit bags, and batons. More importantly, perhaps, they were issued with lethal weapons which included a shotgun firing buckshot which is lethal at up to 70 metres; R1 rifles which are lethal not only for the targeted person, but also any person standing behind such a person; and R5 rifles which can kill a targeted person up to a range of 150 metres (Jeffrey, 1991). There were no shields available at this time. Members were trained how to use tear gas and gas masks as well as the use of the D-formation which was developed by the Old Rhodesian Police force. Members from the Durban areas were trained at the Wentworth Training Centre once a month, and were sent regularly to the Maryvale Shooting Range for shooting practice.

The events of 1976 gave rise to a more systematic and coherent approach to establishing localised Riot Units as well as a more structured approach to training. At the same time, there was a concern to establish a more permanent component for riot or crowd control. In late 1979, a national riot unit was formed and was called the Reaction Unit. This Reaction Unit was trained by an existing and highly specialised national unit of the SAP, the Special Task Force.¹³ The Special Task Force was responsible for the training of the national Reaction Unit in Pretoria, also known as Unit 19. The Reaction Unit was also highly specialised and focussed more specifically on counter-insurgency and riot control situations. Unit 19 was responsible

12. Interview with General Marais, September 1999.

13. The special task force is currently known as the National Task Force. The Special Task Force was established in 1976 following an incident known as the Fox Street Siege where a number of hostages were held in the Israeli Embassy in February 1994. The unit is highly trained and specialised to deal with high-risk situations such as tracing of terrorists, rescue of hostages, underwater searches, and VIP protection services. Members who enter this unit have to undergo six months training which includes counter-insurgency and urban terrorism, handling of weapons and identifying of explosives.

for rapid deployment to unrest points anywhere in the country that the local mobile Riot Units were unable to contain.¹⁴

The systematic formation of the mobile riot units throughout South Africa as well as the formation of the national Reaction Unit, signified a move towards a specialised and separate unit within the SAP to deal with any crowd situations. However, it was not only those members selected to serve in the mobile units who were trained in riot control and counter-insurgency. Following the 1976 Soweto uprisings, those in command of the SAP decided that it was crucial for all police members to be prepared for any potentially riotous situations. From this time on, the majority of police members had to undergo crowd control and counter-insurgency training, given that, according to police and military leaders, South Africa was facing the threat of a total communist onslaught which was orchestrated by communist imperialist powers who made use of terrorist front organisations.

Police management maintained that South Africa was under siege, and there was therefore a need for the use of extreme force in order to achieve public 'harmony'. The training of the majority of members of the SAP in riot control and counter-insurgency is only one indicator of the alarm that police felt regarding the internal climate in South Africa. 'In the eight years following the 1976 Soweto uprisings, the regular manpower levels of the SAP rose by almost 30 per cent' (Brewer, 1989:259).

During the 1970s, Durban was once again a site of both major resistance and repression. The heart of industrial resistance was the 1973 Durban strikes that affected 150 establishments. The University of Natal Medical School was one of the key institutional bases of the Black Consciousness Movement and many Black Consciousness supporters were arrested in Durban and charged under the Terrorism Act No 83 of 1967. The 1976 Soweto uprising impacted on Durban and produced a wave of popular protest amongst youth (Stadler, 1986). The security forces in Durban arrested and detained political activists and there were widespread allegations of torture. There were also numerous treason trials during this period and in 1976 Harry Gwala and nine others were charged under the Terrorism Act (*Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report*, Chapter 3).

The 1980s - fortifying separate riot policing units

In the 1980s, it became clear that serious consideration needed to be given to changing the nature and organisation of public order policing. Throughout Europe, public order policing became a key concern for governments. Increased powers had been awarded to the police, and relations between the police and the public had been tarnished (Roach and Tomanek, 1985). In Britain, 'outbreaks of public disorder [led] to changes in public order policing which in turn [created] conditions in which the legitimacy of the police [was] questioned' (Morgan and Smith, 1989:235). This outcry was a response to the notable deviation of the British police away from 'push-and-shove' methods of crowd management, to more aggressive and forceful

14. Telephonic interview with Director Fryer, Commander of the National Task Force, July 2000.

policing which, as we have seen, began in the 1970s.

Fundamental to the change in public order policing was the Scarman Report drawn up in 1981. This report was commissioned in response to the violence which erupted during the urban riots in the early 1980s. The 1981 Brixton riots were the catalyst. Since the 1950s, Brixton had been a rental area for Caribbean migrants. In April 1981, police tried to enforce unpopular housing policies and in doing so conducted raids in full riot gear. They were perceived by the local community as a force of occupation, and in the few days that followed, violent conflict broke out between the police and black youth in the area. In the short period 10-12 April 1981, 145 shops premises were damaged. On the evening of 11 April 1981, 279 police officers and at least 45 members of the public were injured. Many police and other vehicles were destroyed as well. Police attempted to disperse the crowd, but widespread looting resulted. While police only made use of batons, it became clear that they were not properly trained, deployed, or equipped (Pike, 1985).

The Brixton riots thus came to represent the need for a fundamental shift in the approach to public order policing:

For many the events of Brixton 1981 introduced a qualitatively different era into British policing. Brixton came to signify a fundamental break with the past - with the golden age of policing by consent. ...An examination of urban policing strategies pointed to a pervasive drift toward para-militarism. And it is this tendency toward a militarisation of policing that many regarded as incompatible with the tradition of consensual policing in Britain (van der Spuy, 1989:55).

Following the Brixton riots, high-level reviews of police arrangements for the handling of public order were requested. Lord Scarman was commissioned to investigate and write a report. The aim of the Scarman report was to provide suggestions which would lead to a widening of the scope 'that the police have to de-escalate potentially riotous situations' (Brearly and King, 1996a:56). Scarman identified a number of problems on the part of the police which contributed to the violent outcomes of the Brixton incident: there were signs of racial prejudice; policing was unimaginative and inflexible; the police over-reacted to disorder; there was a delay and a lack of vigour in dealing with the disorder; and the police were poorly equipped and trained for the task (Pike, 1985).

The report called for sufficiently trained and equipped officers, improved arrangements for communications, a review of tactics, as well as a stress on prior planning and negotiations (Brearly and King, 1996a). Aside from its insistence on proper procedure - pre-planning, negotiation, proper assessment, and comprehensive evaluation and debriefing - there are a number of important principles which constitute 'good practice'. These include the development of co-operative relations with communities, a graduated police response, minimum use of force, tolerance and situational appropriateness. All these principles were based on a fundamental acceptance of the rights and liberties of the individual and were essentially a restatement of early 'Peelian' policing principles which stress accountability, co-operative relationships with communities, impartiality, and the minimum use of force (Pike, 1985).

The Scarman Report did not lead to immediate changes in the policing of crowds and protest in Britain. In fact, the mid-1980s were also characterised by confrontation between police and (minority) communities. In 1985, for example, riots again broke out in Handsworth, Brixton, Tottenham, and Broadwater Farm. At Broadwater Farm, a police officer was hacked to death and firearms were used against the police. In Handsworth, a street carnival transformed into a riot triggered off when police tried to arrest two men at the scene of a motoring offence. Shops were looted, the local police station was set on fire, and two men died. The Brixton riot was precipitated by the accidental shooting of Ms Cherry Groce when armed officers entered her home in search of her son (Brewer et al, 1988). Clearly, there was no automatic transformation in police behaviour or police-community relations resulting from the report. But, the report placed firmly on the agenda that a new form of public order policing had to develop.¹⁵

The Scarman Report, while directed at the British police, influenced police forces throughout the world, particularly those in countries characterised by liberal democratic policies. This was due to the 'vociferous domestic protest and increased international pressure arising from the wider acceptance of the norms governing human rights, equality, and justice' (Brewer et al, 1988:235). The extent to which the suggestions of the Scarman Report were practicalised and implemented, however, depended on a number of variables which include 'the nature or changing of the state, the cleavages that [existed] within society, the specific functional specialisms of the police force concerned, and the organisational structure and lines of accountability within the force' (Brewer et al, 1988:234).

The authoritarian nature of the apartheid state, legally enforced racial divisions, and the unimpeachable nature of the police force meant that the Scarman report had little impact on the nature of public order policing in South Africa. By the mid-1980s, the South African state was confronting its greatest crisis of legitimacy as internal resistance escalated and much of the international world severed social, political and economic ties. In a desperate attempt to maintain power, repression was intensified and the South African government insulated itself from outside influences and criticism. The policing of crowds and public order during this period in South Africa became even more ferocious, and no real attention was paid to international trends and developments.

From 1982 onward, levels of political mobilisation increased dramatically. Civic struggles escalated throughout the country with the introduction of the Black Local Authorities Act in 1983 (Seekings, 1990) which tried to devolve the governance of black townships to local authorities which lacked resources, capacity, and legitimacy. The anger of township residents mounted as local councils increased rents, evicted defaulters and demolished shacks, and was fuelled by the lack of services rendered by councils and allegations by residents of widespread corruption. Initially protests were peaceful, but when residents'

15. Jefferson (1990) makes an interesting point in this regard. He argues that the Scarman report gave rise to a more 'professionalised' approach to public order policing through its insistence on increased training and the use of more sophisticated technology, and that this in itself led to increased militarisation in the policing of public order.

demands and concerns were not acknowledged and dealt with, protests became more confrontational and eventually, violent (Lodge, 1991). This violence spiralled as the security forces used tear gas, rubber bullets and even live ammunition to curb local resistance (Steytler, 1989). In April 1984, a nationwide school boycott was embarked upon precipitated by the extremely poor matriculation results and the refusal of the authorities to readmit pupils who were over the state-stipulated school-going age (Lodge, 1991). This led to the freeing of school going youth who could then take up oppositional activities which constituted the backbone of community struggles (Seekings, 1988; Hyslop, 1988; Johnson, 1989).

The most central contributor to the increased township resistance in the early 1980s was the formation of the United Democratic Front (UDF) in August 1983. This was 'a turning point in the shift of balance between the South African government and black opposition' (Lodge, 1991:29). According to Lodge, 'the UDF inspired an insurrectionary movement that was without precedent in its combative militancy, in the burden it imposed on government and in the degree to which it internalised hostility toward apartheid' (Lodge, 1991:29).

The regulatory framework restricting the right to protest and assemble prior to 1992 was expanded and the Minister of Justice was awarded further powers to prohibit gatherings. New legislation 'granted sweeping discretionary powers, closed any loop-holes that had previously been exploited, and extended the range of criminal offences associated with gatherings, while reducing the restrictions on the use of force to prevent and disperse crowds' (Rauch and Storey, 1998:10). The most important Act governing the policing of public order at this time was the Internal Security (Act 74 of 1982). This Act gave wide powers to the Minister of Law and Order to control and prohibit public gatherings. Under section 46(3), the Minister had the power to prohibit any gathering if he deemed this necessary or expedient. 'This was held by the Appellate Division to be a discretion without bounds. Provided the power was exercised for the purposes of the section, the Minister's view as to the necessity or expediency of the prohibition was regarded as conclusive, and could not be challenged on objective grounds' (Rauch and Storey, 1998:11). The Act authorised police members to order a crowd to disperse and to use force to compel adherence to such instructions.

The Internal Security Act allowed for the use of force, which included the use of firearms and other lethal weapons in the policing of protest and assemblies. While the Act stated that lethal force should only be used if lesser means had proven unsuccessful in achieving a dispersal, or if violence appeared imminent, these provisions were not effective in curtailing the use of force. Perhaps the most fundamental problem with the Act (as was its intention) was that it provided no means other than dispersal to deal with a prohibited gathering or assembly. To make matters worse, the Act required that a warning be given only once, and police were no longer obliged to inform the public that force may be used to disperse the gathering (Rauch and Storey, 1998).

The Internal Security Act was used in conjunction with Section 49(2) of the Criminal Procedures Act of

1977. This Act, allowed the SAP as well as other police agencies (such as the mining police and private security firms) to use any force that was deemed 'necessary' under a given circumstance in order to overcome resistance or to stop a fleeing suspect. Justifiable homicide was viewed as an acceptable plea if a fleeing person could not be stopped or arrested. Furthermore, the Act allowed for the detention of a suspect for a period of 48 hours, even without good cause being demonstrated. These Acts, used together, gave the police wide powers to arrest, detain, and to use deadly force with almost no culpability on their part.

Despite the repressive responses of the South African Police, mobilisation and protest continued and in fact intensified in the mid-1980s. The spiral of violence escalated as resistance increased and the actions of the police became increasingly repressive. The enormity of the need to control the threats to public disorder (which the apartheid state generated) meant that 'riot control in South Africa was not a "skill" restricted to a specialist or elite squad' (Brewer et al, 1988:177). Instead, the entire SAP was geared toward front-line counter- insurgency tasks where "normal" crime became a secondary problem as the police concentrated on the struggle against "ideological criminals" (Cawthra, 1992:6). The whole police force, often together with the military, were equipped and ready at all times to enforce a social order as defined by apartheid governance.¹⁶ The role of the police was synonymous with the control of riots and unrest and with defending the interests of the white minority.

In 1984, troops were brought into the black townships to help quell unrest, indicating in no uncertain terms the military approach to dealing with public protest. Evans and Phillips describe the moment when the defence force moved into the townships:

On the night of Saturday 6 October 1984, South African Defence Force troops entered Joza township outside Grahamstown. By the next morning they had moved into Soweto outside Johannesburg as well...Within two weeks Operation Palmiet was launched. At 4 o'clock in the morning, a 7000 strong contingent of policemen and soldiers entered the Vaal township of Sebokeng outside of Vereeniging. While troops cordoned off the streets, the police conducted house-to-house searches in an attempt... 'to root out revolutionaries'. By the end of the day, they had arrested 350 residents...A new phase of conflict in South Africa had begun: a phase in which the lines of battle shifted from the borders of Namibia to the black townships of South Africa...(Evans and Philips, 1988:117).

The government's decision to deploy the military internally to quell unrest indicated in no uncertain terms that a military approach to dealing with public protest had been endorsed.¹⁷ The police became increasingly

16. The training, equipment and deployment of police in 'riotous' circumstances was reinforced by legislation which awarded extensive powers to the police, and criminalised everyday activities of ordinary South Africans. For example, the Amendment Act of 1980 prohibited reporting of police misconduct. The Indemnity Act of 1977 gave indemnity to any action or statement arising from the policing of internal unrest. And, the Internal Security Act of 1982 the police were awarded wide powers to arrest, detain and interrogate people involved in broadly defined acts of terrorism and subversion which included industrial disputes, school children boycotting classes, and participants in peaceful demonstrations (Brewer et al, 1988).

17. The introduction of the troops into the townships to quell unrest led to a debate within the SAP about the most feasible approach for dealing with gatherings. A new model was proposed, the 3rd force model, as a solution to the problem of large scale public disorder. The third force would comprise a new grouping that fell between the military and the police but was not under the direct

heavy-handed and paramilitary in nature. Evans and Phillips (1988) argue that this shift to an extremely militarised approach represented a watershed in South African politics as the battle between the apartheid state and the liberation movement became even more polarised and violent.¹⁸ The State Security Council (SSC) called for a strategy of counter-insurgency against what they called the 'communist onslaught' of the liberation movement.¹⁹

From 1984 onwards the SADF and the SAP operated jointly on a continual basis to suppress township resistance, signalling that the SAP alone was not able to cope with the intensifying resistance within South Africa.²⁰ The brutality of the police and the military during this period was incessant. Between September 1984 and December 1985 alone, the security forces were responsible for the deaths of 628 people in township unrest. Township residents also voiced 'allegations of rape, assault, murder, theft, the besieging of schools, the disruption of funerals and church services and the demolition of shacks' by the security forces (Evans and Phillips, 1988:130). Violent conflict between the state security forces and township residents escalated, and high levels of resistance mobilisation were sustained. Academics and activists at the time argued that there was a virtual civil war in the townships (Seekings, 1988).

On the 21 July 1985, a State of Emergency was declared in 36 magisterial districts. 'The state attempted to counter the increasing ungovernability of the affected townships through armed occupation by the military, coupled with police action aimed at the destruction of organised opposition through mass arrests and detentions' (Grest, 1988:106). The state of emergency, which lasted for eight months, gave soldiers and policemen, regardless of rank, 'absolute authority to arrest, interrogate, search homes, and confiscate possessions. The commissioner of police could declare night and daytime curfews, close any building or business property, regulate the news, and restrict access to any area defined by the regulations' (Lodge, 1991:78).

A number of new offences, punishable by a prison sentence of up to ten years, were also promulgated by the 1985 State of Emergency. These offences included innocuous acts such as verbally threatening to

command of either body. This highly specialised force would be employed solely to deal with serious public violence and disorder. This grouping would have the appropriate training and equipment for this type of work, and this would make them more effective than either the police or the military. This proposal was rejected in 1985, and again in 1986. In 1991, the Internal Stability Unit was formed which had some of the characteristics of a third force, but remained part of the broader policing body (Rauch and Storey, 1988).

18. This, however, was not the first time the military had been called upon to act internally to assist the SAP with riot control work. The SADF was deployed on alert after the 1960 Sharpeville shootings. During the 1976 Soweto uprisings the SADF was again called upon to assist the SAP (Prior, 1989).

19. The State Security Council (SSC) was a cabinet committee chaired by the Prime Minister. It was responsible for the directing and co-ordinating the activities of 15 inter-departmental committees. The policies and decisions of the SSC were implemented at the regional and local level by Joint Management Councils which were headed by the SAP and the SADF.

20. It is important to note that the joint working relationship between the military and the police in the townships was nothing new. According to Evans and Phillips (1988), joint operations began as early as April 1983 where 43 000 soldiers had been used in police work. The importance of the 1984 deployment of the troops in the townships was that a more permanent relationship between the police and the military was established in containing internal unrest.

harm another person; preparing, printing, publishing or possessing a 'threatening' document; hindering officers in the course of duty; destroying or defacing any notice of the emergency regulations; disclosing the names of any persons arrested by the security forces before their name was officially confirmed; causing fear or panic or weakening public confidence; and advising people to stay away from work (Johnson, 1989). What the State of Emergency regulations effectively achieved in defining these offences was to criminalise any activity which could be construed as political. It also empowered the police to act against collective groups of people in almost any setting - students at school, workers in a factory, mourners at funerals, and participants in peaceful demonstrations. The criminalisation of protest activities, and even of everyday collective events, was congruent with what Brewer refers to as the 'stereotypes of blacks which pervaded the occupational culture of the SAP, presenting black South Africans as criminals and threats to the state' (1989:270).

The State of Emergency also awarded all security force members, and those in the prison services, indemnity from civil and criminal prosecution, as long as they acted in 'good faith'. If a member of the security forces acted under the command, direction, or instruction of a superior officer, their actions were deemed to be in good faith. These boundless powers were used extensively by the police and the military with enormous human costs. In 1985 alone, a total of 512 African adults and 187 African juveniles were killed in police shootings. A total of 2312 people were wounded by the police (Brogden and Shearing, 1993). During this same period, 18 966 people were detained for 'unrest offences' in 1985. Twenty-two per cent of those detained were under 16 years of age (Brewer, 1989). The brutal tactics of the police, however, seldom came into the public eye. This was largely due to the 1958 Police Act which prevented the publication of what it called 'untrue material' which related to police misconduct. The force which the police employed in riotous situations was only possible because of the type of ammunition and equipment they were issued with. Rauch and Storey (1998) have provided a list of the main equipment issued to the police who were engaged in riot control during the 1980s. The list includes:

- R1 rifles - either single or automatic shot at a range of 150m
- R5 rifles - hypervelocity single or automatic shot at a range of 150m
- Uzi hand machine-carbine - either single or automatic shot at a range of 100m
- Teargas - used to incapacitate people or disperse them from a particular location
- Wooden sticks, truncheons, and later, plastic batons
- Stopper guns - used for firing teargas rounds or rubber bullets
- 12 bore Musler shot-guns - used to fire a range of ammunition which includes both rubber bullets and pellets (which are potentially lethal)

The use of live and lethal ammunition was an integral part of riot control. While some of the equipment was deemed 'non-lethal' - tear gas, rubber bullets, and batons - all of these are lethal if used inappropriately. For example, as Rauch and Storey (1998) point out, teargas inhaled within a closed environment can cause death by asphyxiation. A rubber or wooden baton when used to strike a person's head can cause death

with a single blow. Both rubber bullets and pellets are lethal if fired at vulnerable body parts and at short range. The distinction, then, between lethal and non-lethal ammunition is almost irrelevant, and the consequences of its usage depended on the intent of the police officer using the equipment.

Mobile riot units were merciless in dealing with township residents who protested against apartheid legislation, or even gathered for funerals, or celebratory events. Hansson (1989) concludes in this regard that during the period between 1984 -1986, the (riot) police failed to comply with internationally recognised standards and procedures with regards to the use of force, and that lethal weapons were used as a first, rather than a last, resort. A policy of maximum, rather than minimum force was employed by the mobile riot units. The police provided three main justifications for this use of force - the fact that most protests and demonstrations were illegal; the volatile and violent nature of such events; and the fact that the legislative framework governing the policing of crowds provided little scope for the use of negotiation in resolving conflict.

From 1985 onwards, the SAP tried to involve as many sympathetic groupings as possible in the quest to crush resistance within South Africa. This they did through training and ensuring the co-operation of the homeland police, fostering relationships with right wing vigilante groupings, and the creation of two new black police bodies.

In 1985, the SAP started to train the various homeland police bodies²¹ in counter-insurgency and riot control. The 1984 Annual Report of the Commissioner of the SAP revealed that thirty-three policemen from Transkei, forty one from KwaZulu and thirty-eight from Ciskei had undergone training with the SAP in counter-insurgency and riot control. This [was] not only an attempt to prevent infiltration by guerillas but also reflects how unrest [began] to occur in rural areas' (Brewer, 1989:261). The homeland police were heavily involved in the suppression of resistance movements. The KwaZulu police, for example, played an active role in controlling political and industrial unrest, and in repressing any opponents to Inkatha (Brewer, 1989). The homeland police are also reported to have worked together with well-armed vigilante groupings in suppressing opposition. In KwaNdebele, the police organised together with the notorious Mbokotho vigilante grouping and in January 1986, 261 activists were abducted and subjected to torture. At least 22 residents died in this attack (Brewer, 1989). In Natal, a group called 'impis' who were associated with Inkatha, were involved in gruesome killings of UDF supporters in the townships surrounding Durban.

For the most part, vigilante groupings engaged in violent activity against members of the liberation movement. The SAP made a concerted effort to foster relationships with these groupings. Where these groupings did not work collaboratively with the police, they were given tacit approval by the police. But, vigilante groupings did not always exist prior to police intervention. In many instances, the police were

21. Both the 'independent' and the non-independent homelands within South Africa developed their own police forces. These police forces had very close ties with the SAP, and in most homelands, were notorious for their brutality in suppressing unrest.

actively involved in creating forms of vigilantism. It would also seem that many vigilantes were paid informers who acted under the direction of the SAP. Haysom (1990) argues that the main objective of the SAP in colluding with or supporting vigilantes was to destabilise and 'disorganise' local communities. Put more strongly, he asserts that vigilantes allowed the police to operate effectively at a distance in a low intensity war. Consequently, he states that 'the prevalence and operation of these groups should be seen as the internal equivalent of the strategy of destabilising neighbouring states' (Haysom, 1990:64).

Right-wing vigilantes spearheaded attacks against activists in an attempt to 'neutralise' radical elements (McCaul, 1988). Brogden and Shearing have remarked that vigilantes had 'several values to the SAP' (1993:86). First, they argue, vigilante groupings were not subject to the same scrutiny from the press as the police are. Second, they were not concerned about adverse legal considerations since they were essentially anonymous persons. Third, given that they were 'indigenous', they were able to easily target local activists. Fourth, attacks by vigilantes could be presented as 'black-on-black' violence that legitimated the security force's presence in the townships and their interventions that the police claimed were aimed at stabilising these areas.²²

The SAP also made a number of other desperate attempts to increase their manpower (particularly with regard to 'riot' situations) and to maintain some kind of legitimacy by creating new black police agencies. In 1984, 32 township authorities were granted the power to have their own police bodies. These police officers were trained separately from the SAP, but were centrally involved in the suppression of unrest during the mid-late 1980s. Initially, the Municipal Police were 'charged with protecting the lives of African councillors and guarding municipal installations and government buildings, thus freeing the SAP to concentrate on policing township unrest' (Brogden and Shearing, 1993:81).²³

Brogden and Shearing (1993) argue that the Municipal Police in fact became responsible for much of the direct and forceful repression of anti-apartheid organisations and individuals and the SAP took up a more supervisory role with regards to riot control. The Municipal Police were, not surprisingly, very unpopular in the black townships. They 'soon earned themselves pejorative labels in townships, where they were called variously "greenflies" (a reference to the flies that buzz around faeces), "Amstels" (after the beer bottles) and "sunlights" (after a soap commercial on TV2 promising a faster response to your washing up problems), "magodolos" (the opposers), "magundawane" (wild rats) and "Zulu boys"' (Brogden and Shearing, 1993).

A second surrogate police body was established in 1986 - the SAP-financed Special Constables or Kistskontabels (Afrikaans for 'instant police'). They were given three six weeks training courses and were

22. Similar comments on the 'usefulness' of vigilantes are made by Haysom (1990) and Plasket (1989). Plasket also makes the important point that vigilante activity did not begin in the mid-1980s in South Africa, but can be found 'laced' throughout South Africa's history. The systematic activities of vigilantes, however, coincides with the crisis of state control from 1984 onward.

23. According to Brogden and Shearing (1993), the main reason behind the creation of the Municipal Police forces was to remove the SAP from the day-to-day patrols in the townships.

used to supplement the SAP where they were overstretched. The passing out parade of the first set of kitskonstabels was led by the head of South Africa's Counter Insurgency Unit who made it clear that their role would be to act against those who were defined by the security forces as 'leftist' or 'radical' (Brewer, 1989:263). 'Recruits required no educational qualification, and included many illiterates. Equipped with shotguns, and dressed in functional blue overalls, they were allocated the tasks of foot patrol and riot control' (Brogden and Shearing, 1993:83). They were only employed temporarily and were paid on an hourly basis and were not eligible for any of the SAP benefits.²⁴ The Kitskonstabels became the scapegoats for the violent policing of the African townships. Township residents laid hundreds of complaints against the kitskonstabels whom they claimed were often drunk on duty and extremely aggressive.²⁵

Despite the heavy-handed approach of the security forces during the first State of Emergency, the liberation movement was not deterred. While resistance organisations were brought into disarray by the Emergency regulations and the responses of the security forces, waves of popular protest continued (Naidoo, 1989). In fact, Naidoo argues, the 1985 State of Emergency fuelled rage and discontent in local communities and resistance organisations, as detentions, arrests, harassment, and deaths at the hands of the security forces increased. The state had not succeeded in containing mass resistance.

While the 1985 State of Emergency was lifted on 7 March 1986, a second state of emergency was declared on 12 June 1986. Through the announcement of the second State of Emergency, the government indicated that it intended to use even more intensive efforts to quell resistance. According to Johnson, this State of Emergency differed from the previous one in that it was 'a concerted attempt at eradicating, rather than just silencing, the disparate structures of popular resistance' (1989:131). The government made it clear that it had no intention of submitting to black majority rule. Arrests and detentions of large numbers of activists continued, and resistance organisations were forced to operate in increasingly clandestine ways (Marks, 1993).

In 1986, a single Riot Unit was created, but it was not distinguishable in terms of vehicles and uniform from the rest of the SAP. The Riot Unit was the first separate, specialised, centralised body in South Africa geared toward the policing of public order, or perhaps more appropriately, disorder. According to General Marais, the Riot Unit was established at this point because SAP leadership felt that a permanent structure

24. In 1991, the ranks of the kitskonstabels were opened to all persons who had a standard six education and training was increased to three months. Instead of disbanding this unit or incorporating them into the mainstream SAP, black applicants to the SAP were diverted to becoming kitskonstabels (Brogden and Shearing, 1993).

25. The kitskonstabels and the municipal police were by no means the only black policemen in South Africa at the time. In fact, there have always been black police, usually in equitable numbers to white police. The numbers of black police increased dramatically after the 1976 Soweto uprisings when the media published pictures of white policemen clubbing black protestors. It seems that the SAP felt a need to present an image of black-on-black policing as a way of bolstering its legitimacy. Only in the 1970s were black police promoted to positions of authority, and only in 1980 was a black police officer given authority over white police. For more information regarding the racial composition of the SAP, please see Brogden and Shearing (1993) and Prior (1989).

needed to be established to deal with conflict in the country which was escalating. In Durban, KwaMashu, Umlazi, Chesterville and Lamontville were 'on fire'. It was at this point that the Riot Unit began to look for permanent bases; Unit 9 based themselves at the old Point prison.²⁶

Initially, the core of the unit was made up of the Reaction Unit. As time went by, members from the mobile units in the districts were brought in on a permanent basis as well. All new recruits were then sent to Maloeskop Training Centre for three months' training. The training at that point consisted of infantry training; weapons training, particularly in the use of rifles; and the use of teargas. Recruits were also taught how to recognise explosives and land mines. Members were also taught how to use shields for the first time. Officer training was also introduced for junior, middle and senior management which included crowd control and counter-insurgency warfare courses.²⁷

The Riot Unit was divided into companies, following the military style of organisation. The unit was controlled from the SAP national headquarters in Pretoria, but was based in the various regions of South Africa. Unit 19 continued to operate from Pretoria, and was called in when there was a capacity problem at the local level, though the command structures at national and local level were completely separate. While the Riot Unit was equipped with proper anti-riot gear following international trends, police resisted using them, 'in favour of the raw force they seemed to prefer' (Cawthra, 1992:11). Ultimately, as a result of the preferred equipment used by the unit, the nature of the members of the unit, and the lack of accountability and supervision in the unit, they became known as one of most problematic and brutal units in South Africa.²⁸ Critcher and Waddington (1996) commenting on the Riot Unit proclaimed it to be crude and incompetent, using excessive force without legal constraint and authority, and without discipline or accountability.

The period from 1984, when the troops were brought into the townships, to the second state of emergency in 1986, was characterised by enormous security presence and operations in the townships. This included raids, setting up roadblocks, disruption of gatherings and meetings, cordoning of townships and searches, thousands of detentions and the killing of hundreds of local activists. Local communities were ripped apart and the detentions and arrests lead to a massive leadership crisis, particularly at the local level (Marks, 1993; Plasket, 1989). The Riot Unit was centrally involved in planning and carrying out these operations. This created a space for the surrogate forces to move into the townships and create further disarray with the security forces now able to take a backseat (Plasket, 1989). Instead of breaking up gatherings, the police became more pro-active. They banned rallies, meetings, and even mass funerals, and laid down restrictions on the numbers of people who could attend such gatherings and how they should conduct

26. Interview with General Marais, September 1999.

27. Interview with General Marais. According to Marais, academics from the University of Pretoria taught aspects of the course on counter-insurgency.

28. For further information in this regard, see Brogden and Shearing (1993).

themselves (Friedman and Webster, cited in Plasket, 1989).

The existence of surrogate police bodies and the collaborative relationship which the police fostered with right-wing vigilante groupings enabled the police to 'sub-contract their dirty work' (Plasket, 1989). This shift toward 'sub-contracting' allowed the police to change their strategy toward dealing with internal resistance. They moved away from direct maximum force toward a new approach where the security forces withdrew from the townships. The vigilantes and surrogate police groupings became the key role-players in an attempt to alter the balance of power in the townships. The police then re-entered the townships to 'sort-out' what they portrayed as inter-community conflict.

However, the police were selective in terms of targeting the 'malefactors'. For the most part, the police acted against supporters of the United Democratic Front and Cosatu and in favour of vigilante groupings or those not antagonistic to the apartheid state, such as Inkatha. This response led to allegations that the SAP was partisan and that through active collusion, or mere commission, they were fuelling community conflict, and were acting as a 'third force' (Maré and Hamilton, 1987). The problem of police collusion with Inkatha was most serious in KwaZulu-Natal where Inkatha and the UDF battled for power bases and territoriality.²⁹ There are numerous incidents which have been cited showing police collusion with Inkatha. Amnesty International, for example, recorded the following event:

'In Calusa [Natal Midlands] on the second day of two days of sustained onslaught by Inkatha forces, uniformed police arrived with the attackers and took no action against them while they looted and burned homes...when some women went to help one of the wounded youths, a white police officer intervened and asked him to open his mouth. The police officer then allegedly put a gun in the boy's mouth and fired' (Quoted in Brogden and Shearing, 1993:23).

But, collusion between the police and Inkatha was also taking place at other levels. In 1988, 300 Inkatha recruits were trained and deployed as special constables in the Pietermaritzburg area. It seems that this training programme was organised by Riot Unit 8. These special constables, once deployed, became associated with 'acts of extreme brutality' (*Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report*, Chapter 3:196). Coetzee³⁰, a senior commander of the Riot Unit, admitted to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that special constables had been involved in serious criminal acts and were not properly commanded and controlled by the Riot Unit.

The Trust Feed massacre in the Natal Midlands on 3 December 1988 was yet another example of the problematic role played by the Riot Unit and the special constables. Inkatha-aligned gunmen opened fire on

29. The war between Inkatha and the ANC led to enormous social and political disruption in Natal. By March 1989, 30 000 people had fled their homes, urban townships were divided into no-go zones, and 11 600 people lost their lives in the 1980s and early 1990s (Jefferey, 1997).

30. Coetzee was Unit Commander of Durban Public Order Police in the late 1990s period. Members in the unit spoke often about the role he played in the Internal Stability Unit (ISU) in Pietermaritzburg.

a house during a night vigil. Thirteen people aged between four and sixty-six were mowed down in the attack. The Riot Unit and the Hanover Station Commander, Brian Mitchell, had been given prior warning of the pending attack. Instead of taking precautions to protect residents of Trust Feed, they rounded up and detained UDF supporters in the area the day before the attack. Only two people survived (*Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report*, Chapter 3). Captain Brian Mitchell later admitted during the Trust Feed trial that he 'had ordered four black special constables to kill UDF supporters in Trust Feed on 3 December 1988. The killings had been planned by him in conjunction with Mr Jerome Gabela, the chairman of Inkatha in the community' (Jefferey, 1997:257).³¹

Aside from the obvious collusion of the police, particularly the Riot Unit, with Inkatha during this period, the police also used the emergency regulations to crush the UDF-aligned resistance movement. Between June 1987 and April 1988 alone, 1 100 UDF supporters had been detained (Jefferey, 1997). Between 1983 and 1989, the South African Police had killed over 800 people in Natal alone (*Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report*, Chapter 3).

The early 1990s - the façade of professionalism

In February 1990, the State President, F.W. de Klerk unbanned the ANC and other black opposition political parties. The political arena was transformed into one that stressed the need for a negotiated settlement in South Africa. The police were identified early on in the negotiation process as a key institution that needed to be transformed for the successful changeover to a democratised state and society to occur (Shaw, 1994; Marks, 1996).³²

The changed political climate in the early 1990s did not lead to a decline in collective protest or public disorder. Given the lack of social and economic change, protest centred on the appalling conditions in the black townships and the lack of effective local governance, and political parties and the trade unions were trying to consolidate their constituencies. But, perhaps more importantly, there was a dramatic shift in the nature of political conflict during this period. There was a striking increase in the levels of violence in the country. Much of this violence was between rival political parties, in particular the ANC and the IFP³³ in

31. Riot unit members have also admitted to working closely with the vigilante grouping, the A-Team in the Durban townships of Lamontville and Chesterville in the 1980s. According to Riot Unit member Frank Benetts, the A-Team assisted the unit in identifying UDF activists. Benetts also admitted that the Riot Unit framed activists - they would be paraded through the streets of the townships with weapons and be labelled as informers by the police.

32. This is a crucial point. National stability and the assurance of legitimate law and order are essential aspects of any democracy. As a result, the armed forces must be brought on board if lasting change is to be achieved (van der Hoek and Bossuyt, 1993). Smit and Botha argue that 'a democracy is heavily dependent on its police to maintain that degree of order that makes a free society possible. It looks to society to facilitate those aspects vital to a democratic way of life, to provide a sense of security, to resolve conflicts, and to protect free elections, freedom of association, and free movement' (1990:36).

33. In July 1990, Inkatha was formally constituted as a political party (the Inkatha Freedom Party) and began to embark on major recruitment campaigns in KwaZulu and in Natal. This took place at the same time as the newly unbanned ANC openly campaigned for members. The rivalry for membership and resources resulted in violent conflict. However, in many ways the root of the conflict was ideological in nature. The IFP was essentially a rurally based movement/party based on traditional values and with a historically agreeable relationship with the apartheid government. The ANC on the other hand was essentially urban based and revolutionary in

KwaZulu-Natal. This region was characterised by massive political intolerance and fervent animosity between these two parties.

An average of 101 people died each month between July 1990 and June 1993, a total of 3 653 deaths. For the most part, this violence resulted from contests for power bases which took the form of territorial battles for the control of communities and geographical areas. Tens of thousands of people were affected by the violence which resulted in death, maiming, injury and then mass displacement of communities. Hostel dwellers, who were usually IFP-aligned, engaged in massacres of township residents. In many of these incidents, the KwaZulu Police (KZP) were found to have been involved in human rights abuses against people perceived to be sympathetic to the ANC. KZP members were regularly seen transporting IFP supporters to the scenes of attacks (*Truth and Reconciliation Report*, Volume 2, Chapter 7, 1998). Members of SAP Riot Unit, particularly in the Natal Midlands, were also involved in selling guns to the IFP/Inkatha, and in siding with the IFP against the ANC.

Perhaps the most scandalous incident in Natal during this period was the Seven Day War which took place between 25 and 31 March 1990 in the Vulindela and Edendale Valleys. Armed Inkatha supporters invaded the valleys killing 200 ANC supporters in just seven days. The Riot Unit seems to have taken instructions from Inkatha warlord, David Ntombela, and was directly involved in the attack. Director Danie Coetzee was on duty during the Seven Day War and acknowledged to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that he had made no attempt to disarm Inkatha members (*Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report*, Volume 2, Chapter 3).³⁴

The violence in KwaZulu/Natal spread to the Transvaal where approximately 4765 people were killed during the same period. Over 200 township residents were killed on the East Rand alone during large-scale massacres perpetrated by hostel dwellers. In the year to follow, violence intensified, so that by the April 1994 national elections, it was 2.5 times higher than its previous levels (*Truth and Reconciliation Report*, Volume 2, Chapter 7, 1998). In the months leading to the elections, KwaZulu and Natal experienced the worst wave of political violence in the region's history. The majority of those killed were ANC supporters, and the SAP continued to transfer large quantities of weapons for the IFP (*Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report*, Volume 2, Chapter 3, 1998).

Violence was mostly random and took the form of night-time massacres, drive-by shootings, military-style attacks on commuter trains, and assassinations. The massacres and killings appeared to be unplanned and were carried out by large groups of men wearing red headbands, and using anything from iron rods to automatic weapons. This created a virtual reign of terror in South Africa, particularly in the African townships. Many commentators claimed that a 'third force', involving the security forces, was behind much

nature.

34. Director Coetzee [not his actual name] was later appointed as unit commander of the Public Order Police unit in Durban.

of this violence and was intent on escalating violence as a means of derailing the negotiations process.³⁵ In evidence given to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, one SAPS member, Wayne Swanepoel, stated that he and others in his unit were involved in throwing people from the trains in an attempt to get the ANC and the IFP to blame one another (*Truth and Reconciliation Report*, Volume 2, Chapter 7, 1998).

Many deaths also resulted from the continued use of force in public order policing. It is estimated by the Human Rights Commission that between July 1991 and June 1992, 518 people were killed in the course of public order policing (*Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report*, Volume 2, Chapter 7, 1998). The Truth and Reconciliation Commission concluded that there was little change in the policing of demonstrations after 1990 (*Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report*, Volume 2, Chapter 7, 1998).

Between 1990 and 1991, police statistics indicated that there were 10 889 gatherings, the majority of which were not authorised (Jeffrey, 1991). For the most part, gatherings were still deemed illegal. This meant that gatherings and protest actions were still responded to with brutality by the Riot Unit.

Two incidents caused much public outcry and in many ways were a catalyst to the changes that were to come about with regard to protest policing in the early 1990s. On 26 March, 1990, a march was organised by the United Democratic Front in Sebokeng, a black township in the Vaal district. The aim of the march was to protest the crisis in housing and education in the black townships. Permission was requested to conduct the march in the bordering central business district five days in advance, but was denied. The crowd was singing protest songs, and seemed to have posed no threat to any non-participants or to the police. Nonetheless, the police fired into the crowd, apparently with no order to shoot. Shooting lasted about 20 minutes during which 60 rounds of ammunition were fired. Five people were killed, and 161 were injured. A commission of inquiry which followed the incident concluded that the force used was excessive, and that there was poor co-ordination between police commanders and rank- and-file police members. Police who were involved in the operation were deemed undisciplined and inexperienced in protest policing. Following an investigation into the conduct of the police, six policemen were charged with murder (Jeffery, 1991).

On 14 March 1991, 200 ANC supporters gathered in Daveyton township on the East Rand who were protesting the lack of protection provided to community members who were being attacked by members of Inkatha. According to members of the ANC, 'the police arrived on the scene, gave the group ten minutes to disperse and then, while the men were still discussing the issue, opened fire' (Jeffery, 1991:38). Thirteen people were killed and 29 were injured. The police claimed that the men were armed with petrol bombs, pangas (axes), and other weapons. Police argued that they were under attack and in 'self-defence', opened fire on the protestors. Twelve ANC supporters were killed, including a nine-year-old girl, and 27 people

35. Much of the violence during this period was carried out by unidentified groups and individuals. The Goldstone Commission found that in KwaZulu-Natal, the SAP were involved in arming members of the Inkatha Freedom Party (*Truth and Reconciliation Report*, Volume 2, Chapter 7).

were injured (Jeffery, 1991).

Later that same year, white right-wingers for the first time in history, incurred the wrath of the Riot Police. On 9 August 1991, white right-wingers organised by the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB), threatened to disrupt a meeting in Ventersdorp where state president, F.W. de Klerk was to be scheduled to speak. Two thousand AWB supporters who were heavily armed with pistols and hunting guns, approached the venue of the meeting. They defied the police line outside the hall, and fired on two minibuses near the venue. The police opened fire and killed one of the AWB protestors. A street battle ensued and 48 people were injured, six of who were policemen. According to the AWB, the police acted without warning, and were ordered to 'shoot to kill'. The police did not contest that such an order was given, but stated that this only took place after three policemen had been shot by AWB supporters (Jeffery, 1991).

The South African government came to recognise the need for a radical change in policing as early as 1991. In November 1991, the Strategic Plan of the South African Police endorsed the concept of community policing. In so doing, police management acknowledged the need for a representative police force which forged alliances with the community, did away with a military ranking system, and was both depoliticised and service oriented (Cawthra, 1993). The apartheid government agreed with the African National Congress that what was needed was the restoration of public confidence and involvement in policing so that genuine partnerships could emerge between the police and communities, and that the basis of policing should be consensus rather than coercion. The continued death of protesters at the hands of the Riot Unit made the need for change in this unit even more urgent.

As part of the plan to reconstruct and reform the police force in 1990, it was decided to rename and reorganise the problematic Riot Unit. In its strategic planning for 1991, the SAP leadership realised that the repressive policing style which they had adopted in relation to unrest had 'contaminated' the corporate image of the SAP and also 'reduced its capacity for crime prevention and control, because of the number of police officials required for dealing with unrest' (Rauch and Storey, 1998:22). As a result, it was decided to create an easily identifiable, separate Division in the SAP with a national command structure, the Internal Stability Division (ISD). The ISD was formed in 1991 and was made up of 40 locally based Internal Stability Units with over 7000 members operating throughout South Africa. One of the largest of these was Unit 19, the special national unit based in Pretoria, which consisted of 1200 members. Another 32 similar units were established in the various homelands.

The ISD was supposedly committed to less aggressive crowd control. The ISD defined its primary role as

'the combatting of riots... and combatting of violence and unrest in the Republic of South Africa. The division placed emphasis on preventive actions, such as patrols in areas where unrest and intimidation and other unrest related crimes prevail. [But, the role of the ISD is extended to support the functions of regular visible police] If there is not unrest in an area, the ISD is fully employed in the prevention of crime' (quoted in Cilliers, 1995:25).

The ISD was organised as a separate full-time paramilitary unit within the SAP, but its members were noticeable because of their camouflage uniforms and military vehicles. The ISD, however, was not less problematic than its predecessor. It was a massive unit, able to command 17 000 men at any particular time, with their own distinctive uniform and equipment not dissimilar in appearance to those of the military. Even the armoured vehicles used were similar to those used by the military, a khaki-green colour.

The training was slightly more sophisticated than the previous riot unit training and focussed more on crowd control. Some soft skills were introduced into the training which included training in negotiation skills and crowd psychology. However, despite these new additions to the training programme, the main focus continued to be the use of force and how to apply the law in a mechanical fashion (Rauch and Storey, 1998). While police seem to have been more tolerant of protest and demonstrations than previously, there were still numerous incidents where police involvement in riot and crowd control resulted in death and serious injury during this period.

Riot control training was still provided at a police college in Maloeskop in the Eastern Transvaal. ISD members were taught the relevant laws pertaining to crowd control, the handling of weapons, and 'crowd psychology' which focussed on de-individualisation based on the writings of Le Bon on mob psychology (Jeffery, 1991). While in theory, the training emphasised minimum use of force and the gradual escalation of forceful methods, this was undermined by the types of weapons the police were equipped with, and the continued emphasis on the irrational and unreasonable nature of crowds. This type of training continued until the mid-1990s.

In September 1991, an historic event took place that was to change the face of public order policing in South Africa. A National Peace Accord was signed by the government and 27 political parties (most importantly the ANC and the IFP). The purpose of the National Peace Accord was to 'signify a common purpose to bring an end to political violence in the country and to set out the codes of conduct, procedures and mechanisms to achieve this goal' (Marais, 1994:2). The accord provided a set of requirements for the police to ensure that they were both accountable to local communities and that they consulted with both local communities and political parties as to the methods of policing to be employed. All police were expected to sign a Code of Conduct which committed them to impartial and proper policing (Jeffrey, 1991). The National Peace Accord was the first of many multi-party agreements to be promulgated through parliament.

The National Peace Accord also made provisions for a commission of enquiry regarding the prevention of violence and intimidation (also known as the Goldstone Commission). In terms of the Prevention of Public Violence and Intimidation Act 1991, the Commission's objectives were to: (a) enquire into the phenomenon of public violence and intimidation in the republic, and the nature and causes thereof; (b) enquire into the steps that should be taken in order to prevent public violence and intimidation; and (c) make recommendations to the State President regarding steps to prevent violence and intimidation. About 40 reports were generated by the Commission relating to a wide range of topics related to ongoing violence. In

particular, the reports looked into ongoing taxi conflict, train and hostel violence, violence on the East Rand, and the violent conflict between the ANC and the IFP, particularly in Natal (Marais, 1994). A number of recommendations were also made as to how to improve the relationship between the police and local communities.³⁶

One of the main incidents that the Commission of Enquiry was formed to look into was the Boipatong massacre which took place on 17 June 1992. IFP-aligned hostel dwellers from Kwamadala Hostel attacked Boipatong residents during a night raid. Residents were hacked, stabbed, shot, beaten and disembowelled. Forty-six people died in the massacre. The Boipatong massacre was described as one of the 'darkest days in South Africa's history' (*South African Press Alliance*, 07/08/1996).

Following the massacre, the ANC suspended its negotiations with the National Party government. The police were once again implicated in the massacre; eyewitnesses claimed that policemen were present during the attack (SAPA, 07/08/1996). Immediately after F.W. de Klerk visited the township, police fired on a fleeing crowd. According to journalist, Alistair Sparks, the ISD fired at point-blank range, and without warning, on an unarmed crowd. Two people were killed and 29 were seriously wounded (cited in Brogden and Shearing, 1993). The Commission's report concluded that the police (the ISD) were undisciplined, incompetent, lacking adequate command and control, had ineffective intelligence, and having extremely poor relations with the community (Waddington report cited in Brogden and Shearing, 1993). They also lacked proper knowledge in crowd control. Most of the members in the ISD were the same members who had been in the Riot Unit, and even in the mobile units prior to that. They had received very little training in crowd management techniques.³⁷

On 6 December 1991 members of the Goldstone Commission announced the appointment of a committee to enquire into the way in which demonstrations should be conducted and policed. The Commission recognized that 'unpredictable or undisciplined conduct by mass demonstrators or members of the police force create a very real potential for violence' (*Goldstone Commission Report*, 1991:1). A committee was then to be formed which would look into (a) the procedure which should be followed in order to arrange or organize mass demonstrations; (b) the procedure which should be followed by the organisers before,

36. These recommendations included the following:

- a. ISD members should make use of blue uniforms to ensure the image of the ISD as a policing agency, not a military force.
- b. Use should be made of normal police vehicles, and armoured vehicles should only be used in high-risk situations and areas.
- c. Weapons and tactics should be adopted to give greater effect to the principles of minimum force.
- d. The name of the ISD should be changed in order to accommodate its new image.

37. The brutal repression of protest during this period was also evident in the 'independent' homelands. The most well documented of these incidences is the Bisho massacre which took place on 7 September 1992, and following which the ANC once more withdrew from the negotiation process. On this day, the ANC had organised a protest march of about 80 000 people who were campaigning for the opening up of areas for free political activity. Ciskei troops opened fire on the marchers killing 30 people (*Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report*, Volume 2, Chapter 7, 1998).

during and after mass demonstrations; (c) the norms of behaviour of the persons who participate in mass demonstrations; (d) the role and duty of the police and, if relevant, of other security forces, in relation to mass demonstrations; and (e) the adequacy of present legislation relating to mass demonstrations.

On 22 May 1992 it was announced that a multinational panel of experts had been appointed to advise the Commission's committee on the matters outlined above - especially as it related to mass demonstrations, marches and picketing. The panel recommended that bodies other than the police should be involved in public order policing. As a result, it was decided that marshals from the community (who had a very different culture from the police) should be involved in the regulating of crowds. In so doing, policing would also become the responsibility of demonstrators and the organisations involved in demonstrations. Demonstrators would then be part of the planning of a policing strategy prior to a protest or demonstration. In so doing, the panel proposed the establishment of 'triangles of safety' (now known as the Golden Triangle) that would be made up of representatives from the local authority, representatives from demonstrators and the police and these three groupings would be involved in the planning and evaluation of public demonstrations and protests. The aim of this triangle approach was to move away from the sole control on the part of the state police during such events (Shearing, 1995).

As a result of its 6 December 1991 invitation, the Commission received submissions from a whole range of organisations that included political parties, academics and the South African Police. These submissions, together with contributions prepared by members of the panel as well as other relevant documentation, served as the panel's source material. The panel submitted its report to the Commission on 9 July 1992 at a public hearing. The hearing lasted four days during which time members of the public and other organisations had an opportunity to respond to the panel's report. The most important participants were the South African Police (SAP), the African National Congress (ANC), the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu).

The panel accepted the following principle as its point of departure:

The right to demonstrate is as fundamental a right of democratic citizenship as the right to take part in political campaigns. Where the purpose of the demonstration is protest, the demonstration is at the core of free expression in a democracy. One of the central responsibilities of the police is to facilitate the right to demonstrate (Heymann, 1992:ix).

The Commission subsequently prepared a draft bill that captured the code of conduct as represented in the panel's report. On 28 January 1994 the Regulation of Gatherings (Act 205 of 1993) was published in the Government Gazette (Republic of South Africa, 1994). According to the Regulation of Gatherings Act and the Constitution of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996), each and every person has a right to freely express their views, to demonstrate and protest, provided that their actions are peaceful. Section 16 of the Constitution entrenches the right to freedom of expression, and Section 17 provides that everyone has the right to assemble, picket, demonstrate, and present petitions in a peaceful and unarmed manner. The Act also

stipulated that all assemblies, marches, gatherings, meetings, demonstrations must be considered lawful. The focus of the Act shifts away from permission to hold a gathering, to a situation where notice of an intended gathering is sufficient. No longer was there to be a distinction between legal and illegal demonstration and gathering - gatherings are now defined as either 'peaceful' or 'unrest' incidents, depending on their outcome.

The role of the police in accordance with this Act and with the Constitution is to protect the rights of all people affected by gatherings, both participants and non-participants. Another crucial aspect of the Act is that the convener of a gathering must notify a responsible officer appointed by the local authority that a gathering is to take place. Negotiations should then be instituted with all interested parties (an authorized member of the police, local authority representative and the convener) to ensure the peaceful progress of the gathering and the protection of participants and non-participants. A key role of the police should, therefore, be that of negotiator rather than enforcer.

The Act, together with the provisions of the Interim Constitution, turned public order policing in South Africa as it functioned in the apartheid years, on its head. The SAPS now had a legal responsibility to protect the right of citizens when they engage in peaceful protest activities. More specifically, the role of the police responsible for public order policing changed from repressing protest to managing protest. This had implications not only for the selection and training of members, procedures for operations, but also for equipment to be used by such police.

But, despite the Gatherings Act (which was not promulgated until 1995) and the Goldstone Commission Report, by 1994 the ISD was still viewed as extremely problematic. A public opinion survey conducted by the Human Science Research Council in 1994, concluded that in the view of the public 'the ISD is beyond redemption, [and] a replacement must be created' (Cilliers, 1995:25).

State change and a new vision for public order policing

In April 1994, South Africa elected its first national democratic government and so began a process of transformation within the South African Police. The new Minister of Safety and Security, together with the National Commissioner, set in motion a series of internal changes in line with democratic governance. This involved moves toward increased civilianisation, transparency, accountability and representivity. The military ranking system was removed, legislation pertaining to police unionisation and labour relations was liberalised, affirmative action processes were set in motion, and, at a more symbolic level, the insignia of the police were changed. The new South African Police Service Act (No. 16731) 1995³⁸ also called for the renaming of the police from the South African Police to the South African Police Service (SAPS) which was

38. This Act is historic in that it breaks with previous Police Acts that focussed on a law-and-order approach to policing. The new Act stresses that the SAPS must ensure the safety and security of all persons; uphold and safeguard fundamental rights; ensure co-operation between the service and communities it serves; reflect respect for victims of crime; and ensure effective civilian oversight of the police.

to be a single, united police service formed from an amalgamation of the SAP, the homeland police forces, and the railway police. While there was reasonable clarity as to what the new police service would look like, the future of ISD was a source of much contention.

Throughout the transitional 1990s period in South Africa, academics and the ANC called for the disbanding of the problematic ISD. However, in the 1994 run-up to the first national democratic elections, the ISD was used extensively to help create a secure environment to allow for free and fair elections. Perhaps the ISD knew that its days were numbered since the conduct of the ISD during this period was both professional and efficient. As a result of this 'good behaviour', following the 1995 elections, the ANC-led government decided to maintain a separate, specialised public order police unit within the newly 'transformed' SAPS. Director Wiggins, Provincial Commander of POP in KwaZulu-Natal tried to explain (in his view) how this came about:

It was decided to maintain the unit because we were efficient in the transitional period. The ISD was the only line between chaos and order before the elections. Overreaction by the unit during this period was an exception and it became clear that the unit was a disciplined grouping.³⁹

However, there are a number of more generally applicable explanations for the continuation of a separate police unit concerned with public order policing. For David Storey, a member of the Technical Team on the Transformation of Public Order Policing (discussed below), the need for a separate public order unit was indisputable in South Africa.⁴⁰ Storey provided 8 reasons for this: (a) the easy access of firearms to the general public provided a real threat to public order; (b) social conflict in South Africa persisted due to antagonistic relations in industry, ethnic divisions, continued racial tensions, and territorial disputes manifested in localised conflict between contesting political organisations; (c) the high crime rate, particularly violent crime, in South Africa required special interventions by paramilitary units; (d) regular visible policing was viewed as unable to carry out their routine police work, let alone a crowd management function; (e) the socio-economic disparity served as a basis for constant discontent due to perceived and real relative deprivation; (f) there was a legacy of paramilitary structures and tactics within all political organisations, which Storey believed required a paramilitary response; (g) the huge numbers of people involved in protests and demonstrations in South Africa required highly specialised policing; and (h) the volatility of protest action demanded a paramilitary response.

Storey's views, not surprisingly, were shared by police officers who were part of the ISD at the time. As the Head of Personnel Development in the Durban Public Order Police Unit stated:

There are circumstances, especially when there is a threat of violence where the police

39. Interview with Director Wiggins, April 1998.

40. Telephonic interview with David Storey, March 1998.

need to use force. For this we require a semi-military unit. You can only negotiate so far, then you need to take action. This kind of action requires discipline which this unit is known for.⁴¹

In the case of KwaZulu-Natal, which it could be argued has the highest level of internal conflict and public disorder among the provinces, the need for a separate public order unit was viewed as even more apparent. According to Director Wiggins, Commander of Public Order Police in KwaZulu-Natal, there were, in 1994, an average of 200 public order events each month in KwaZulu-Natal alone. This situation, he stated, demanded high level policing which 'required a force which can act in unison at very short notice'.⁴²

After much deliberation as to the form that public order policing should take in South Africa (Cilliers, 1995), it was decided by the ANC led government in 1995 to maintain a unit similar to that of the ISD.⁴³ The new unit, like the ISD, would be a separate division in the police with its own distinctive identity.⁴⁴ The 'new' unit was renamed the Public Order Police Unit (POPU, now POP), but it was agreed that dramatic changes needed to take place in this unit in order to increase its effectiveness, and to improve its fragile relationship with communities it services. In accordance with the South African Police Service Act (16731 of 1995), a national public order policing unit was established by the National Commissioner in September 1995.

POP, following the rest of the 'new' South African Police Service (SAPS) was to become an integrated unit. In other words, just as all existing police agencies would form part of a single SAPS, all groupings from these same police agencies who had previously been involved in public order policing, would form one POP unit. During November 1995, ISD was amalgamated with the Riot Control Units of the homeland police following the amalgamation process that was taking place in the SAPS. POP, however, had to undergo a major transformation process aimed at ridding it of its tarnished past and complying with international standards and principles for the policing of crowds and public disorder.

The change processes in the unit were informed by a report drawn up by the SAPS-initiated Technical Team on Public Order Policing. This technical team was established in 1995, and was tasked with drawing

41. Interview with Captain in charge of Personnel Development, POP Durban, March 1996.

42. For example, on 30 April 1998, Sifiso Nkabinde, a controversial and much feared figure in Richmond, in the Natal Midlands was acquitted and released from prison after being charged with nineteen politically related murders in the area. The night prior to his release, 100 families fled the area fearing renewed violence and instability in the area (*Mercury* 01/05/98). This event alone, according to Director Wiggins, required 600-1000 policemen being deployed in Richmond in an attempt to prevent such disorder.

43. This decision is in line with Peter Waddington's approach to public order policing since he believes that:

- a. Specially trained and equipped units are likely to cause less damage and injury during times of public disorder.
- b. Specialised units dealing with public order issues prevents a tarnishing of the image of the entire police force when violent incidents occur between police and communities.

44. There are however, three other internationally accepted models for public order policing:

- a). Public order policing as an integrated part of classical policing as is the case in Britain.
- b). The existence of a police/military force attached to the defence force as is the case in France.
- c). Public order policing as the responsibility of a division of the country's defence force as is the case in the USA (Report by the Technical Team on Public Order Policing, South Africa, 27/07/95).

up a report that would propose a new system for public order policing in South Africa, and to develop an implementation plan. According to the report, public order policing should be community based and accountable; integrated with mainstream policing; decentralised; demilitarised; transparent, representative, and professional; policy driven; mobile and multi-skilled. It was also viewed as crucial that visible changes were made in terms of uniform and the types of equipment and vehicles used so as to decrease its military appearance and association. There also had to be significant changes in the composition of the unit to one that is more reflective of South African society, particularly with regard to race and gender representativity.

Following from the report of the Technical Team on Public Order Policing, a new set of objectives were outlined for the Public Order Police unit. These are outlined in the Public Order Police Policy Document on Crowd Management (1996) and include:

- To establish standardised procedures to manage crowds in such a way that these conform to democratic values and accepted international standards.
- To instill an approach in POP of acting at all times in a professional, acceptable and effective manner and in a way which is community oriented and accountable for every action.

In order to achieve these objectives, the Policy Document outlines the following principles that are to be complied with:

- The constitutional right of individuals and groups to voice their concerns/grievances/opinions must be upheld at all times.
- The rights of citizens and the community to demonstrate peacefully without infringing on the rights of others must be acknowledged.
- In their actions, members of the unit must be fair, impartial, and firm.
- Responses and actions must be predictable and tolerant.
- There should be no loss of life.
- There should be no damage to property.
- There should be no injuries.
- All citizens should be satisfied with the conduct of the SAPS.
- All citizens present at a gathering are to feel safe and secure.

For these new objectives and principles to be adhered to, a major transformation process had to be undertaken in POP advanced primarily through the training and retraining for all members, improved recruitment procedures, guidance via new policy and legislation, and the provision of appropriate equipment.

Conclusion

Public order policing in South Africa has historically been highly politicised and governed by narrow national state interests. The insular and insecure South African government did not allow for any significant influence from the international community. For most of the twentieth century, protest or any situation defined by the government as 'disorderly' was policed ruthlessly, and ultimately, repressed. As the South African state entered into periods of ever-increasing crisis from the 1970s onward, the public ordering became more and more forceful and militarised. This brutal response to any expression in defiance of social injustice led to acts of collective violence on the part of the resistance movement, and growing violent confrontations between the police and (black) communities, all confirming Jefferson's (1990) view of paramilitary public order policing. By the mid-1980s, parts of South Africa had become almost ungovernable. The police engaged in public ordering had developed a culture of brutality, intolerance, partiality, racism, as well as a sense of impunity.

Changes in public order policing were only seriously considered when the transition from authoritarian to democratic governance was underway. As the state attempted to develop hegemony based on democratic principles of inclusion, the need for both violent repression and resistance declined. A space was also opened for external influences and engagements in terms of the policing of crowds and public order. This, however, did not mean that a specialised and separate public order police ceased to exist. Rather, the new South African government opted for a 'pragmatic' Waddington type approach, maintaining a distinct unit to deal with public order, the Public Order Police unit.

Following the election of the democratic government in 1994 public order policing at least in principle was brought into line with trends internationally. In both established Western democracies and in 'new democracies' there has been a move away from the inflexible and unimaginative use of heavy police tactics in the 1990s (Reiner, 1992; Brewer et al, 1988). This has accompanied a concern within policing bodies since the 1980s with quality service and police-community partnerships (Waddington, 1996) and these changes in policing and social control correspond to 'underlying transformations in society and culture' (Reiner, cited in Critcher and Waddington, 1986:265). 'A general trend [has emerged] regarding protest policing styles which... can be defined as "soft", tolerant, selective, legal, preventive, consensual, flexible and professional' (della Porta, 1998:6). Paradoxically, however, paramilitary units dealing with public order issues continued to proliferate in the 1990s throughout the world alongside a commitment to community-oriented styles of policing (Kraska and Kappeler, 1997).

It is these international trends which both facilitated and directed the transformation of public order policing in South Africa. However, the international context of policing alone could not determine the pace or outcome of this transformation process. The policing structures responsible for public order policing in South Africa are bounded by a number of internal organisational constraints. In particular, public order policing is circumscribed by past politics and practices which have come to characterise those units involved in the policing of protest and public order.

At the more informal organisational level, police cultures exist which are rooted in sets of assumptions about police work, as well as an enviroing culture which includes a series of assumptions about the external environment (della Porta, 1992). These histories, forms of knowledge, assumptions and sets of practices all make a 'change in mind-set' perplexing. The reality is that in 1995, the Government of National Unity inherited a massive riot unit that was fragmented, over-centralised, unaccountable, ill-equipped and poorly trained for the new challenges it would be facing in a democratic South Africa.

The chapter to follow examines the nature of the Public Order Police unit in Durban in the year 2001. In particular, it examines its structure and composition, and activities of the unit. In so doing, it provides the reader with some insight into the people that comprise this unit. The chapter to follow, therefore, together with the history of the unit, sets the stage for understanding some of the boundaries and potentialities of organisational change within this unit.

CHAPTER 5

A SYNOPSIS OF DURBAN POP IN THE YEAR 2001

The aim of this chapter is to provide the reader with basic information about Durban POP in the year 2001, five years after the transformation process in the unit began. The most recent and comprehensive data about the unit could be compiled from the year 2001 and this data provides the reader with a picture of the changes that had taken place in the unit with regards to its daily operations and composition. This chapter explores the structural make-up of the unit, the basic functions that the unit carries out in its daily work, and why and when members joined the police and this unit. This chapter is based largely on qualitative data from the survey conducted in 1999 and on planning and report documents in the unit. The chapter is not analytical in nature; it merely provides some insight as to who makes up the unit and what the unit 'looks like'. This in turn will help in understanding the behaviour and ideology of members of the unit dealt with in later chapters.

The composition and structure of Durban POP

There can be little doubt that Durban POP is vastly different from its Riot Unit and ISD predecessors. At the structural level there have been a number of important changes in the unit. The face of the unit has changed dramatically in the past few years. According to the 1997 Unit Commander, in 1992, 80 per cent of the members of the ISD in Durban were white. Those in command positions were uniformly white.¹ By 1998, the unit looked vastly different - the majority of members were African, clustered in the lower ranks. Most of the African members, however, had been members of the police forces for long periods of time. They therefore shared the daily work, including the occupational culture of the police forces, with their white colleagues.²

In large part, the change in the racial composition of the unit dealing with public order was the result of the amalgamation process of the SAP with other police forces in the various apartheid homelands. In the case of the Durban unit, amalgamation took place between the SAPS and the former KwaZulu Police Force³. A

1. Interview with Unit Commander of POP Durban, May 1998.

2. Brogden and Shearing argue that black police were often as brutal as their white colleagues. In fact, according to them:

Many of the features which sponsored a unified police culture were also evident for the black police - a rigorous indoctrination in the new training colleges was combined with social ostracism in local communities and in the townships where black SAP members, despite hopes to the contrary, were even more unpopular than white police, as their propensity to resort to violence made them little different from their white peers (Brogden and Shearing, 1993: 77).

3. Following the first democratic elections in South Africa in April 1994, it was decided that one united police force should be formed.

second reason for the changed composition of the unit was that white members left the unit soon after the transformation process began. According to the 1997 Unit Commander, 'there were many white members who felt uncomfortable or threatened by the transformation process in the unit, and opted for retrenchment packages'.

Table 1: Officer rank by race (1998)

	Indian		White		African		Coloured	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Director	0	0%	1	0.9%	0	0%	0	0%
Snr Supt	1	0.5%	1	0.9%	0	0%	0	0%
Supt	2	1%	5	4.7%	0	0%	0	0%
Captain	35 (2 female)	18%	11 (1 female)	10.3%	6 (1 female)	1.1%	0	0%
Inspector	53 (1 female)	27%	15	14%	37	6.9%	1	5.5%
Sergeant	93	47.4%	61 (4 female)	57%	305 (3 female)	56.7%	12 (1 female)	66.7%
Constable	12	6.1%	13	12.2%	190 (2 female)	35.3%	5	27.8%
Total	196	100%	107	100%	538	100%	18	100%

N = 859 (excluding civilian staff)

Table 1 demonstrates the percentage of members of each racial grouping that were present in all the ranks of the unit. While 35.3 per cent of African members were constables (the lowest rank), only 6.1 per cent of Indian members and 12.2 per cent of white members occupied this rank. As Table 1 illustrates, by 1998 the majority of members were African but white members continued to dominate the management and leadership of the unit. This only began to change in the year 2000. By May 2000, significant changes could again be observed with regard the structural make-up of the unit. Both Senior Superintendents were Indian and there was a newly appointed Unit Commander, the first African⁴ Unit Commander in Durban

This meant that all the police forces from the so-called self-governing homelands would be amalgamated into the SAP and the 'new' amalgamated police force would be renamed the South African Police Service. The KwaZulu police were infamous for their partisan, ruthless and inefficient policing. They had no specialized training in the management or control of crowds, or more broadly, the policing of public order. The KwaZulu Police (KZP) was a separate police force administered by the homeland KwaZulu administration.

4. In January 2001, an African Senior Superintendent was appointed to the unit as one of the two Operational Commanders. An Indian member who was promoted and transferred to Cape Town previously occupied this key position. This represents another important appointment aimed at transforming the racial representation in the unit in the higher ranks.

POP. Table 2 shows that Indian members continued to be over-represented at the middle management level, and there remained a major under-representation of African commissioned officers.⁵

Table 2: Officer rank by race (May 2000)

	Indian		White		African		Coloured	
Director	0	0%	0	0%	1	0.2%	0	0%
Snr Supt	1	0.3%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Supt	2	0.7%	2	2.7%	0	0%	0	0%
Captain	29 (2 female)	9.7%	8 (1 female)	11%	6 (1 female)	1.4%	0	0%
Inspector	82 (1 female)	27.4%	22 (3 female)	30.1%	54 (4 female)	12.4%	6	75%
Sergeant	173	57.9%	37 (3 female)	50.7%	289 (3 female)	66.3%	1	12.5%
Constable	12 (1 female)	4%	4	5.5%	86 (1 female)	19.7%	1	12.5%
Total	299	100%	73	100%	436	100%	8	100%

N=816 (excluding civilian staff)

The African female Captain was the only female platoon commander in the unit and indeed in the entire country.⁶ In November 2000, she was promoted to Superintendent and appointed as Company Commander. This was a major advance for the unit both in terms of race and gender representation in the commissioned supervisory ranks. Less than three per cent of members of the unit are female, and most of them are non-commissioned officers.⁷

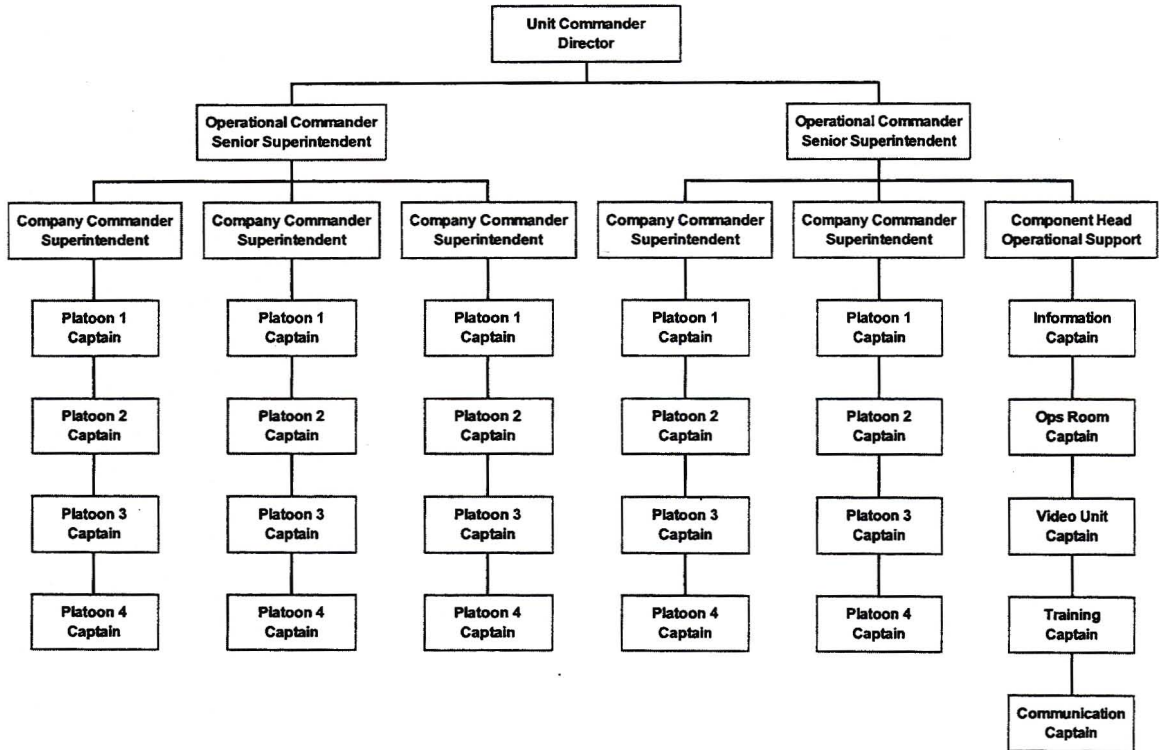
Durban POP has a structure that is similar to a military organisation, and thus at the most basic level retains its paramilitary character.

5. As we shall see in Chapter 9, this was a source of great discontent within the unit. While African members welcome the new unit commander, they argue that African members should represent 70 per cent of commissioned officer ranks. In mid-2000, black members formed a grouping called the Empowerment Committee of Public Order Police. The objective of this grouping was to take up the grievances of African members, and to advocate for speedier affirmative action processes. This committee is discussed in Chapter 9. At the same time following the appointment of the new unit commander, White and Indian members argue that they have little chance of promotion in the near future.

6. This female Captain was later promoted to the rank of Superintendent and to Company Commander. See structure of the unit below.

7. White women were first recruited into the South African Police in 1972. Women of other race groups were only allowed to join the police in the early 1980s. The recruitment of women was essentially a strategy to decrease the 'manpower' shortage in the police (Brogden and Shearing, 1993).

DURBAN POP OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE



Each Platoon is made up of four Sections that are the lowest unit of organisation. Each Section has 8 members and a Section Leader. A Platoon Commander (Captain rank) and a Second-in-Charge head each Platoon. Four Platoons make up a Company. A Company Commander (Superintendent rank) and a Second-in-Charge head each Company.

One of the companies of Durban POP consisted of four highly specialised platoons. These included:

- The RDP Platoon: this platoon was established to ensure that people involved in state development projects were safeguarded by the unit. For example, if a school was being built in a local area, the unit would ensure that no unauthorised people entered the site and that materials were not stolen. This platoon was also deployed to escort vehicles carrying large amounts of cash and was seen as a key platoon for recovering weapons and stolen vehicles in crime prevention operations. The RDP platoon was essentially composed of white members.
- The Field Platoon: this platoon was deployed mainly in expansive peri-urban areas and their key mandate was to recover firearms and stolen vehicles. They were known to have an extensive network of informers who assisted in their information gathering. This platoon was composed entirely of African members.

- The Bike Platoon: this platoon was deployed when the Company Commander or Operational Commander believed that it was necessary for motorbike support at a crowd management or crime prevention operation. This platoon was also mainly composed of white members. A few coloured and Indian members were introduced to the platoon in 1998.
- The Reaction Platoon (Unit): this was a reserve platoon meant to provide tactical support to other platoons operating in the field. The members of this platoon were believed to be highly specialised and trained in dealing with dangerous or precarious situations. This unit was also made up of white members, though some black members joined after 1999.⁸

The four above platoons were a source of much controversy in the Unit. This was due to the racial composition of the platoons, as well as the perceived preferential treatment that these platoons received with respect to resources, shifts, and even payment. The RDP and Reaction Platoons were also perceived as two of the most brutal platoons in the Unit⁹, making use of reprehensible tactics to achieve their goals.

The Unit also had a non-operational Support Services component that dealt with Human Resource Management, Administration, Logistics and Finance. A third Senior Superintendent was responsible for the oversight of this component.

POP is a national specialised unit within the SAPS. The unit has its own command structure at all levels - national, provincial and local. According to the South African Police Service Act (1995), the SAPS Provincial Commissioner must approve any deployment of the unit at provincial or area level. Area Commissioners of the regular visible police may request the support of the POP, but the Provincial Commissioner should approve of this. Given that POP is a national and centralised unit, the National Commissioner may deploy the national POP to any area at any time as he/she deems necessary to restore public order. This requires the unit to be highly mobile and able to respond at very short notice.

When and why members joined the unit

While there was an influx of African members into the unit and exit of white members from the unit in the early 1990s, this abated in later years. Aside from some significant shifts in the higher ranks (as was mentioned above) there was little movement in and out of the unit from 1996 to 2001. Most of the members in the unit had joined prior to the transition to democratic governance in South Africa. In other words, they had been members of the ISD and even of the Riot Unit in the past.

8. Reaction Units (Platoons) were initiated in the Internal Stability Unit. However, a policy decision was taken when POP was established in 1995 to dismantle these platoons. Durban POP was the only unit in the country to maintain a Reaction Platoon after 1996. The continued existence of this platoon is viewed by the POP Headquarters as extremely problematic and as indicative of the slowness of structural transformation in the unit. Interview with Senior Superintendent Majola, February 2001.

9. Interview with Director Selebi, Unit Commander of Durban POP, November 2000. Director Masemola began a process of deconstructing the RDP and Reaction Platoons in January 2001 in a quest for equity within the Unit.

According to the survey carried out in the unit in 1999, 77.4 per cent of members had been involved in public order policing for more than five years. Of these, 16.9 per cent had been in the unit for between ten and 15 years, and 2.8 per cent had been in the unit for more than 20 years. This meant that the vast majority of members had been trained in the tactics of counter-insurgency and riot control and were socialised into a sub-culture where excessive force and the denial of basic freedoms was assumed to be legitimate and normal.

The length of time members had been in the unit varied somewhat according to race. More than half the white members (53%) had been involved in public order policing for more than ten years. Almost all Indian members (87%) had been in the unit for between five and ten years, but only nine per cent had been doing this type of work for more than ten years. About 24 per cent of African members had been involved in public order policing for more than ten years. 44.3 per cent of all members had been members of the police for more than ten years.

While white members dominated the specialised policing units until the early 1990s, the South African Police have never been a 'white' police force. Black people were recruited into the police force as early as 1910. A serious recruitment programme aimed at increasing the number of black members in the police force was implemented in the mid-1970s. Black police were to play a key role in minimising a public image of white police injuring and killing black township residents. By the late 1980s, 'there was rough parity in numbers between white police and black police' (Brogden and Shearing, 1993:76). However, black members of the police were heavily discriminated against within the SAP. It was extremely difficult if not impossible for them to advance in the ranks. Asian police were only appointed as station officers in the late 1960s and African police officers were only allowed to have authority over white members in the late 1980s; they also received roughly two-thirds of the salaries of their white colleagues (Brogden and Shearing, 1993).¹⁰

Members of the unit joined the police for a multiplicity of reasons. Fielding (1988) argues that the motivations that people have for joining the police are important to understand. These motivations impact directly on the extent to which new recruits adapt to and imbibe both formal and informal processes of socialisation, and in their identification of reference groups within the police. A variety of motivations continue to motivate the police in the work they do throughout their policing careers. As Reiner puts it:

Police officers will remain motivated by a complex and varying mixture of a search for interest, excitement, and a cup of tea, loyalty and esprit de corps, commitment to public service, concern with the plight of victims will all play their parts, as will wanting to get through as trouble free a shift as possible avoiding the rain and the cold, and yes, job security and a fair financial reward (in Critcher and Waddington, 1996:263).

10. This is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 9.

The reasons that members provided for joining the police differed markedly between the four race groups represented in the unit, as Table 3 demonstrates.

Table 3: Question: Why did you join the police?

	African	Coloured	Indian	White	Total
I wanted to serve the public	53 53.5%		8 34.8%	2 11.8%	63 44.4%
I thought it would be an exciting job	8 8.1%	3 100%	5 21.7%	6 35.3%	22 15.5%
I could not find any other work	16 16.1%		1 4.3%	1 5.9%	18 12.7%
My father/brother/uncle was a police officer	3 3.1%				3 2.1%
I wanted to build a career	15 15.2%		9 39.1%	6 35.3%	30 21.1%
Other				2 11.8%	6 4.2%
Total	99 100%	3 100%	23 100%	17 100%	142 100%

As Table 3 indicates, the majority of African members claimed they joined the police for altruistic reasons - to serve the public. However, a significant number of members also indicated that they joined the police because they were unable to find other work alternatives. In interviews conducted with African members, the latter seemed to be the dominant reason for joining the police, particularly those who joined in the late 1970s and 1980s. As the recently appointed African Operational Commander of Durban POP commented when I asked him why he decided to join the police:

Monique, to be honest, black policemen like myself joined the police because there were few job alternatives open to us. I joined in 1982 when really it was not a popular thing to do. I was ostracised by my community who hated the police. But, where else could I think of starting a career? Black police at the time knew that they would be acting against the community and not for it.¹¹

Brogden and Shearing have also stated that most black recruits into the police during this period joined for economic reasons. Joining the police force was one of very few alternatives to a strictly blue-collar job for African people in South Africa. As a result, despite the isolation from their own communities that black police experienced and the racist treatment they received while in the police force, there 'appears to have been no shortage of recruits among black people' (1993:78).

Lack of job opportunities continued to be motivating factor for African recruits in the early 1990s. Sergeant Miriam Ncobo stated that:

11. Interview with Senior Superintendent Bengu, January 2001.

I joined the police in 1993. The reason I joined is because I couldn't find any other job and I needed money to further my studies. At first I wanted to become a teacher, but at that time all the teacher colleges were full and I did not get accepted. So, I stayed home doing nothing for three years after finishing school. Then I heard the police were trying to employ more people and I decided to join. I must say I am happy now that I did.¹²

Indian members joined the police for three main reasons. The greatest percentage claimed they were motivated by self-interest - they wanted to build a career for themselves. But, almost an equal number like their African compatriots, claim they joined the police to assist the public. Roughly 20 per cent joined because they thought it would be an exciting job.

White members seem to have been attracted to a policing career because they believed it would be an exciting job. This is highly typical of new police recruits throughout the world (Reiner, 1992; Banton, 1964). Very few white members claimed to have joined the police out of a desire to serve the public.

It is equally important to understand the motivations members had for joining units involved in public order policing i.e. the Riot Unit, the ISD and POP. These too vary according to race, as Table 4 clearly illustrates.

Table 4: Question: Why did you decide to join the Riot Unit/ISD/POP?

	African	Coloured	Indian	White	Total
I thought the work would be more exciting	19 19.6%		3 13%	2 11.8%	24 17.1%
I had no choice	19 19.6%	3 100%	8 34.8%	7 41.2%	37 26.4%
The unit paid better	7 7.2%				7 5%
It was an elite unit	5 5.1%		4 17.4%	5 29.4%	14 10%
I was bored with the other work that I was doing	3 3.1%			1 5.9%	4 2.9%
It seem to be a more effective unit as compared with others	32 33%		8 34.8%	2 11.8%	42 30%
Other	12 12.4%				12 8.6%
Total	97	3 100%	23 100%	17 100%	140 100%

12. Interview with Sergeant Ncobo, November 1999.

Table 4 alerts us to a number of important issues. Firstly, more than a quarter of the members surveyed claimed that they did not join the unit out of choice. Indeed, in the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, new recruits and members working at the stations were instructed to join the Mobile Unit, the Riot Unit and later, the Internal Stability Unit.¹³ Indian and white members, in particular, appear to have been targeted by police management, but a significant number of African members, almost one fifth, had no choice as to whether they wanted to join the specialised unit.

Those African and Indian members who joined the unit voluntarily indicated that they did so because the unit appeared to be more effective than other units in the police. White members, on the other hand, appear to have been more interested in the fact that the specialised unit was seen as an 'elite unit'. The desire to be part of an elite unit is typical of those who join specialised units dealing with public order policing. Jefferson, writing from a British point of view, claims that recruits into specialised paramilitary units tend to join because it is an avenue to 'highly valued police work' (1990:114).

The third most significant reason provided by white members for joining such units is that they thought the work would be more exciting than working in the police station or doing regular beat work:

I wanted to join the Reaction Unit. It was a unit engaged in high-risk and dangerous work, which is what I wanted. It also was a unit made up of disciplined members who are well trained and where there is no place for error.¹⁴

Once again, Jefferson would argue that this is a typical sentiment from those recruited into paramilitary units. For him, 'the typical recruit to the SPG [Special Patrol Group] is a keen ambitious young male officer of four or five years' standing, anxious to be "active" (1990:134).

The elite and exciting nature of the paramilitary unit, as well as the daily conditions under which members operated seems to have led to a distinct occupational ethos within the paramilitary units. White members interviewed spoke of high levels of solidarity within the unit which emerged not only from the dangerous and even horrific circumstances under which members operated, but also because of the personal costs that many members seem to have incurred as a result of their work in the unit:

My feelings about the unit were very strong. We were simply doing our job and had no time for a normal life. You were moved from one violent place to another, and there was no chance of a normal life after that. Many of the new recruits were not ready for this hard man's world. I had strong feelings for the guys at this time. I felt bad for them, and I was a commander who tried to take care of them. They were like the military, seeing blood and sweat all over the place. They would not admit it but they could not handle it. There were many things that were not natural in the sense that it was not a normal life. Also, these

13. It is interesting to note that this is not peculiar to South Africa. Even in Britain the early recruitment into the specialised units dealing with public order policing was done through a process of forced selection. Early recruits were 'misfits' that divisional commanders wanted to offload (Jefferson, 1990).

14. Interview with Captain Viljoen, Durban POP base, April 1988.

guys were never at home and this created other problems such as very high divorce rates in the unit...we stayed in awkward places and had awkward hours. And there was no racism during that time. We slept together, we ate together, and we bathed together. We were all buddies. We had a relationship. Your buddies were your back-up and we all protected each other.¹⁵

The Senior Superintendent quoted above is reflecting on life in the unit in the 1980s period. From his account, members operated in an environment that was war-like. The unit became their home and other members became the family upon whom they depended and shared their daily experiences. But despite the security provided by this substitute family, the Superintendent makes constant reference to the belief that the conditions under which the members operated and lived were 'abnormal', and by implication, perhaps, undesirable.

Activities of the unit

The primary function of the POP as outlined in the *Technical Team Report on Public Order Policing* (1995) is 'the management of events/incidents of public collective action and behaviour particularly where there is a potential for violent or disruptive conduct. Management includes preventive, protective, pro-active, reactive and restorative conduct'. As will be seen in Chapter 6, policy and training were almost entirely geared towards its primary activity.

The secondary functions of the unit, as stipulated in the *Technical Team Report on Public Order Policing* include the prevention of crime; rendering support on an ad-hoc basis in respect of policing activities or tasks which require the specialised training, equipment and personnel of the unit; policing of and rendering support to natural and man-made disaster situations; and support of the governmental development programmes. Ideally, the unit should only engage in its secondary functions if there are adequate resources (human and physical) to carry out its primary function in the first instance.

While the Durban POP unit prioritises its primary function in terms of its planning, it engages in a wide variety of activities. These range from strictly public order or crowd management operations such as the policing of marches, demonstrations, sports events, political rallies (or anything that could be considered as the management of crowds), to maintaining a presence in areas that are volatile and require 'stabilisation', to more mainstream policing which includes patrols and crime prevention.

Every week the unit prepares a series of planned activities (specifically for crowd management events) based on requests from the public and from the SAPS Area Commissioner as well as intelligence (police and military) that has been gathered pertaining to possible events and sites of public disorder. The following are a list of planned activities for the first week of March 1998 and are copied from a Planned Activities Report of the Provincial Joint Co-ordinating Committee (POCOC)¹⁶ and gives some idea of the types of crowd management events that the unit attends to:

15. Interview with Senior Superintendent Meiring, August 1999, POP Durban Base.

16. Joint Coordinating Committees meet at provincial and local level each week. They are made up of the commanders of the

1998-03-01 Sunday: 9am

A meeting will be held at the Folweni garage in Umbumbulu where work opportunities in the greater area will be discussed. Problems can be expected, as the community is unhappy that the organisers are from the outside.

1998-03-01 Sunday: 10am

A meeting to be held at Nhlakanipho High School in KwaMashu. Report back from Education Department.

1998-03-01 Sunday: 10am

A meeting of Inkatha Freedom Party to be held at the Phikiswayo ground in Richmond Farm. The purpose of the meeting is to increase membership and to relaunch the branch as well as to combine five other branches into one branch. A large crowd is expected.

1998-03-01 Sunday: 10am

A meeting between the ANC chairperson and the community regarding the conflict between the community of Shonokona Squatter area and the councillor in the area. Meeting will take place at the Catholic Church.

1998-03-01 Sunday: 2pm

A community meeting will be held at Cato Crest, Cato Manor. The purpose of the meeting is to elect a committee that will be responsible for the allocation of houses in the area.

1998-03-02 Monday: 10am

Security guards employed by Rhino Security intend to march from Pinetown Taxi Rank, via the central business district, to Rhino Security offices.

1998-03-02 Monday: 2pm

A further meeting between the Dolphin Coast and the Stanger Taxi Association over the use of routes to be taken. Previous negotiations between the associations have so far been unsuccessful.

1998-03-02 Tuesday: time unknown

A meeting will be held at SAPS Chatsworth to resolve the conflict between Africans in the community and the Indians at Welbedacht. The tension developed after an Indian tavern owner allegedly shot a patron.

1998-03-03 Wednesday: 1pm

various policing units and members of the military. Information is shared as to how the security forces should be deployed for the coming week based on information about expected activities in the area. The Provincial Unit Commander of POP KwaZulu-Natal gave this report to me.

The Natal African Teachers Union will hold a protest meeting outside the Durban City Hall to highlight the plea of the 5000 teachers to be retrenched. No permission for this gathering has been obtained. It is unknown how many persons will attend.

1998-03-06 Saturday: time unknown

An IFP rally will be held at Menzi sports ground in M-section, Umlazi. Premier Ben Ngubane will be the guest speaker and IFP members from various surrounding areas will attend. Presently there are no indications of violence manifesting during or after the rally. Although no threats/problems are foreseen, confrontations between supporters of opposing political groups cannot be ruled out, especially en route to and from the rally.

1998-03-06 Saturday: 12am

A mass meeting will be held outside the Workshop complex in Durban. The aim of the meeting is to promote peace, reconciliation and to fight crime which has plagued Durban and the surrounding areas. About 7000 people are expected to attend.

1998-03-06 Saturday: time unknown

The funerals of the following gang members who were killed in Clermont will take place as follows... The above mentioned were members of the Abashana gang and the possible burning of stolen motor vehicles, discharging of firearms, revenge attacks, etc cannot be ruled out from occurring at the funeral.

1998-03-07 Sunday: 11am

A meeting and community feast will be held at Nkosi Ntinyane's kraal in Umbumbulu. About 5000 people are expected to attend. The area is currently stable and there are no threats foreseen.

1988-03-07 Sunday; 10am

The funeral of the late vice chairman of the Chesterville Taxi Association will be held at Chesterville Cemetery. Prior to that a memorial service will be held at the Chesterville Hall. Possible revenge attacks cannot be ruled out as the situation remains tense.

The weekly Planned Activities Report cited above reveals that there are a number of different types of 'crowd management' events that the unit deals with on a weekly basis. These include mass meetings, funerals, protests and demonstrations, as well as small gatherings of community groupings. While there does not seem to be a clear threat of disorder at most of these events, the potential for disorder appears to have been a concern. This concern (most likely based on the historically volatile nature of politics in the province) provides a justification for the presence of the unit¹⁷ at seemingly inconsequential gatherings.

17. There are a number of indicators that illustrate the high levels of social and political conflict in KwaZulu-Natal, the province in which Durban POP is located. According to the Human Rights Commission in KwaZulu-Natal, 338 people died in politically related incidents in April 1994. According to Director Wiggins, POP Provincial Commander, in the first three months of 1998 alone, there were 546 murders in KwaZulu-Natal alone. Most of these were related to instances of public disorder. These numbers were far higher in the 1980s and the early 1990s given the high levels of conflict between groupings aligned to the ANC and those aligned to Inkatha, as well as the many hundreds of deaths that occurred during crowd events as a result of police action. Jeffery reports that between 1987 and 1997, 'more than 11 600 people have died in KwaZulu-Natal. Thousands more have been injured, rendered homeless, cast adrift as refugees' (1997:1).

The Planned Activities Report cited above also indicates that crowd management events tend to take place on the weekends rather than on weekdays. This, of course, is not unexpected given that it is far easier to mobilise crowds on non-working days. However, the minimal number of crowd management events that appear to take place on weekdays does raise the question as to what the unit does when crowd management events are not taking place. A second point to be kept in mind is that the Durban POP unit is the largest in the country; there are roughly 850 uniformed members in the unit at any given time. Given the small number of crowd management events in recent years, as well as the relatively peaceful nature of most of these events, it is important establish what most members do if they are not deployed to carry out crowd management duties.

Through examining the Daily Events Planner of the unit and the Company Commanders' Monthly Reports, it is possible to establish a sense of what activities the unit engages on a regular basis. The Information Management (Intelligence) Department of the unit compiles the Daily Events Planner. Based on information and requests received and the Planned Activities Report, a list of activities is drawn-up for the unit on a Monday morning. Below is a Daily Events Plan for the Durban POP unit for the week 6-11 February 2001.

Tuesday 6 February 2001

09:00 - 17:00: Umbilo¹⁸ - Crime Prevention Operation

(This crime prevention operation involved the establishing of roadblocks and searches in the area. This operation was the result of a request from the Umbilo Police Station Commissioner due to the high levels of theft, housebreaking and unlawful sale of liquor in the area).

Wednesday 7 February 2001

09:00-17:00: Berea¹⁹ - Crime Prevention Operation

(This involved patrolling the area particularly in the light of the growing number of thefts of motor cars in the area).

00:00-04:00: Sydenham²⁰: Crime Prevention Operation

(This involved drug raids and patrols in the area at the request of the Station Commissioner).

18. Umbilo is a lower-middle class/working class area close to the Central Business District in Durban.

19. Berea is an affluent suburb in Durban.

20. Sydenham is a 'Coloured' residential area in Durban. The area is infamous for high levels of drug usage and sale as well as organised crime.

Thursday 8 February

08:00-15:00: Maydon Wharf²¹ - Crime Prevention Operation

(This involved searching port containers for illegal goods and persons)

18:00-22:00: Sydenham: Crime Prevention Operation

14:00-18:00: Pinetown²²: Crime Prevention Operation

(This involved patrolling the area and creating a visible presence given the high levels of car hijackings and theft out of motor vehicles in the area).

10:00-00:00: Pinetown: Crime Prevention Operation

Friday 9 February

16:00-00:00: Central Durban: Road blocks and vehicle checks

16:00-21:00: Absa Stadium - Rugby match CROWD MANAGEMENT EVENT

14:00-22:00: Pinetown: Crime Prevention Operation

Saturday 10 February

10:00-18:00: Point²³: Crime Prevention Operation

(This involved drug raids, patrolling the streets looking for 'illegal' prostitution, monitoring street crime).

06:00-18:00: Pinetown: Crime Prevention Operation

18:00-06:00: Pinetown: Crime Prevention Operation

Sunday 11 February

10:00-18:00: Point: Crime Prevention Operation

07:00-19:00: Absa Stadium: Benefit concert for ill national soccer player CROWD MANAGEMENT EVENT

18:00-03:00: Pinetown: Crime Prevention Operation

These were not the only activities the unit was engaged in during the week cited above. There were also a number of other operations that were sustained and ongoing and intended to stabilise areas that have been categorised as 'unstable' or as 'volatile'. For many months prior to the week cited above the unit had been involved in monitoring and patrolling the taxi ranks. The taxi ranks had been a site of major conflict and even of deadly violence as members of taxi associations came to blows with one another in a contest over routes. Durban POP was also involved in an ongoing operation in one of the biggest and most crime-ridden African townships in Durban, KwaMashu. By 2001, Durban POP had been deploying one company

21. Maydon Wharf is a part of the Durban Harbour/Port. The Durban Harbour is the busiest in South Africa.

22. Pinetown is an affluent, mainly white suburb 15 km from the centre of Durban.

23. Point is a mixed, working class inner-city suburb in Durban. It is a well-known crime area, especially with regards to 'victimless crimes'.

a day to KwaMashu for over a year. KwaMashu was patrolled by Durban POP throughout the day and night. This was done to allow for a strong policing presence in the area, for the conducting of roadblocks and weapons and drug raids, and to assist the local police in any other crime prevention operations.

A third stabilising operation the unit was involved with at the time was maintaining a presence in some of the hostels²⁴ in the Durban area. From the early 1990s the hostels were locations of acute conflict between IFP and ANC supporters. A high percentage of hostel inmates was armed with weapons ranging from spears, to knives, to live ammunition. In one of the hostels, Glebelands Hostel²⁵, 36 hostel inmates were killed between January and May 1998 alone.²⁶ Durban POP maintained a visible presence in three of the key hostels. They conducted searches for illegal weapons and stolen goods, tried to prevent and curtail outbreaks of violence, and made attempts at mediating between conflicting parties.²⁷

None of these stabilising duties can be easily classified as part of the unit's primary function, crowd management.²⁸ They could more easily be classified as crime prevention, the unit's secondary function. However, drawing a distinction between the crime prevention and crowd management work is not always straightforward. High levels of crime and even fear of crime can create situations of public disorder that in turn can lead to a situation where crowd management is required. As Inspector Prem, a member of the Information Management Department of Durban POP explained:

You can't really say that POP should stick strictly to their primary function. Crowd management situations can emerge at any time in the other work we do. Let us say for example that a taxi driver is killed in the middle of Warwick Circle in the centre of town. A crowd begins to form and people take sides. If POP is not there, there would be a real crowd situation and a problem with disorder. In the hostels as well we have to see the bigger picture. Someone from one of the political parties is attacked and maybe even killed by someone from another party in the hostel. If POP was not there to make arrests and deal with the situation immediately, you may find that members of both parties come

24. The hostels were initially established by industry in the 1920s. They were built as single sex housing for Africans who were employed in the city. Those who lived in the hostels did so under appalling circumstances, and in many ways the hostels were a means for employers to ensure the lowest possible cost of reproduction. In the 1960s and 1970s, the government Administration Boards also built hostels for municipal workers in the area. The hostels were used as places of social control and are generally seen as one of the cruel reminders of the apartheid era in South Africa.

25. Glebelands Hostel is situated close to Durban International Airport. 30 000 people live in the hostel which is supposed to house 10 000. Many of the people living in the hostel are unemployed.

26. This information was provided by Director Coetzee, then Unit Commander of Durban POP during an address which he gave to the members of the unit who were undergoing in-service training in late May 1998.

27. Informal telephone interview with Prof. Ari Sitas at the University of Natal who has done extensive research on hostels in South Africa, February 2000.

28. Aside from the ongoing stabilising duties the unit was involved in, they were also called upon from time to time to do 'special duties'. This involved deploying the unit outside of Durban, but usually in the province, into areas characterised by disorder. For example, the unit was deployed for nearly two years in an area called Richmond in the Natal Midlands. In May 1998, roughly 1000 police, including a large contingency from Durban POP, were deployed in Richmond as a stabilising force. This followed the release from prison of a controversial public figure, Sifiso Nkabinde. Nkabinde was much feared in the area and had been charged with 19 politically related murders in the Richmond. On the night prior to his release, one hundred families fled the area fearing renewed violence and instability in the area (*Mercury*, 01/05/98).

together and try to attack each other. This has happened before and it is a very dangerous situation. Have you seen how many weapons there are in the hostels?²⁹

Perhaps the simplest way to gain a sense of the proportional involvement of the unit in primary and secondary activities is to glance at the statistical records documented in the Company Commanders' Monthly Report.³⁰ Below are two examples of these reports from two different companies:

Company Commander: Captain Reddy

Month: November 2000

Company: Alpha

Crowd management unrest	0
Crowd management peaceful³¹	16
Crime prevention³²	22
Road blocks	64
Cordon and search	3
Stability duties: hostel	35

Company Commander: Captain Yeriah

Month: November 2000

Company: Delta

Crowd management unrest	0
Crowd management peaceful	4
Crime prevention	48
Road blocks	38
Cordon and search	14
Stability duties: hostel	32

What is easily observable from these two tables documented in the Company Commanders' Reports is that the amount of crowd management activities in which individual companies engage is minimal as compared to other (secondary) functions which they engage in on a regular basis. This was particularly the case with regard to Delta Company.

29. Informal chat with Inspector Prem while sitting in the Information Management Department, February 2001.

30. These reports also contain a host of other important information. They record the number of arrests and recoveries of stolen vehicles and goods by the company. They also include space for suggestions or plans that the company may have to improve service delivery. Included in the Company Commander's Report is a breakdown of the activities and 'successes' of each of the four platoons that comprise the company.

31. The POP unit distinguishes between Crowd Management Peaceful incidents and Crowd Management Unrest incidents. Crowd Management Unrest refers to incidents where there was violence, injury or damage to property during the crowd management event. Crowd Management Peaceful refers to situations where no violence, injury or damage are reported. This categorisation will be looked at in more detail in the chapter that explores the behaviour and responses of Durban POP.

32. Roadblocks and cordon and searches could both be considered as crime prevention duties. In the Company Commander's Report, crime prevention refers to those activities where the unit was engaged in patrolling and monitoring a given locality such as KwaMashu, Umbilo or Sydenham.

Over the years Durban POP has been spending more and more time and resources carrying out its secondary functions. In 1998, therefore, Director Meyer, then Unit Commander, stated that he believed that 80 per cent of the unit's time was spent carrying out its secondary function. Three key reasons were given to explain this. First, in Director Meyer's view, following the 1994 elections there was a complete breakdown in regular visible policing in the Durban area and consequently a dependency relationship had developed between the regular police and Durban POP. Second, according to Director Wiggins, Provincial Head of POP, the regular visible police refused to engage in any work that was viewed as 'vaguely dangerous'. POP were seen as a unit who were equipped, trained and having adequate person-power to carry out such work. Third, according to the National Head of Training of POP, the extensive involvement of the unit in secondary functions is rooted in early 1990s with the Internal Stability Unit. According to him, in the early 1990s the ISU purposefully involved itself in crime prevention activities as a means for ensuring that they were seen as 'indispensable' and that disbanding the unit was unwise.

The involvement of paramilitary units such as POP in mainstream policing is not peculiar to South Africa. Kraska and Kappeler (1997) have noted that in the United States almost every police department has a paramilitary unit attached. These units have become increasingly involved in mainstream policing. However, most of their interventions are in situations that are potentially 'high risk'. Drug raids are cited as the most obvious areas of intervention in the United States.

The extensive use of Durban POP in mainstream policing is not unproblematic. While there needs to be an integration of public order policing with mainstream policing, particularly with regards to issues of accountability, public order units should not substitute for regular policing units. When this does become the case, there is a potential danger that regular policing could become more militarised given the specialised equipment, organisation, and training of paramilitary units. The over-involvement of Durban POP in secondary functions has meant at times that the unit may not be readily available or prepared for the policing of public order, which is their key responsibility.³³

Conclusion

At the point of writing this dissertation in 2001, Durban POP remained part of a centralised national paramilitary unit. Despite attempts to demilitarise³⁴ and civilianise the unit, it retained its military structure and command system. Furthermore, while there had been some changes in terms of personnel (particularly at the management and supervisory levels) in the unit between 1995 and 2001, most of the

33. Whether or not there should be a large specialised unit dealing with public order policing in the first place is an important question. This has been a source of debate within POP for many years. In 2000, POP initiated a project to train local visible police in crowd management techniques and legislation. The objective of this project was to eventually devolve the task of managing non-volatile crowd management events to local police stations. POP would then decrease in size and would only be activated where there was potential for disorder and violence, or where assistance was requested by the local police.

34. There were a number of initiatives that were taken to demilitarise the unit. These included removing camouflage uniforms. From 1995, POP members dressed in the same blue uniform as other police members. Aside from a red badge that POP members wore, they were indistinguishable from the regular police. POP vehicles were painted yellow thus removing the militarised khaki green colour they were previously. The ranking system was changed to be more in line with those of the police in places like Britain, and reduced emphasis was placed on military discipline; for example, non-commissioned officers were no longer expected to salute

members in the unit had been involved in public order policing for many years. This meant that they had been both formally and informally socialised in the philosophy, styles and methods of apartheid riot control and counter insurgency policing.

While a common culture and history of public order policing seems to have been shared by most members of the unit, the motivations for joining the police and entering public order policing differed markedly between the various race groupings in the unit. White members displayed motives that are typical of those who enter into specialised public order units throughout the world; they join as young men keen for action and elite status. Indian members were more career oriented in deciding to join the unit, while African members were impressed by the effectiveness of the unit and many claimed they initially joined the police out of a desire to serve the public.

The length of time members had spent in the unit, the militarised nature of the unit, and the differing motivations that members had for joining both the police and the specialised unit are all key factors influencing their views of transformation and their behaviour when on the job. As will be seen later on in the dissertation, while there was a high degree of solidarity and shared experiences in the unit, racial divisions and racialised responses both within the unit and toward the public, were evident.

Finally, the unit's stated primary function is that of crowd management. Indeed, almost all training and policy in the unit is geared toward the management of crowds. However, for a number of reasons Durban POP spent a greater proportion of its time and resources carrying out its secondary functions. These reasons included the decreasing incidence of crowd events and mass gatherings from 1996; the inefficiency and ineffectiveness of the regular visible police in carrying out their functions; the overwhelming need for crime prevention and stabilising interventions in Durban and in KwaZulu-Natal; and the availability of resources - both physical and human - of Durban POP. While the extensive involvement of the unit in secondary activities is understandable, it raises questions about the appropriateness of the training and policy focus of the unit as well as the indicators of good performance that are used. These questions are dealt with in the chapter to follow which explores the mechanisms that were employed to facilitate transformation in the unit.

commissioned officers on sight.

CHAPTER 6

'TRADITIONAL' AND INADEQUATE MECHANISMS FOR TRANSFORMATION: TRAINING, POLICY AND RECRUITMENT

This chapter provides a backdrop for understanding both the shortcomings and the advances of the change process in the Public Order Police unit in Durban. In the first instance, the chapter explores the nature and adequacy of the mechanisms employed by the management of the Public Order Police unit in Durban to bring about the desired goals of transformation. This change process, however, is situated within the broader context of political and public sector transformation, which, it is argued, provides a framework of both limitations and potentialities for police organisational change. The chapter contends that while the political and legislative reforms of the early 1990s provided an impetus and direction for change, they also constrained the change process. Furthermore, while the mechanisms for change favoured by the Public Order Police unit are international conventions for effecting police organisational change, they are unlikely to result in lasting or deeply embedded change. This is because these mechanisms, for the most part, do not give rise to fundamental change in beliefs and assumptions, and do not assist in changing existing power relations and role modelling within the organisation. This is not only because of the inherent limitations of the mechanisms themselves, but is also a result of the particular ways in which they were implemented within the unit.

The process, mechanisms and outcomes of police organisational change in South Africa must be considered within the context of South Africa's broader transition to democratic governance. They should also be seen in terms of the concurrent requirements for change in the public service in general which were viewed by the new government as central to the democratisation project. The form that the political transition took provided an environment that both facilitated and limited the change process within the police, while the legislative process within the public service provided a policy framework to guide this change process. It is this environment (political and legislative) that is in part responsible for the complex and contradictory nature of police transformation in South Africa. This environment was also a key factor in determining the mechanisms for transformation that were selected and prioritised by organisations such as the Public Order Police unit.

While the political transition to democracy in South Africa provided the key catalyst for major reform processes in the public service¹, the nature of the transition also produced serious limitations to fundamental change. Hein Marais, a political analyst, argues that South Africa's transition from authoritarian to democratic rule should be understood 'less as a miraculous historical rupture than as the (yet inconclusive) outcome of a concerted and far-reaching attempt to resolve an ensemble of political, ideological and economic contradictions...' (1998:2).

According to Marais (1998), there was never any real possibility of replacing the old with the new; the result of transition would always be an assimilation of the two. There was no chance of sweeping aside the old institutions of South African society. Instead, he argued, they would be reshaped.² Friedman recognising this, describes South Africa's transition to democracy as the outcome of 'pact-making' between the ANC and the National Party (NP). The pacting process, Friedman argues, was inevitable³ given the fragility and potential volatility of the transition process. In fact, says Friedman, 'bargained compromise is the fulcrum on which [South African] society revolves' (1996:46).

Early on in the negotiation process between the NP and the ANC⁴, the ANC recognised that political consensus would have to be reached for a lasting and positive outcome. A number of compromises were made (by the ANC in particular) - the most notable one being the formulation of what came to be known as the 'sunset clause'. This clause provided for compulsory power sharing, and an offer not to purge the security forces and civil servants of 'counter-revolutionary elements'. From 1994-1999, a Government of National Unity ruled South Africa; executive power was shared between political parties that had gained more than five per cent of the popular vote. As part of the negotiated settlement and shared government, the ANC agreed to 'refrain from purging the civil service, thus leaving intact much of the institutional culture and personnel of the old order' (Marais, 1998:92).

The sunset clauses ensured that government departments and administrations would continue to be plagued by defining apartheid features. At the time of the transition, government departments were characterised by a particular internal culture and structural arrangements which included racial and ethnic

1. I will make use of the definition of public service provided by Adler (2000) that includes national and provincial government departments.

2. It is perhaps because of this that Mc Lennan notes that by 1997 'despite several concerted efforts to change manage a range of national and provincial government departments, the public in 1996 [saw] little difference between the public service of 1993 and the one currently in operation' (1997:98).

3. Friedman (1996) argues that the ANC and NP were both very skilled at bargaining compromises and that it was these compromises that saved the transition process from a number of crises and breakdowns. Friedman refers to this process as a 'remarkable exercise in conflict resolution' (1996:53).

4. While there were a host of other parties involved in the negotiation process, the outcome was essentially the result of negotiations between the ANC and the NP (Friedman, 1996).

segregation, corruption and mismanagement of resources, poor and outdated management practices, a regulatory bureaucratic culture, a lack of accountability and transparency, and poorly trained staff (McLennan, 1997). This legacy has proven to be an obstacle to change within the police organisation.

The transitional process did not only give rise to a restrictive environment. Two major documents resulted from this process that spurred on transformation in the public service - the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) and the Constitution (1993; 1996).⁵ By the end of 1993, the Reconstruction and Development Programme was the key document projected to guide change in South Africa. The RDP document consisted of four sub-programmes including meeting basic needs; developing human resources; building the economy; democratising the state; and the implementation of the programmes aimed at reconstruction and development. The RDP document noted that 'democratisation require[d] modernising the structures and functioning of government in pursuit of the objectives of efficient, effective, responsive, transparent and accountable government' (cited in Patel, 2000:186), and thus placed the transformation of the public service high on the political and social agenda. This would involve changing the working practices of the public service, performance and the organisational culture (Wooldridge and Cranko, 1997).⁶

The 1996 Constitution also stressed the importance of the transformation of the public service. The Constitution guarantees 'the right to collective bargaining, to strike, to freedom of expression, speech and assembly, to privacy, equality before the law, access to information and to sexual orientation'. It sets out a clear framework for a restructured public service, recognising that the public service has a key role to play in addressing the ravages of South Africa's past. In order for the public service to address this past, the Constitution stresses, it should be 'non-partisan, career-oriented, and guided by fair and equitable principles. It should promote an efficient public service broadly representative of South African communities. Public servants should serve in an unbiased and impartial manner and loyally execute the policies of government' (McLennan, 1997:109).

Both the legislative and political environment were positioned for transformation to take place in the public service. Whether reform or transformation is the correct word for describing the process of change that was embarked upon, change had to take place. Change, while constrained by political settlements and the organisational legacy of the public service, had to reflect the principles enshrined in the constitution,

5. An Interim Constitution (Act 200 of 1993) was devised prior to the first national democratic elections in April 1994. On 8 May 1996, the new and slightly amended Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) was adopted by the Constitutional Assembly.

6. The Reconstruction and Development Programme, however, was confronted by numerous problems. These included a refusal of public officials to implement the programmes outlined; faltering structures in the civil service; and lack of co-ordination by central government. In April 1996, RDP National Office closed and the importance of the RDP document declined as government increasingly emphasised the need for fiscal discipline and the belief that reconstruction should be built on free markets, the cultivation of business, and investor confidence.

the Reconstruction and Development Programme, as well as the goals of democratic governance in its broadest sense.

Shortly after the first national elections in 1994, there was a flurry of drafting new government policy documents. In November 1995, the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service was finalised which provided both a mission and a vision for the entire public service.⁷

The White Paper begins by stating that:

In forging ahead with the process of reconciliation, reconstruction and development, the South African public service will have a major role to play as the executive arm of government. To fulfil this role effectively, the service will need to be transformed into a coherent, representative, competent and democratic instrument for implementing government policies and meeting the needs of all South Africans.

Following from this general principle, the White Paper outlines a mission for the public service.

In order to reach its vision it stipulated that the public service should aim to:

- Become genuinely **representative** of South African demography. This is viewed as key to attaining legitimacy in the public service and essential for equitable service delivery.
- **Transform the attitudes and behaviour** of public servants toward a democratic ethos underpinned by a commitment to human rights.
- Promote **commitment to the constitution and national interests** rather than to partisan allegiances.
- Respond **flexibly, creatively and responsively** to the change process and the needs of the public. This would require organisational decentralisation.
- Promote **human resource development** for effective change and institution building.
- Encourage the evolution of **accountability and transparency**.
- Upgrade standards of **efficiency and effectiveness**.
- Create an **enabling environment** for economic growth within the country.

The White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (1996) sets out clear parameters and goals for change in government departments, such as the police.⁸ Some, however, have argued that the

7 . This mission and vision, while largely an attempt to rid the South African public service of its apartheid past, must also be seen within the context of international trends within the public service. These trends include a move away from centralised planning; a changed state role from central agent to facilitator; cutting of state expenditure; an insistence on greater accountability, innovation, creativity and responsiveness to client needs; an emphasis on quality, efficiency and effectiveness; a greater emphasis on human resource development and participatory management; and increased reliance on information technology. These international changes are cited in the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (1995).

8. The White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Services, however, recognises that there are a number of inherited characteristics in the public service likely to hinder transformation. These include the lack of representativeness; lack of popular

framework provided by the Constitution and the White Paper gave rise to a transformation process that looked at the existing structure as a starting point for change instead of considering restructuring and reorganisation (Wooldridge and Cranko, 1997). This meant, Wooldridge and Cranko argue, that the premise for change was to 'rationalise old structures into new ones' (1997:337). There was little accounting for the organisation's external context and the internal organisational context of culture and capacity. As a result 'the process of public sector change [became] a technocratic process cast in terms of existing frameworks, institutional practices and procedures. Existing frameworks and vested interests [dictated] the pace and nature of change' (Wooldridge and Cranko, 1997:341). The Public Order Police unit (and indeed the police in general) was no exception, and as a result, the methods developed for bringing about change in the unit were conventional and somewhat perfunctory.

Reforming public order policing in line with public service transformation

The new political and legislative framework had important implications for policing in general in South Africa, but for public order policing in particular. The NP government, as well as the ANC, recognised early on in the negotiation process that democratisation could not take place without the support and the transformation of the police. This is because, as Shaw puts it:

...few issues are more central to the future of the country's attempt at democratic compromise than the maintenance of public order...Restoring civil order and personal security for all South Africans is thus very important to a successful transition, and a credible, competent and accountable police force, enjoying broad public legitimacy, is a prerequisite for a durable democracy (1994:1).

As was discussed in Chapter 4, police management realised as early as 1991 that change in the South African Police was inevitable. Changes in the political arena forced police management to restate their allegiances and, consequently, 'during the negotiation process, both security arms [the police and the military] sought to cement their future by placing a distance between themselves and the National Party, insisting that they would serve any elected government' (Friedman, 1996:54). According to Friedman, it is hardly surprising that police management came to this understanding. Both their own careers and the future success of South Africa's transition depended on their support for the new political dispensation.

The quest to transform public order policing units during periods of political transition from authoritarianism to democracy is not peculiar to the South African case. Similar emphasis has been placed on the need to transform public order policing in European countries that have undergone political transitions. Della Porta argues that this is so because the case for transformation in line with state democratisation is even more pronounced for those police involved in public order policing. The reason

legitimacy; lack of service delivery, particularly in black communities; centralised control and top-down management; lack of accountability and transparency; an absence of management information; low productivity; poorly paid and demotivated staff; conflictive labour relations; and a poor professional and work ethos. Added to this, the White Paper recognises that fear and resistance to change on the part of public servants would also hinder transformation.

for this, she says, is that 'direct interventions by the police to restore public order, moreover, put the police on the front pages of the press, and increase the likelihood of public criticism' (della Porta, 1995:1). The manner in which police deal with public protest is a key indicator of state democratisation.

The legislative framework contained in the new public sector policy documents and the Constitution set the tone for the type of policing that was required in a democratised South Africa. The South African Constitution (1996) stipulates that safety and security are basic rights of every South African. It is also the only constitution in the world that prescribes community policing⁹ as a style of policing to be adopted by state police. This is in line with new government policy and philosophy which focuses on bilateral/trilateral agreements, community participation and community consultation within public service institutions (Adler, 2000). Police management is bound to establish community policing forums as a mechanism to ensure police-community co-operation, police consultation with the community, police accountability to the community, and that the service provided is oriented toward community needs and priorities (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, Chapter 13). Public sector legislation more broadly commits the police to provide an equitable, non-partisan, effective and efficient service.

As a result of the changed political and legislative environment, the entire police force was compelled to make the difficult change toward an organisation that is representative, demilitarised, community oriented, accountable, and that provides a service in line with policing standards in established liberal democratic states.¹⁰ In 1995, the South African Police Service Act (1995) was promulgated. It reflected the spirit and concerns of both the Constitution and the new public sector policy documents. In its preamble, the Act states that a single police service would be formed to ensure the safety and security of all persons in the national territory of South Africa. The police service, the Act stipulates, should strive to uphold and safeguard the fundamental rights as guaranteed in the Constitution. The Act also highlights the importance of community co-operation and civilian oversight.

9. This is a highly contested term. In its most minimalist meaning, community policing refers to accountability to and co-operation with the community that the police serve (Moir and Moir, 1992). The term community policing can also include a move toward a more localised and problem solving approach to policing (Goldstein, 1990; Bayley, 1996). The term, however, is highly controversial. Who exactly the community is and who should own and control the process of policing are probably the two most important questions confronting debates on community policing (Brogden and Shearing, 1993; Brown 1988; Marks, 1997).

10. The transformation of the police is key to any societal transition. The police are 'major actors' in changing societies; they not only reflect the nature of the state, but may also be responsible for the prevention or promotion of state change (Marenin, 1996). The constant contact that the state police have with the public situates the police in the centre stage in societies in transition. Changing police in line with changing states is not peculiar to South Africa. As states throughout the world have increasingly moved toward greater democratisation, there has been a shift toward the democratisation of policing and community policing has become a catch phrase for contemporary policing. Attempts to democratise the police as an institution is a contemporary phenomenon stretching from Latin America, to Eastern Europe, to Asia and the North Americas. This reflects attempts by states to become increasingly accountable to their citizens, and the concurrent acknowledgement that this cannot be done without the support of the police as both objects and agents of change. Such changes have involved a move away from military organisations, to ones concerned with human rights (Marenin, 1996).

While the entire amalgamated police service had to embark on a change process, the need to transform the unit that had been involved in public order policing was even more urgent. Not only had these police units been some of the most brutal during the apartheid years and even during the transformation period itself, they were also the most public and visible units of the police. A number of challenges confronted public order policing. The new unit, POP, had to reflect a commitment to the right to freedom of expression, and to peaceful demonstration and protest. This would involve greater tolerance on the part of the police, an emphasis on consultation and negotiation, as well as the use of minimum force (Heymann, 1992). The philosophy of community policing also meant that public order policing had to result from processes of consultation, community participation, and problem solving.¹¹ More structurally, the make-up of the POP unit had to become representative of the communities it serves, and less militarised in appearance and organisation.

There were, however, clear limits to the change process in the police. As Wooldridge and Cranko (1997) point out with regards to public service transformation more generally, change was limited to the revamping of existing structures. The sunset clauses also made fundamental change unlikely from the outset. As a result, Penuel Maduna, ANC representative at a conference held in 1992 on the prospects for democratised policing, warned that:

The political and economic reality confronting us is that there is no question of the apartheid oriented, non-representative South African Police force, which is rooted in the gross denial of human rights to the oppressed black masses, being dismantled and replaced with a new force. At the same time, we cannot take over the SAP as it is, with its wrong orientation, tendencies and value systems...Trapped as we are between Scylla and Charybdis, as it were, we are constrained to talk about the need to transform the existing forces and instruments of the law...and infuse them with new, humane and democratic values and personnel...The alternative of us throwing them out lock, stock and barrel is just not feasible (cited in Cawthra, 1993:176).

In sum, while change had to take place within public order policing in South Africa, there were two important constraints that were shared with the rest of the public service. The personnel remained largely intact¹², and the managerial mindset for change was essentially technocratic. It was relatively easy to make visible changes to the unit in terms of the types of uniforms, vehicles and equipment used in order to decrease the military appearance of the unit, but changing patterns of behaviour and ways of thinking was more of a challenge. Two mechanisms were identified by police management and international

11. Huens, Van Ryckeghem, and Hendrickx (1998), who have all been directly involved in developing and constructing the new training programme for POP, have argued that community policing as a philosophy and practice can easily be applied to crowd management. They argue that the police need to begin from the perspective that conflict is constructive and that crowds are usually peaceful and unproblematic. The role of the police is to prevent (intervene with the causes of conflict and disorder) and prevent (deal with the circumstances which could lead to violence and disorder) in the first instance, and to de-escalate violence and disorder thereafter. All this involves constant negotiation, conflict resolution and problem-solving with all parties concerned.

12. As was demonstrated in Chapter 4, almost half of the members of Durban POP had been involved in public order policing for more than ten years. 77.4 per cent had been in the unit for more than five years.

policing experts for bringing about change in performance and attitude - training and policy. These mechanisms, as we shall see, were both traditional and limited (Shearing, 1995).¹³

Providing a vision - the development of new policy

In Chapter 4 it was noted that as early as 1992, Judge Goldstone (who had chaired the Commission of Inquiry into the Prevention of Violence and Intimidation) had established a panel of international experts to make recommendations regarding the procedures and rules pertaining to mass demonstrations, marches and picketing. The panel completed a document that was edited by Phillip Heymann, a criminologist at the Harvard Law School. The document, available as a book compiled by Heymann, laid out the principles and made practical recommendations for ensuring protected and peaceful demonstrations in South Africa. This would involve significant changes in the South African practice, to bring public order policing more in line with practices in Western Europe and North America (Heymann, 1992).

The recommendations of the international panel became a key reference point when the ANC-led government decided to maintain a separate public order police unit within the SAPS. In 1995, a Technical Team on Public Order Policing was established, and was tasked with devising a report that would propose a new system for public order policing in South Africa and with developing an implementation plan. One of the first things the Technical Team decided to do was develop a set of policy guidelines in a document called the *Public Order Police Policy Document on Crowd Management* (1996).¹⁴ The aim of the document was to 'communicate to members of the police and the public how public order police should conduct themselves and the principles that inform this conduct'.¹⁵

The policy document was developed despite the fact that the principles and procedures for crowd management are clearly laid out in the Regulations of Gatherings Act (No. 205 of 1993) which was promulgated in 1995. However, the Technical Team felt that a policy document was required. This is hardly surprising given that the law with regard to policing is open to interpretation and wide discretion (Pike, 1985; Hall et al, 1978). The law may provide limits, but police policy provides interpretation of that law which is a more immediate guide to behaviour and strategy (Reiner, 1992; Jefferson, 1990).

13. There were also structural changes that had to be achieved such as increased representativity and diminishing the ranking system. This will be dealt with in detail in Chapters 8 and 9.

14. This policy document was the first major policy document to be drawn up by the South African Police Service after the 1994 democratic national elections. By 1998, the Public Order Police unit was the only police unit in South Africa to have a formally stated policy document.

15. Interview with Captain Mohamed, Head of Training of Public Order Police, Chatsworth Police College, May 1998.

The *Public Order Policy Document on Crowd Management* was developed, according to senior police officers in the Public Order Police unit, to provide clarity on what was expected from POP in conducting their primary function, and exactly how to go about policing crowd events, whether planned or spontaneous. As has been outlined in Chapter 4, the document outlines a set of objectives and principles for policing crowds. The document is centred on a move away from police control of crowds (where groups of people were forced to conform to rules set by police, often through violent means) to crowd management (where the police, together with participants, jointly plan and ensure protected and peaceful demonstration and protest).¹⁶ The policy document states that:

As a result of the vast socio-political changes that have occurred in South Africa over the past few years, new approaches, tactics and techniques must develop to align the management of crowds with the democratic values of transparency and accountability. Police actions must also be reconciled with the Bill of Human Rights and the statutory provisions pertaining to crowd management (1996:1).

Aside from the objectives and the principles of crowd management, the document provides procedural guidelines for the management of crowds. In so doing, it stipulates that there should be pre-planning, negotiation and consultation with key players representing the public; a gradual build-up of defensive and offensive measures in line with demonstrated need; constant communication with key players; and finally debriefing (both with key players, and within the unit itself). The document stipulates that:

Members of the SAPS/POP are to be structured, organised, well trained and provided with suitable protection and equipment before being deployed. A detailed briefing, during which the line of command is clearly defined must be given to all members involved. During this briefing the levels of force must be predetermined and clearly explained to all members and that it can only be effected by instruction of the operational commander. Force shall be managed in a professional and disciplined manner and within the terms set out in this policy...The SAPS/POP policy toward crowd management will be one of a gradual build up from negotiation, through the implementation of defensive measures, to the undertaking of offensive operations. Continuous contact at the scene is necessary with organisers through direct communication, negotiation and mediation (1996:10).

Senior police in the POP unit, as well as trainers, believed that the new policy document was key to bringing about what they termed 'mind change'. Exposure to the policy document, they believed, would lead to new understandings of how crowd management should be conducted and new rationales to guide action. When asked what he thought the purpose of the new policy document was, Director Coetzee, past Unit Commander of Durban POP stated that the document was there to 'change attitudes and to help move the unit away from the past'.¹⁷ Captain Mohamed, Head of Training of Durban POP, also seemed to believe there was a direct correlation between new policy and changed ways of thinking:

16. These represent a significant shift in focus from previous public order policing in South Africa where force was ubiquitous, no planning and assessment was conducted, police response was reactive and not guided by any policy, and where the use of equipment and manpower was generally excessive in relation to the circumstances.

17. Interview with Director Coetzee, October 1997.

With the advent of democracy we now have new values and regulations. Police are trained to work according to laws and policies, and when these change, police change too.¹⁸

These two views are not surprising. As Jefferson (1990) has noted in his study of public order policing in Britain, most police supervisors and managers view policy in an idealised manner. They believe it is a set of instructions or guidelines to be followed in a straightforward way. In fact, argues Jefferson, one of the central ways in which police managers try to manage is via policy; the whole managerial enterprise is directed to and by policy.

While it is well and good for policy to be formulated, it is important to establish whether rank-and-file members are aware of new policy, how they receive and understand this new policy, and whether policy is in fact adhered to in the daily practices of the police. It is equally important to establish whether those in command and in supervisory positions instruct in accordance with new policy.

For the most part, members of the unit at all levels received the fact that there was a new policy document positively. They appreciated the need for a set of guidelines and instructions during a period that they characterised as 'in flux' and as uncertain. They acknowledged that styles of policing public order had to change to conform to the new governance and in line with the new Constitution and Bill of Rights. One of the Inspectors in the unit reflected this general feeling in the unit in stating that:

The document has been important. In the past we had a lot of intolerance in public order policing. With the new document we have learned that you can't just charge at people for no major reason. The policy document helps the police and the crowd to know how crowds should be treated.¹⁹

The Inspector clearly acknowledged a need for changed behavior, but that this behaviour had to be guided. His views were echoed by one of the platoon commanders in the unit:

The policy document has had a big effect. Previously we had no legislation or guidelines to prescribe how we behaved. New legislation now prescribes our behaviour. We have to comply with the new legislation or face the consequences.²⁰

While members believed the new policy document was important, this did not mean that they were entirely informed as to the content of the document. In 1999 I conducted a survey with 143 members of

18. Interview with Captain Mohamed, April 1998.

19. Interview with Inspector Myeni, May 1998.

20. Interview with platoon commander at Chatsworth Training College, May 1998.

the Durban POP unit. On being asked whether they had seen a copy of the new policy document, 65 per cent said that they had, while a fairly significant number, 32.9 per cent, said that they had not. However, the fact that members had copies of the document did not mean that they had read it or that they were in any way familiar with the content or objectives of the document as the following three tables indicate.

Table 5: Statement: Most members of the unit have read the policy document

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative per cent
Strongly disagree	10	8.4	8.6	8.6
Disagree	24	16.8	17.3	25.9
Neutral	38	26.6	27.3	53.2
Agree	49	34.3	35.3	88.5
Strongly agree	16	11.2	11.5	100.0
Total	139	97.2	100.0	
Missing	4	2.8		
Total	143	100		

Only 45.5 per cent of members believed that members in the unit had actually read the document. Not surprisingly therefore, as Table 6 below indicates, only 52.5 per cent (just over half) of members surveyed believed that members in the unit had a clear understanding of the intentions of the document.

Table 6: Statement: Most members are aware of the goals of the policy document

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative per cent
Strongly disagree	10	7.0	7.1	7.1
Disagree	25	17.5	17.9	25.0
Neutral	30	21.0	21.4	46.4
Agree	57	39.9	40.7	87.1
Strongly agree	18	12.6	12.9	100.0
Total	140	97.9	12.9	
Missing	3	2.1	100.0	
Total	143	100.0		

The assumed low levels of familiarity with the document itself and its intentions could in part be due to the fact that very little discussion had taken place within the unit regarding the new document. As Table 7 indicates, only 37.1 per cent of members surveyed believed that the policy document had been adequately discussed within the unit. Most felt that there had been insufficient dialogue and debate about the policy document. This lack of discussion most likely prevented members from developing a shared understanding and vision, necessary during periods of organisational change. The dearth of debate and

dialogue within the platoons is in large part due to the absence of participatory management styles within the unit which is dealt with in more detail in Chapter 8.

Table 7: Statement: We have adequately discussed the policy document in our section/platoon

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative per cent
Strongly disagree	12	8.4	8.6	8.6
Disagree	34	23.8	24.5	33.1
Neutral	40	28.8	28.8	61.9
Agree	41	28.7	29.5	91.4
Strongly agree	12	8.4	8.6	100.0
Total	139	97.2	100.0	
Missing	4	2.8		
Total	143	100.0		

What these three tables indicate is that while the policy document may exist, and members may be aware of the document, the document is unlikely to be an effective transformative tool. Less than half the members had read the document. Individual members interviewed did not seem to feel there was any urgency in reading the document. As one of the Constables in the unit told me:

I do not know if members are familiar with the document. I have the document but I have not read the whole thing. I can always go back and read it. Just because I received it today does not mean I have to read it today.²¹

While according to the Head of Training at POP Headquarters, the policy document was supposed to be disseminated and discussed both in in-service training and within platoons, most members (78%) only received the document while in training. Section leaders and platoon commanders did not actively distribute the document to members. It also seems that discussions about the document within platoons and sections were neither systematic nor institutionalised; Table 7 indicates that only 53 per cent of members had discussed the policy document in their platoons and sections. Platoon commanders acknowledged that they were not actively involved in initiating discussions about the document in their platoons:

The members tell you, 'Captain, we didn't even know about that thing. We didn't even open it'. But they listen when you tell them about it. But sometimes, even I don't have time for that... You cannot instruct people to read. You have to go inside their spirits and inside their minds.²²

21. Interview with Constable Mbeki, August 1999.

22. Interview with Captain Modise, only female platoon commander in the unit, May 1999.

This Captain is making the important point - simply giving police members a document to read will not automatically lead to a change in attitude or values.

The fact that members were not necessarily aware of the details of the document did not mean that the document has had no impact on the unit's conduct and performance. The document outlined procedures and methods for conducting crowd management which most supervisors and commanders became aware of. One of the trainers commented in an informal conversation with me that those in command had been told that they needed to use the document as a reference point and that failure to act in accordance with the document would lead to serious consequences.²³ The possibility was always there, therefore, that adherence to the policy document would be mechanistic rather than due to a changed understanding of mission or objective.

Even if adherence was because of fear of reprimand, new policy did impact on the procedures and methods used by the unit in crowd management situations. As can be seen in the chapter to follow, the use of force was minimised and members displayed far greater tolerance in the policing of crowds from 1995 onward. However, the extent to which the document came to be used as a guide for action is, however, highly dependent on the confidence that those in command have with regard to implementing the new methods and styles outlined in the documents. Ultimately the implementation and adherence to new policy is dependent on clear commands and careful supervision. As Jones, Newburn and Smith have noted:

If new policies are to be effectively translated into practice, then new methods of limiting officer discretion and supervising police work are necessary...It is crucial therefore, that discussions of police accountability are not overly narrow in focus and that, in addition to external structures, attention is paid to internal structures for ensuring that the service that is delivered, conforms to that laid down by policy makers (1996:194).

The 1999 survey results indicated that only 53 per cent of rank-and-file Durban POP members believed that their platoon commander was familiar with the policy document and applied it in his/her command. Fifty seven per cent felt that their section leaders were familiar with the policy document and applied it in their command.²⁴

Supervision and command on their own are not enough to instil a sense of commitment to new policy amongst the rank-and-file. New procedures and methods need to be seen to work effectively in the field. Policy does not lead directly to new forms of behaviour. Ericson notes that how policy is interpreted and used is highly dependent on police discretion. Rules as stated formally, he argues, 'have a fictional

23. Informal chat with Inspector Bosman, August 1997.

24. Issues of supervision and command will be explored in depth in Chapter 8.

character' (1982:44). Citing Manning, Ericson continues that it is the context of rules not the rules themselves that determine how policy is interpreted and used. This is because, Ericson believes, 'the police officer's rules for action are the recipe rules learned on the job...They are not administrative rules...but those rules of thumb that mediate between the departmental regulations, legal codes, and the actual events he witnesses on the streets' (1982:25).

Holdaway maintains a similar point of view to Ericson. He insists that 'formal organisational rules, enshrined in law, policy or some other prescriptive managerial instrument are changed as they are used within the context of policing the streets. A clear objective can be written into any prescriptive directive but it is not safe to assume that the same clarity of purpose will be affirmed by those who implement it' (1994:70). Change in organisations cannot be brought about in a one-dimensional manner since, Holdaway argues, there are always assumptions lodged in the minds of those who implement policies in their daily work. These assumptions will shape the way in which policies are interpreted into daily practices of the police. Holdaway's cautions were echoed by one of the platoon commanders of Durban POP unit:

You definitely cannot change police through reading a policy document. There is nothing like that happening. You have to be physically involved and work hands-on with the members in a new style, and also ask members how they are feeling about these things. But the commander must be there at all times...You need to make them involved physically, show them how to respond and what to do.²⁵

Captain Dada, Head of Public Relations in the unit similarly argued that 'the document cannot work as an abstract document. Police only change when they work at a practical level and see the benefits of any type of transformation.'²⁶

The degree to which policy is used and is perceived as noteworthy depends on the extent to which it can be applied to the situations and circumstances confronted by the police in their daily work. There were two key problems with the applicability of the document in the POP unit. Firstly, the document was solely concerned with crowd management, the primary function of POP. However, as was discussed in Chapter 5, 80 per cent of the unit's activities are related to its secondary functions. Thus, there was no real policy guidance with regard to the work that the unit does most of the time.

A second problem (related to applicability) is that members of the unit, particularly those in management functions, believed that the document was devised by a group of experts influenced by international

25. Interview with Captain Modise, May 1999.

26. Interview with Captain Dada, Head of Public Relations in Durban POP, April 1998,

trends in liberal democracies.²⁷ Their understanding was that the policy document was not suited to the volatile and unpredictable nature of public order policing in South Africa, KwaZulu-Natal in particular. This concern was also raised by station commissioners who were attending a workshop aimed at training high-ranking regular police in crowd management skills.²⁸ I attended this workshop as an observer and recorded the following incident in my research diary:

19/04/2000.

I could see some of the station commissioners were shaking their heads as the trainers introduced them to the procedures outlined in the policy document. One female Station Commissioner from Empangeni²⁹, in particular, looked very agitated. She eventually stood up and said: 'Crowds in Zululand are spontaneous and are not willing to negotiate. Often, crowds of people end up killing each other. The only thing we as police can do is use maximum force. So, where is the use of the policy document here?'

In reality, the policy document at no point states that force should not be used. What it does stipulate is that maximum force should be used as a very last option when all other attempts have failed and that any force used should be proportional to the threat of violence on the part of the crowd. While the Station Commissioner from Empangeni may be indicating a lack of understanding of the policy document, she was also expressing a commonly held assumption that in volatile situations it is more appropriate to use force first and talk later.

It is clear that there are a number of factors that determine whether or not policy can be used to effect change. These include the competence, skill, knowledge and commitment of supervisors and commanders; the day-to-day street experiences of police members; the demands of the job; and existing attitudes and assumptions held by police members (particularly the rank-and-file) about their role and about the nature of policing. At a more basic level, adherence to policy and the effectiveness of policy as a transformative tool depends on whether, in the first instance, members are familiar with the goals, objectives and stipulations of new policies. While new policies may be adhered to and new procedures and methods followed, this may take place in a mechanistic way and result from fear of reprisal if interventions deviate from stated policy. The basic assumptions that are held by the police will not change automatically on hearing about new laws and new policies; 'mind change', a common phrase among managers in the unit, does not change prior to the experiencing of positive outcomes of new procedures and methods.

27. This was mentioned to me by Captain Dada in an interview in April 1998.

28. In November 1999 a decision was taken by senior management and trainers in POP from throughout the country to begin a programme of training regular visible police in low-risk crowd management functions. The aim of this is to free the POP unit for interventions where there appears to be a higher risk or where a show of numbers is clearly needed since there is a potential or actual threat to public tranquility.

29. Empangeni is on the Natal north coast and has been the scene of high levels of political violence, usually between groups claiming to be supporters of the ANC and those claiming to be supporters of the IFP.

Training - the magic wand for change

With the transition to democratic governance in South Africa, training came to be seen as one of the key mechanisms for developing South Africa's human resources, especially in the public service. South Africa's legislators and change agents advised that training helps in the development of professional capacities of public servants and promotes institutional change. According to the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (1995), training contributes to attaining strategic goals of transformation in a number of ways. First, training equips public servants with the skills and knowledge needed to carry out jobs effectively and in line with new visions and missions. Second, proper training assists in increasing representativity by equipping persons new to the civil service. Third, training is key to the development of a new work ethic and professionalism and as a mechanism for reorienting values. Fourth, training assists public servants to develop a better understanding of the communities that they serve and how to respond to the needs that those communities may have.

While the training of new recruits and the retraining of existing police members did not take place systematically in the South African Police Service at large, it was seen as crucial to the transformation of the Public Order Police unit. Following the *Technical Team Report on Public Order Policing* (1995) and the 'new vision' for public order policing, a completely revised training programme for the POP unit was designed. The emphasis on the need for new training as a mechanism for transformation is not surprising. Within police organisations throughout the world, training is used as a key formal tool for socialising members into the organisation and to secure members' commitment in the organisation. In fact, Fielding argues that most police managers believe that 'training is the most direct and intensive way by which the organisation can seek to influence its members' adjustment to the police role' (1988:2).

A lot of time, energy and money were invested in developing a new training programme for POP. Approximately R46 million was spent on the retraining of POP members at all levels. Most of this money was provided by the Belgian government whose police directed the retraining programme. Policing experts from five European countries conducted bi-annual evaluations of the training programmes over a period of five years.³⁰ The aim of the new training was to provide new skills and knowledge as a means of facilitating the move away from unprofessional, reactive and excessive public order policing, toward interventions that are well planned, properly equipped, constrained by legislation, and where preventive and consensual policing methods are prioritised. All existing members of POP were expected to undergo retraining within a five-year period³¹, and all new recruits were expected to undergo extensive initiation training before being able to work in the unit. The new training programmes were developed by senior

30. Telephonic interview with Head of Development Services, Public Order Police Head Office, January 2002.

31. All members of Durban POP had completed retraining by November 2000. Interview with Senior Superintendent Steyn, December 2000.

POP trainers together with police trainers from Canada, the United States of America, Britain, the Netherlands, and Zimbabwe. The main contributor to the new training programme was the Belgium Gendarmerie whose model of crowd management training is now closely adhered to in South Africa. The Belgium Gendarmerie also funded the new training programme and process in POP.

There were a number of different levels to this new training programme. First, there was an Operational Commander Course, aimed at those responsible for the planning of operations including company commanders, unit commanders, and provincial and national heads of the unit. This course focused on the skills required for the planning of operations and negotiating skills. The entire course embraced and was based on the new conceptualisation of public order policing as outlined in the new policy document. Second, there was an initiation course that was targeted at rank-and-file members of the unit. The aim of this course was to ensure that the knowledge and skills held by members of the unit was standardised with regard to crowd management. During the course members were introduced to the new legislation pertaining to crowd management - the policy document and to the Regulation of Gatherings Act and to a revised way of understanding and approaching crowds. By far the greatest emphasis of the course was on the use of new methods and tactics (such as cordoning of areas, push and shove techniques, formations) and on how to make use of new and more appropriate equipment and weapons (such as shields and the tonfa).³² Despite the fact that the new policy and the Regulation Gatherings Act stress the need for negotiation during crowd management interventions, negotiation skills were not covered in this course.³³ While initiation training was initially done at one central national training centre, it soon ran as decentralised in-service training, with the intention of adapting the course to more localised needs.³⁴ Third, a Platoon Commanders Course³⁵ was developed to assist platoon commanders with the planning of interventions, skills in briefing and debriefing, basic negotiations skills, the use of conventional signs, as well as the basic methods and techniques of crowd management.

32. The tonfa is a type of baton used internationally in crowd management. It is a preferred weapon since its use leads to minimum injury. The tonfa used in South Africa is similar to the one used in Japan.

33. The general (arguably short-sighted) view of those in charge of training in POP is that rank-and-file members do not require such skills since their role is to follow commands, not to make decisions. The danger of this view is that rank-and-file members are viewed as having no role or capacity with regard to decision-making, and it is in tandem with an old-fashioned military approach to command and instruction. This was the view of both Captain Mohamed, Head of Training of Durban POP, as well as Superintendent Steyn, National Head of POP Training.

34. It is generally accepted that in-service training is more beneficial than more centralised training since it is flexible and allows for the altering of both methods and content. Furthermore, on-the-job evaluation is easier to conduct at the local level (Nikjerk, 1985).

35. When the new training programme was initially conceptualised and implemented, there was no training for platoon commanders. This was identified as a serious gap in the training programme since platoon commanders are in many ways responsible for the on-the-ground planning, implementation and supervision of crowd management interventions. The Platoon Commanders' Course was instituted in early 1998.

The new training, both in terms of content and philosophy was in line with current training of public order police internationally (except in those with authoritarian governments). As Brearly and King (1996) have stated, it is now generally accepted by police practitioners and experts that good public order policing is dependent on proper training that focuses on community liaison to prevent spontaneous disorder; forward planning; and an improved range of technology, equipment and tactics to allow for a more flexible and less forceful police response.

The new training courses, at every level, were a dramatic change from previous training in public order policing. Details of the prior training of police involved in public order (or riot control) functions were discussed in Chapter 4. As was noted earlier, prior to 1986, police involved in public order policing received virtually no training at all, except for some rudimentary training in riot control. Given that training barely existed, members were expected to learn from their superiors while on the job. Senior Superintendent Meiring was one of the longest standing members of the unit. He joined in the early 1980s. When asked what kind of training he received when joining the unit he answered:

When I joined the unit in 1983 we did not really receive training. I did go on a riot control course, but what generally happened was that if you didn't know how to do something, you asked. At that time we didn't have crowd management, we had crowd control. That was aggression. If the crowd didn't listen to what you had to say, there was force. We had no training on the use of batons or formations. The emphasis, you see, was not on crowd management, it was to stop these people from doing what they were busy doing. We told people to disperse and if they didn't, we just use what we had at our disposal - guns, gas and so on.³⁶

From 1986 until 1995, training focussed on counter-insurgency methods, the use of dangerous and lethal weapons, and was premised on a philosophy of crowds as inherently irrational, violent and threatening to social order. Training was paramilitary both in content and in style. Some members claimed to have enjoyed this type of training:

I joined in 1991. We underwent what was then insurgency training. For me, this was a good experience. We mostly learned about the different firearms and the different ways of retaliating to crowds such as the use of gas or batons. To me, all the firearms training was a great learning experience. Then we were also taught self-defence. They also gave us bush training or a survival course. They would put you in the bush for a week and tell you to find your way out of the camp. They gave you a certain amount of food and water and you had to survive. It was a great experience. It was similar to the kind of training that the military would get.³⁷

36. Interview with Senior Superintendent Meiring, August 1999, Durban POP base. At the time of the interview, Superintendent Meiring was acting unit commander.

37. Interview with Sergeant Maduna, November 1999.

Others remembered past training with less fondness. On the 30 May 2000, I was driving with a young white Inspector to KwaMashu Township where one of the platoons was involved in a crime prevention operation. The following discussion was recorded in my research diary:

We chatted all the way to the township. Inspector de Bruin clearly identified with me as a white person and felt he could tell me how he felt about being in the unit as a white person at the present time. He said he found it very alienating. I wanted to find out more about his experiences in the unit:

Monique: How long have you been in the unit?

Inspector de Bruin: I joined in 1992. I came straight from college...

Monique: Did you have any specialised training before you came into the unit?

Inspector de Bruin: Not really. Well, we had some counter-insurgency training as part of the basic training, but nothing much. When I got into the unit I was not allowed to go into the townships unless I had done riot control training.

Monique: What was the training like at that time?

Inspector de Bruin: Well, when I got to Maloeskop [training base] we really did a lot of riot control stuff. We were also taught how to do house penetration, use explosives. We also did bush survival courses. It was very physical. They were really hard on us at the time. They would make us run three kilometers with heavy backpacks. We were given two litres of water between the two of us, and one rat pack. We were told we had to survive on that. You wouldn't believe how much weight I lost during that course, and my eyes were all sunken into my head. I had black rings under my eyes. I tell you, I looked really sick.

Monique: That sounds really taxing. Do you think that the training was useful in any way?

Inspector de Bruin: Not really. It is only useful if you are going to do military operations or if you are wanting to do an armed robbery yourself. But, it is useless for what we are doing now. I mean, what am I going to do with bush survival?

The new training content and methods introduced in 1996 were, in general, embraced by members of the unit. For the most part, this was because past training had not equipped members with the new skills and knowledge required to carry out crowd management functions in accordance with the Regulations of Gatherings Act (1993), the Constitution (1996) and the new policy document. Most members, by 1996, had not been formally trained in the use of shields or tonfas, or in the use of internationally accepted tactics and strategies for public order policing. Without new training, members felt incompetent to carry out their primary function of crowd management. Added to this, both rank-and-file members and supervisors claimed that the methods and tactics used previously were problematic and unprofessional, and that the new training courses would assist in moving away from these. As one of the constables on the in-service course commented:

This course has been very important. We have learned many new skills and methods that we did not know before...We have had to change from the way we did things in the old days that were wrong. Training is the only thing that can help us do this.³⁸

38. Interview with Contable Ndebele, Chatsworth Training College, April 1998.

The need for new training was linked to an acknowledgement of the necessity for transformation in the unit. Conformity to new laws was seen as very important. As Herbert (1998) argues in his study of the Los Angeles Police Department, the law is an important component of the police normative order and plays a key role in shaping their behaviour and even the police occupational culture. Members of the unit, like their peers internationally, were concerned that their conduct was in accordance with the law:

The new changes are positive. We now realise that people have rights, and the law allows for people to protest and to demonstrate. So, we can't just forcefully disperse crowds as we did before, which was not right. We are aware that we need new skills and training to be able to change³⁹.

For the most part, the new training was well received by members of the unit of all ranks. The results of the 1999 survey I conducted indicate that most members felt that the new training played a crucial role in equipping them with the knowledge needed to carry out crowd management functions. In particular, most felt that the most important aspect of the new training was that they learned about the theory of crowd management and the importance of tolerance in dealing with crowds.⁴⁰ However, 80 per cent of members felt that there was a dire need for training in negotiation and conflict resolution skills in the in-service training programme.

At face value the objectives of the new training seem to have been achieved. Most (78 per cent) rank-and-file members believed that they were able to make use of the new knowledge and skills learned operationally, as Table 8 indicates.

Table 8: Statement: When I am in the field, I am able to use the skills and knowledge I learned in training

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative per cent
Strongly disagree	1	0.7	0.7	0.7
Disagree	16	11.2	11.5	12.2
Neutral	9	6.3	6.5	18.7
Agree	80	55.9	57.6	76.3
Strongly agree	33	23.1	23.7	100.0
Total	139	97.2	100.0	
Missing	4	2.8		
Total	143	100.0		

39. Interview with Sergeant Patel, Chatsworth Training College, April 1998.

40. This view is in line with the goals of those who developed the new training programmes. Senior Superintendent Steyn, National Head of Training of POP commented that 'a lot of emphasis has been placed on the principles and philosophy of crowd management. From here, we are able to teach the appropriate tactical skills and techniques which were never taught before'.

Those in charge of planning and directing crowd management operations also felt that they were more equipped to plan operations in an informed manner once they had undergone new training.⁴¹

There were, however, three serious problems with the new training programme. First, as was the case with the policy document, the applicability of the new training to the daily activities of the unit was questionable. At all levels, training was directed toward greater efficiency, effectiveness and professionalism with regard to POP's primary function, crowd management. In reality, however, the Durban POP spent most of its time performing secondary functions. This posed serious questions about the appropriateness and applicability of the training programme.

When quizzed about this, the national Head of Training of POP agreed that it was indeed problematic that members were only trained to be competent in what they do with 20 per cent of their time. However, he believed that the training of POP members in generic skills needed for crime prevention and regular police work should not be the responsibility of the POP but of those who train the regular visible police. Rank-and-file members, however, seemed to be very concerned about the problem of applicability of training to their daily work. This became evident in informal interactions with them:

08/05/2000.

Today I joined one of the sections on a crime prevention operation in KwaMashu township. All of the members in the section were African, and perhaps because of this, they felt at ease discussing some of their problems in the unit openly. As we were 'hanging around' waiting for an instruction from the platoon commander, one of the members told me about his frustration with the in-service training programme. He stated: 'All we are taught about is crowd management, but as you can see as you are with us now, this is not what we are doing most of the time. We need to learn other skills, like how to use a computer and how to write an affidavit. These are important things for an officer to know. Have you ever heard of a police officer who can only manage crowds and can't do anything else? That is not a policeman. A policeman should know all the skills and be able to do any general policing task. When the community members see us, they do not see a Public Order Police officer. They just see a policeman. We have to know the procedures and be able to help them in any way we can. But, we are not trained for this. Our training is too limited.'

41. It is important to note that members were not only appreciative of the new content learned. They also appreciated the dramatic change in the training methods used. Durban POP trainers made a concerted effort to create a more relaxed and participatory training environment. The trainers themselves participated in a Training Officers' Course where they learned about adult based learning, group facilitation and updated lecturing techniques. The Durban POP trainers were very committed to this new training approach. In fact, four of the trainers registered for a graduate course in adult education at the University of Natal in 1999 to further advance their skills in adult teaching and learning. This they did at their own personal financial expense. Most members interviewed who had been for new training were extremely positive about the new training approaches. The concern with training methodology as well as content began to take hold in police organisations internationally in the late 1980s (Southgate, 1988).

The gaps in training left many members feeling inadequate in doing work that was not related to their primary function.⁴² In another informal chat which took place at the unit's base, two sergeants told me that members of the unit seldom made arrests because they had no knowledge of due process or of the basic requirements for making an arrest. As a result, if they recover weapons during a crime prevention operation, they tended to seize the weapon and not effect an arrest for fear that they would be reprimanded for not following the correct due process. The lack of applicability of the new training had serious implications for the manner in which some members of the unit conducted themselves during operations that were not crowd management functions. This will be explored in some detail in the chapter to follow.⁴³

Second, as was the case with the policy document, there were concerns expressed, particularly by high-ranking officers in the unit, that the principles and procedures covered in the new training programmes were not entirely appropriate to the South African context, and even less so to the conflict ridden and volatile environment in KwaZulu-Natal. There was a view that the techniques and tactics learned in the new training programme were too 'soft'. This was the perception even of the Provincial Head of POP in KwaZulu Natal:

The new training works well in Belgium where people are more educated and there is not daily violence and conflict. It is limited in its usefulness in South Africa. It tends to insist on an avoidance of confrontation, but there are lots of instances where this model cannot be used. We still need other methods which train members in clear paramilitary skills.⁴⁴

Perhaps implicit in what this Director is saying is an unwillingness to let go of familiar tactics in a familiar environment. A similar sentiment was expressed by the Unit Head of POP Durban in an interview in May 1997.

Third, some of the Durban POP trainers expressed uncertainty as to whether in fact commanders were properly implementing the skills and procedures learned in the training programme when planning, directing and evaluating crowd management operations. Trainers could not assess to what extent implementation was taking place because on-the-job evaluation did not exist in the unit. As Inspector Bosman, who had been centrally involved in developing the new training modules for the Public Order Police unit stated:

42. The gap between what is covered in training and the actual work that police do is not specific to the case of the POP. Birzer (1999), writing of police training in the United States of America, notes that the majority of the training courses available only teach officers what they will be doing a small percentage of their time.

43. The fact that members are unfamiliar with basic police skills is also the result of the fact that many members went straight from basic training into the specialised units dealing with riot or crowd control. Many members have been in the unit for more than 10 years, as was noted in Chapter 5.

44. Interview with Director Wiggins, March 1988.

One of my real concerns is that our training takes place in a controlled environment. This limits the extent to which individuals see the value of new skills but also means that our evaluation is limited to the classroom...Off the top of my head I would guess that commanders are not entirely following the steps they are taught. So, implementation does seem to be a problem. They leave college with new skills and knowledge, but they do not necessarily change their performance.⁴⁵

On the flip-side, some commanders felt that while they tried to implement new approaches and techniques in crowd management covered in the new training, the implementation of new skills and knowledge was limited if members were not committed to the change process. This was reflected in an interchange between a woman Platoon Commander and myself:

10/05/1999

Monique: What role do you think training has played in helping members change their behaviour in the field?

Captain Modise: Training has helped a lot...At least members are aware now that a crowd can swear at you, but you cannot harm them. But, what is important Monique is that attitude inside. Don't tell members that if they touch a civilian violently they are going to be charged because inside that member there will be no change. They just stop doing certain things because of that fear. We want to change them inside.

Monique: How do you do that?

Captain Modise: Monique, I can't really answer that fully. I just try to motivate my members. I try to command members in such a way that people are respected. I tell them to try to treat other people in the same way you would want them to treat your family.

Training on its own, as Captain Modise implies, cannot change the deep cultural imprints of the police.

The ultimate test of the effectiveness of training as a transformative mechanism is the extent to which it is implemented and impacts on the way in which police members operate on a daily basis. However, a straightforward evaluation of the impact of training is difficult since, while training is a crucial formal tool for change, it is but one influence in terms of police behaviour (Southgate, 1988).⁴⁶ Fielding argues that there are a number of other determinants that mediate what is learned in formal training. Key is the sense that individual officers make of their own working worlds, and this is heavily influenced by their motivations for joining the police in the first place, and their knowledge of the police role. Both of these inform the deep-rooted assumptions and values that individual police hold. Ultimately, Fielding argues, 'reform initiatives may stand or fall on their acceptability to those who carry out basic police work' (1988b:58).

Reference groups operating within police organisations are also important determinants as to whether or not training efforts are effectively implemented (Fielding, 1988). Younger and less confident police

45. Interview with Inspector Bosman, Durban POP trainer, Chatsworth Training College, February 1998.

46. However, Southgate argues that it is possible to evaluate whether or not the broad emphasis of training and organisational reform are 'going in the right direction' (1988,238) in the field. However, he does make the point that to establish any ongoing relationship between training inputs and the outputs of policing on the street is tricky.

officers, in particular, will seek other more experienced officers that they can identify with and will model their ways of acting and responding as a means of developing confidence and competence in the field. The reference group becomes even more vital in paramilitary police units such as POP. This is because paramount emphasis is given to teamwork and solidarity in such units (Jefferson, 1990). Public order work by its very nature involves long hours spent together whether this be on standby, or during a demonstration, or when on patrol. Often this work is risky and means that the sense of solidarity and the need for mutual trust is enhanced. 'It is this combination of features - the long hours together, the mutually disrupted social and domestic lives, the emotionally upsetting and frustrating nature of the work - which makes the mutual support of comradeship probably the most important feature to the men themselves' (1990:121) of life in paramilitary units. Reference groups may play a crucial role in reinforcing or undermining what is learned in formal training.

While training is an important mechanism for change, it can only support change, not direct change. For training to have any real impact it must be provided at the right time, be tailored to the job, and must carry real consequences. Added to this, the work environment must support the changes that training hopes to bring about (Wilms, 1996). Police supervisors and managers must ensure that the conditions of work allow for the implementation of what is learned in training. Most importantly, police supervisors and management must be familiar with new training and must make use of this in the directing, planning and evaluating police interventions and individual police performance. All this requires a new management style which is encouraging, supportive, and participatory on the one hand, and decisive and strategic at the same time which, as Chapter 8 argues, was lacking in Durban POP. Southgate correctly reminds us that in efforts to bring about police organisational change, 'the manager in the police organisation has potentially greater scope than does the training officer to influence values and priorities of officers at the grassroots' (1988:233).

Recruitment - changing the 'raw material'

While police managers and expert advisors viewed the development and implementation of new policy and training as the primary mechanisms for transformation of the POP, the need for a more fundamental change in personnel was also advanced. Early on in the transformation process, there was an acknowledgement that there may be difficulties in changing existing personnel and that 'new blood' was needed in the POP unit. A number of recommendations were thus made in the *Technical Team Report on Public Order Policing* (1995) to address this need. First, the report stipulates that any appointments to the public order policing units should be voluntary unlike in the past where police members were instructed to join the unit.⁴⁷ Second, the report states that members of the unit must act in 'in an impartial and professional manner, regardless of the race, sex, ethnicity, political affiliation or sexual orientation of

47. This is very important given that 22.5 per cent of members surveyed stated that they had joined the unit initially because they were instructed to do so. This was particularly the case for Indian (34.8%) and White (41.2%) members.

participants and/or non-participants' (1995:24). Should members not act in accordance with these principles, they should be removed from the unit. Third, there should be a psychological evaluation and support of all members who join the unit and for members already in the unit given the difficult nature of work of the unit. Fourth, there should be a constant evaluation of all members in the unit to ensure that members' behaviour complies with the code of conduct and mission of the unit. Finally, the report suggests there should be a maximum period of duty in the unit of five years. This is in line with international trends where police members are only allowed to remain within a particular specialised unit for three to five years.

Members of the Technical Team were well aware of the limits of transformation without an influx of new personnel and the exit of long-standing members in the unit, some of who were unlikely to embrace the changes in the unit.⁴⁸ New recruitment strategies and criteria are in fact key to bringing about qualitative change in police agencies. As Bent argues, 'improving the quality of people who make up the police department is an unquestionably valid objective of police reform' (1974:11) and this involves improving and revisiting recruitment and training.

Whether or not a police organisation is able to meet its goals for change and to operate in accordance with new principles and new criteria for effectiveness is highly dependent on who the police members are that constitute the organisation in the first instance. For Goldstein (1990), it is crucial that police agencies recruit members who will have the necessary skill and abilities needed to fulfil their role. At the same time recruitment strategies are important because the way in which any police agency is composed has important consequences for the relationships between the police and the communities they serve (Holdaway, 1991; Brewer, 1991; Godstein, 1990). Improving police-community relations often requires ensuring that police organisations are representative of the societies in which they work.⁴⁹

Public order police units that have undergone processes of change in Europe have tried to ensure that there are significant changes with regard to the police members who constitute them. In Spain, for example, with the transition to democracy in the early 1980s, concerted efforts were made to change the composition of the units dealing with public order. By the late 1990s, most of the members of these units had only taken up their posts in the 1980s and 1990s and had been socialised within a socio-political

48. In 1992, a survey was conducted by the Human Science Research Council that found that public servants were not ready for change. 'The survey revealed that a high degree of uncertainty about the political future was making public servants highly apprehensive about their career security. Many believed that merit as a basis for appointment and promotion would disappear from the public service, and indicated that they were not positive about affirmative action' (McLennan, 1997:130).

49. The vision of representativity and the need for affirmative action programmes and activities are stressed in both the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (1995) and the Safety and Security Act (1995). Any recruitment policies and programmes following this legislation should be concerned with both affirmative action and representativity. The issues of representativity and affirmative action in Durban POP are dealt with in detail in Chapter 9.

environment that postdated the dictatorship (Jaime-Jimenez and Ranaires, 1998). This revamping of personnel took place at all levels of the specialised unit in Spain. In Germany it was believed that a change in public order police approach and tactics required a change in the high-ranking police officers. The rationale for change at this level was that top-level police officials were well placed to facilitate a change in police philosophy, and thus behaviour (Winter, 1998).

In South Africa, despite the stated intent to change the composition of the unit over time through introducing new recruits and releasing members who do not comply with new codes of practice, this has for the most part not taken place. On the contrary, in the Durban POP unit, there was a moratorium on members leaving the unit given the lack of interest on the part of new recruits and other members of the South African Police Service in joining the unit. This has impacted negatively on the unit's functioning and on its capacity for change. As a result, in February 2000, the Head of Personnel and a senior Operational Commander of Durban POP jointly compiled a document requesting that newly trained police recruits be sent to POP for a 22-week field training programme. Thereafter, the document suggests, the new recruits will be permanently inducted into POP. Concurrently, it is suggested that older and experienced members would then be transferred to the stations.

According to the document, in the year 1999 alone, there were 78 applications for transfers by members wanting to leave the unit.⁵⁰ The reasons afforded by the members for wanting to leave included feelings of boredom, lack of scope for a career in the unit, work related stress and depression, and an unwillingness to adapt to the changes in the policing of crowds. For the Head of Personnel in the Durban POP unit, the fact that disenchanted members were unable to leave the unit was a major source of frustration. He spoke to me about this informally:

20/05/2000

While waiting to go out with one of the platoons on a crime prevention operation, Captain Naidoo invited me into his office to chat. He looked very perturbed and offered me a seat and he shared with me the cause of his worry.

Captain Naidoo: Monique, do you know about our new recruitment document that we put together?

Monique: Yes, I remember looking at it earlier this year. I thought you had some good ideas in there.

Captain Naidoo: You see, we really need new blood in the unit. That is the only way things are going to change around here. We need to get rid of those members who do not want to be here. Last week I sent out a memo asking members if there is anyone who is willing to be transferred out of the unit, and if so, where they would like to go. You see, the problem is that we cannot bring in a new person, or get rid of an old one if we cannot do a swap. So, if a member from the station wants to join POP, we first have to find a POP member who is willing to go to that particular station. This is a bit difficult because all the members who want to leave want to go to another specialised unit, and nobody

50. According to Jefferson (1990) there is a very particular type of police person who is recruited into paramilitary units such as POP. They are generally young and anxious to display their capacity for action. However, according to the document drawn up by Durban POP 60 per cent were between the ages 35-45 years and only two per cent of members were under the age of 25 years.

wants to leave those units to come here...So far we have only managed to make four swaps. Our hands are tied. We cannot simply get rid of people or bring new ones in, much as I would like this to happen.

The fact that there were those who wanted to leave the unit, but were not able to do so, clearly led to serious discontent within the unit. This became very obvious to me during an encounter with a white sergeant a week after my chat with Captain Naidoo:

28/05/2000

...I was busy writing field notes in the reception area while waiting to meet with the Unit Commander. He wanted to have a chat about his ideas of restructuring the unit. A white Sergeant I had interviewed previously came and sat next to me. He told me that he wanted to meet Captain Naidoo (the Head of Personnel) about some health problems he was having and inform him that he wanted to take sick leave. He was in his early thirties and looked depressed and somewhat agitated. We started to talk:

Monique: You look a bit down today.

Sergeant Niekerk: Well, I must tell you, I am not very happy in this unit anymore. I joined 13 years ago. Things were different then. My buddies were in the unit and it was an exciting place to be. We were always on the go and we were active in the communities. Now things have changed a lot.

Monique: In what way have things changed?

Sergeant Niekerk: In those days we knew what was right and what was wrong. We dealt forcefully with people who were causing chaos. We did not tolerate nonsense from people. Nowadays, people can do what they like. We are expected to just watch them and to tolerate things that are not acceptable.

Monique: What are these things that are unacceptable?

Sergeant Niekerk: Well, for example, you can just march in the streets at any time, even without permission, and members of the public can throw things at us and insult us and we are supposed to just tolerate this. I think this is unacceptable. When I joined the unit we were trained differently. The public knew that the police were in charge and that we had authority. Now the police have become a joke. The public know that we can't use force anymore and they are taking advantage of us...I have tried to get used to these changes, but to tell the truth, I am from the old school...The other problem is that white members like me will never be promoted. This affirmative action thing has made being in units like this a dead end. This unit is making me sick and I don't have the motivation to come to work anymore. I think it is time to leave

A number of significant issues are embedded in what Sergeant Niekerk is saying. First, he believed that his early socialisation (training and field experience) has shaped him fundamentally to the extent that he felt unable to change and adapt to the new demands of the unit. This was the case despite the changed political and legislative context and his exposure to new training in crowd management. Second, he lacked any enthusiasm for his job since he felt there were no career prospects for him in the unit as a white member.

Sergeant Niekerk was one of many who wanted to leave the unit. According to the survey conducted in 1999, almost half (45%) of the members in the unit had considered leaving the unit. The vast majority of white members (82.4%) had considered leaving the unit, as compared with 52.2 per cent of Indian

members, 36.4 per cent of African members and 66.7 per cent of Coloured members. This desire to leave was true of both rank-and-file and more senior officers in the unit.⁵¹ In informal conversations with senior officers, I learned over time that about a third had applied for transfer out of the unit (often linked to promotion prospects) and a number had even applied for posts as police officers in another police organisation. For example, both the Head of Labour Relations and the Head of Information Gathering applied for posts in the Durban City Police in 1998.⁵²

At all levels, then, there were many disaffected members in the unit. This is not unusual during periods of police organisational change, particularly amongst the rank-and-file. Rippy (1990) writes that frontline police employees usually perceive themselves as suffering the consequences of change such as stricter policies, rules and regulations. This in turn can give rise to a knee-jerk resistance to change. Director Wiggins, Provincial Unit Commander of POP in KwaZulu Natal, was aware of this resistance and believed that this would negatively impact on the prospects for transformation in the unit:

To be honest, we are sitting with bad human material. There is helplessness, stress, frustration and poor self-management in the unit. Members think that just being at work is enough.

Those members who had joined the unit during the transition period or after the democratic elections in 1994 also noticed how difficult the change process was for veteran members of the unit. I was able to have the following conversation with a Sergeant in the unit while sitting with one of the platoons in a courtroom they were policing during a potentially volatile hearing of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission:

08/07/2000

Sergeant Mbambo: You can't force someone to change if they don't want to change. There are people in this unit who don't want to change. I feel sorry for them. Eventually they will become victims of change. You have to go with the processes that are underway, otherwise things change and you are left behind. If you are left behind for too long, you become a danger to yourself and do things that you will be in trouble for like shooting an innocent student at the University of Durban Westville. You can't resist the wave of change forever.

Monique: You seem to be someone who is very proud of being in the unit and you feel positive that things are going in the right direction.

Sergeant Mbambo: Well that is true. But, also, I only joined the unit in 1991. By then, changes were already in the wind. So I wasn't really in the unit in the bad old days. Also, I joined when I was already quite old - 32 years. So maybe I came to the unit with a more

51. This is a problem that beleaguered the entire South African Police Service at the time. In November 2001, it was reported that the police service in KwaZulu-Natal was running at half its strength. This was largely because demoralised police were absenting themselves from work. Provincial SAPS Commissioner, Moses Khanyile, believed that this was due to a lack of resources in the service and high levels of deaths and injuries of police members while on duty (Daily News, 09/11/2001).

52. The desire on the part of so many members to leave the unit was due to a multiplicity of factors including the demands of the job and the difficulties members (particularly white members) had in accepting the changes taking place in the unit. One key factor contributing to the desire to leave the unit was the nature of management and supervision in the unit. This subject is dealt with in more detail in Chapter 8.

mature approach. I also had a fresh view of things. Some of these guys have been here forever. It is very difficult for them to change.

Sergeant Mbambo had joined the unit five years before new training and policy was introduced. There were, however, a handful of police members who joined the unit as 'fresh recruits' having undergone a completely revised basic training programme in the SAPS. These fresh recruits struggled to adapt to the existing ways of behaving and thinking in the unit, and found that as new recruits with a fresh perspective they were unable to exert any influence. Rather, they felt compelled to adapt to established normative orders.

31/05/2000

While I was riding in the Nyala with eight members of the unit, I noticed a member that I had never seen before. He was much younger than the other members and seemed rather quiet. I noticed that he was a Constable while all the other members were Sergeants and Inspectors. I decided to find out more about him.

Monique: Hi there, I haven't seen you around the unit much in the past. Are you new by any chance?

Constable Asmal: Yes, I have only been here for about two months. I am still learning the ropes.

Monique: How have you found working in the unit so far?

Constable Asmal: Well, I only joined the police last year and finished my field training earlier this year in one of the stations. This is really different from the stations and what I have been taught. I am still getting used to it and trying to fit in. It is okay so far, but I must say it is very different from what we learned in the college. We were trained mainly in community policing and human rights. This unit does not really do community policing, or they don't see themselves in that way. You just go into an area, do your thing, and then leave again. You don't build relationships with the community. I am very surprised about that. But, I am new, so there is not much I can do about that. I have to realise that members have been here for ten, twelve years. They have a lot of experience that I don't have. These guys are also very militarised, you know. So, I will just have to see how I can try to fit in.

While instructors in basic training are the 'recruit's first clear role models' (Fielding, 1988:69), their influence may decline rapidly as more experienced police members in the field become the key reference group of new recruits in order to be accepted as a competent member of the organisation. This is the case in most police organisations. In 1972 John Van Maanen at the University of California, Irvine, conducted a study to examine recruit socialisation in the Union City Police Department. Van Maanen, on completing his study noted that:

...it is less a question of the recruit accepting the police system than it is a question of the police system (formal and informal) accepting him...the recruit is expected to learn fast or 'get out' for deviations from the work ethic prevalent in the department will normally be met with rather harsh informal - or possibly formal - sanctions (1972:215).

This reality described by Van Maanen has implications for units in the process of change, such as Durban POP. First, it should not be assumed that an influx of new recruits into the unit will necessarily result in new attitudes and practices being role-modelled and accepted. While new recruits may be more

amenable to change than the more resilient established members, this may be of individual rather than organisational significance. Second, for new recruits to impact on the work ethos in the organisation, there would need to be a critical mass of new recruits; a handful of new recruits in the lower ranks may prove to be ineffectual in facilitating the adoption of fresh attitudes and practices.

However, the lack of recruitment strategies and practices in Durban POP meant that there were veteran members in the unit who clearly believed that they were unable to make the required changes as individuals. Even those members who viewed the changes as important and necessary had become accustomed to particular ways of responding while in the field, and these were linked with their understandings of competency in their daily work. Third, the lack of change of personnel in the unit meant that existing networks and reference groupings continued to operate in the unit and seemed to have a significant influence over members' behaviour.

Conclusion

The political and legislative changes that took place in the mid-1990s in South Africa left the police with little choice but to contemplate and engage in a change process. The shift to democratic governance and the new legislative framework provided both an impetus and cogency for transformation to begin to take place. However, change in the police and the public service at large was constrained by the nature of the transition and by the mechanisms used to effect change. South Africa's transition process was particularly limited by a general acceptance that existing structures would be 'rehabilitated' (rather than radically transformed) and this involved maintaining seasoned, and arguably tarnished, personnel in the public service.

While a new unit for public order policing (POP) was agreed upon, this unit essentially was the same in structure and composition as its predecessor, the Internal Stability Unit. This was not only the result of the nature of political transformation, but also due to the lack of an internal policy and procedure for bringing 'fresh blood' into the unit. This has led to a demotivated social base, but also to a maintaining of social networks, role-modelling and power relations within the unit. The consequence of this is that old and existing socialising influences remain intact. Furthermore, within the unit there were veteran members who desperately 'wanted-out' and had no interest in self - or organisational - transformation. Second, the number of new recruits into the unit was too small to have a significant impact on existing practices.

Most members in the unit, however, recognised that changes needed to take place. Past ways of behaving and of responding to the public were clearly out of kilter with the new Constitution and with democratic governance. The acknowledgement of the need for guidance and for new skills and knowledge meant that members in the unit were responsive to the introduction of new policy and training, the two key mechanisms for change that were selected.

The new policy document, though not adequately distributed or discussed in the unit certainly provided members with a sense of the new goals, principles and procedures that the unit had to adopt. However, policy on its own does not transform deep-seated assumptions about the police role and the policing environment, nor does it automatically lead to a commitment to changed behaviour. The impact that policy has had was in many ways dependent on the forms of leadership provided by police supervisors and managers, on existing beliefs with regard to competence and adequacy, and the extent to which police members felt that new policy could be applied to their actual daily work. New policy is often adhered to mechanically, and if not accompanied by shifts in beliefs and values can be overlooked in situations that are complex, difficult and at the same time familiar. In such situations, the tried and tested can take primacy.

Training, too, was well received by members at all levels in the unit. New training played an important function in providing members with new skills and knowledge particularly with regard to the strategies and tactics required in a crowd management event. New training also played a role in introducing members to new ways of thinking about policing which inform new methods of policing. However, training on its own is but one socialising agent. There are a myriad of influences that shape and reinforce values, assumptions and knowledge about environments and the police role. The belief by police trainers and managers that new training and policy can bring about 'mind change' is perhaps an inversion of what actually takes place on the ground. What is taught in training is often altered dramatically when real police work begins. The way in which police see their own role and mission, their organisation and the milieu in which they work, as well as what methods of policing are most effective will, for the most, part be determined by their daily policing experiences. For 'mind change' to take place and be sustained, police members have to be convinced that new philosophies and ways of acting actually work and are effective in achieving desired goals. Furthermore, members themselves have to be willing agents of change and trainers need to be aware that police socialisation takes what Fielding calls has termed a 'non-linear course' (1988b:70).

While both training and policy are accepted and conventional tools for bringing about police organisational change, the limitations of policy and training as transformative mechanisms need to be acknowledged. Shearing thus suggests that 'to change police action one has to do far more than simply provide training that will give police officers new rules' (1995:56). Shearing continues that in order to really change in police behaviour, a new 'police culture' needs to be developed. This could involve a change in personnel (particularly at a management level) as well as 'new ways of interpreting and making sense of the conflicts that police work involves' (Shearing, 1995:57). Shearing's view of a new police culture is thus in line with that of Schein, and involves the creation of new deep level assumptions, beliefs, and knowledge.

Whether or not political and legislative transformation and the introduction of new mechanisms for change in the POP unit have succeeded in bringing about desired changes in POP Durban can perhaps best be assessed by exploring the actual responses, decisions and conduct within the unit, both individual and collective. This is the concern of the three chapters of the thesis that follow.

CHAPTER 7

NEW METHODS, NEW MOTIVES? RESPONDING TO THE PUBLIC

As discussed in Chapters 1 and 4, the term 'police transformation' in the South African context has many layers. In the first instance, it refers to the need for the state police to reflect broader state changes from authoritarian to democratic governance. This requires a move away from a partisan and repressive police force to a police agency that provides an impartial service and that has a firm adherence to human rights principles. The changes demanded of the police service are part and parcel of a broader state project aimed at developing an effective public service. This involves the restructuring of the entire public service. The framework for such restructuring was outlined in the Interim Constitution Act (200 of 1993) which stresses that:

the public service should be non-partisan, career-oriented, and guided by fair and equitable principles. It should promote efficient public service broadly representative of South African communities. Public servants should serve in an unbiased and impartial manner and loyally execute the policies of government (Mc Lennan, 1995:108).

Such shifts demand change at three levels - structure, behaviour and attitude.¹ Similarly, the SAPS has to undergo changes at these three levels. At the structural level, the police service needs to be representative of the population it serves, and be able to respond to both local and national requirements. At the behavioural level, the services provided need to be community oriented, proactive rather than reactive and subject to processes of accountability. At the attitudinal level, community oriented policing needs to become a philosophy (rather than simply a style of policing) and this involves viewing the public as 'clients' who should be treated with care and respect and who deserve the best possible service. Achieving such extensive change, however, has to be viewed as a long-term project that will be continually shaped and reshaped by changes in both internal organisational dynamics and the external environment.

This chapter is concerned primarily with the behavioural level as structural change is examined in Chapter 6 and also in Chapter 9. It examines the responses of members of the Durban POP toward the public that they serve, while carrying out both their primary and their secondary functions.² In so doing, the attitudes and assumptions that inform and motivate this behaviour are examined. This chapter seeks to evaluate whether or not the transformation process and the mechanisms for change discussed in Chapter 6 have impacted on the conduct of members of the unit toward the public. I argue that there do seem to be significant shifts in the responses of the unit toward the public (particularly when carrying out their primary

1. Ogbonna and Harris (1998) argue that any effective organisational transformation requires change at these three levels. According to them, value change is the most difficult to effect and the most difficult to measure.

2. The distinction between primary and secondary functions is discussed in Chapter 5.

function) behavioural change has definitely taken place. However, the transformation process has not impacted significantly on the values, attitudes and assumptions or the 'cultural knowledge' (della Porta, 1998) of many of the members of the unit, and this has rendered behavioural change incomplete.

A key question framing this chapter is: Why do police revert to old and reprehensible behaviour despite the fact that the police agencies that they are a part of have undergone extensive reform processes? There are many examples of police agencies that have been through change processes, yet police officers continue to display a lack of respect for human rights and behave unprofessionally. In New South Wales, for example, the police embarked on a reform process in 1984 that aimed to combat internal corruption and dishonourable police conduct. Despite this process, in the early 1990s the New South Wales Police came under much public criticism for their racist and abusive treatment of Aboriginal communities (Chan, 1996). Similarly, after the Rodney King incident in 1991, the Los Angeles Police Department made attempts to root out discriminatory and menacing police conduct. Yet, as was noted in Chapter 1, in 1999 a major scandal again befell the LAPD. The people of Los Angeles were shocked by horrifying tales of misconduct and abuse of force carried out by police officers at the Rampart³ police station. Police officers at Rampart police station were accused of raping a woman while on duty, beating suspects to the point of severe injury and even death, fabricating evidence in cases of false arrest, planting drugs on suspects, theft of cocaine, witness intimidation, and planting guns on unarmed suspects (Marks, 2000). It would seem from these two cases that sustained police behavioural change is difficult to achieve.

Since the 1960s, police scholars have tried to figure out what 'determines' police behaviour (Lundman, 1980). At any point in time, police behaviour is shaped by numerous factors, a few of which are mentioned here. There are a number of contesting viewpoints about police behaviour. Mastrofski, Ritti and Richards (1994) argue that there are three broad explanatory frameworks for understanding police behaviour. These are the sociological, psychological and organisational frameworks. Sociological frameworks tend to focus on the attributes and behaviour of citizens (such as Lundman, 1980), as well as the broader social forces and structures in the policing environment (crime rates, government priorities, dominant ideologies). The psychological models look at the personal attributes (sex, race, gender), background (family, educational, occupational), attitudes, perceptions, personalities and work styles in explaining police behaviour. The organisational models of police behaviour examine the characteristics of police departments (policy, structure, leadership, rules and guidelines, performance indicators) and their environments in understanding police behaviour. These models also examine the informal aspects of organisations (police subculture). Aspects of each of these models are referred to in this chapter when looking at how members of Durban POP behave and their responses to the public.

3. Rampart police station is situated in the inner city of Los Angeles. Rampart is an Hispanic working class suburb.

Most police officers would argue that their behaviour and responses are determined by the law. In practice, however, while the law does constrain and guide police behaviour, the police seldom refer to the law or invoke the law in their daily activities (Manning, 1987; Mastrofsky, 1987; Reuss-Ianni, 1983). As Worden argues, informal action is commonplace and 'the dimensions of police discretion are not delineated only by officers' authority to apply legal sanctions' (1989:668). Police behaviour is influenced by situational circumstances and environmental conditions. These include, among others, the nature of the police organisation which includes their rules, structures and culture (Chan, 1996; P.A. J. Waddington, 1999; Van Maanen, 1983; Skolnick, 1975); the attitudes and behaviour of the public (Johnson, Misner and Brown, 1981); the historical relationships between the police and the public (Haysom, 1989; Hertzog, 2000); levels of crime and disorder (Nield, 1999); and the power relations that exist within the society in which the police operate (Herbert, 1996; Cashmore and McLaughlin, 1991).

The policing environment (in its broadest sense) also provides normative frameworks (Etzioni, 2000) that are internalised by the police. These normative frameworks are passed from generation to generation and serve both to constrain behaviour as well as to shape the police members' world-view and their view of themselves. These norms form part of narratives, and these narratives constitute the stories that the police tell. These stories can be found in memories which serve to commemorate past behaviour and serve as justifications for present behaviour (Mulgahy, 2000; Keith, 1991).

The rules, structures and culture of police organisations all contribute to what della Porta (1998) labels the 'professional culture' of the police. This professional culture includes the assumptions that police have about their role as well as the methods that are used in fulfilling such roles. It is reinforced via the role modelling of more experienced police members and through the ongoing interactions between the police and the public. Police learn to appreciate what 'works' and what is 'acceptable'.

While many assume that police culture refers to what police speak about informally - in the 'canteen' - canteen subculture does not necessarily have a direct bearing on the way in which police conduct themselves. Police culture, as Chan (1996) argues, is more embedded than everyday conscious conversations. Culture, in this view, refers to the 'less audible assumptions and deep rooted values that are not often discussed in the "canteen"' (Waddington, 1999:299). It leads to behaviour that is patterned and established. The actual behaviour of police is shaped on the streets when encountering members of the police and making use of practices that are familiar and established (even informally). What is practiced on the streets is usually what is seen to be effective and keeps police members out of trouble. Avoidance of 'trouble', the desire to be effective, and hanging-on to known ways of performing may result in a perpetuation of unacceptable practices. Ainsworth sums this up in arguing that the discretionary judgement of the police is

affected primarily by operational experiences, and the attitudes and values expressed within the police subculture. In this way, norms of behaviour are established and each

new recruit is expected by the subculture to follow the (unofficial) line when using their discretion...(1995:13).

The norms of behaviour and expectations of 'good' police work are embedded in the stories that police tell about their work. These stories 'construct ways of seeing and being' (Shearing, 1995) and shape the responses and reactions of the police. The practices of the police are reinforced by their sense of morality which is part and parcel of the stories that are told. Police see their role as protecting those who are 'good' in society against 'evil' forces. In fact, the 'discourse of evil is very common in police discourse' (Herbert, 1996). Police do not just uphold laws and rules, they defend and endorse their own conception of what is morally correct. This morality allows police to make quick and difficult decisions when the environment in which they operate is uncertain. It also provides them with a justification for their actions.

The differentiation between who is 'bad' and who is 'good' is often based on stereotypes held by the police. In their daily policing work, stereotypes are developed of groups in society. The police officers' interactions with the public are heavily influenced by the images and stereotypes that they hold about members of particular groupings, and consequently, people from stereotyped groupings are responded to in a rehearsed fashion. Cashmore and McLaughlin (1991) argue that in Britain black males are continually associated with social problems. For example, the riots in 1970s and 1980s led to a confirmation on the part of the police that black people are a public order problem.⁴ Hostile interactions between the police and the public usually occur when members of the public are cast in the role of suspect (Southgate, 1987).

But, it is not simply preconceived stereotypes that define the way in which the police respond to groups of people. In the case of protest policing, for example, the way in which crowds behave and the protesting styles that are used also affect the way in which the police respond.⁵ The police tend to make distinctions between what they perceive as 'good' and 'bad' protesters. Certain groupings are more likely than others to be termed 'dangerous populations'. These populations generally include minority groupings that the police indiscriminately identify as 'typical criminal groupings' (Reiner, 1992) and they are often policed with more brutality than other groupings. In Israel, for example, there have been numerous allegations against the border police for the use of excessive force against Arabs when dispersing demonstrations (Hertzog, 2000)⁶.

4. As we will see in Chapter 9, racist attitudes amongst police members are also a reflection of the relationship between black people and British society generally.

5. Della Porta (in Reiter and della Porta, 1998) argues that 'police reactions to demonstrations are linked to the knowledge police have about the disturbances, as well as their own role and the role that other actors play, notably political power and public opinion' (1998:240).

6. The Israeli Border Police are typical of paramilitary police organisations as described by Jefferson (1990). The Border Police have 'a quasi-military structure and have been exposed over long periods of time to provocation, aggression and serious expressions of violence against them. Arabs are defined stereotypically as part of a hostile national group, or as the "enemy" or a "security danger" which in turn is assumed to influence their loyalty toward the state' (Hertzog, 2000:468).

Stereotypes, however, are mediated by localised and historical interactions between the police and the public. While police may operate in many different communities and in many different locations, their experiences of each locality and social grouping are embedded in their memories. And, Keith (1991) argues, memory is important. The way in which people and events are remembered 'becomes the stuff of folklore, informing common sense understandings...' (Keith, 1991:209).⁷ According to Keith, localised historical recordings or memories give rise to specific relationships between police and the community. In the case of riots in localised communities, historical precedents of 'negotiated stand-offs' are established. Memories give rise to particular ways of thinking and talking about policing experiences (discourse) and this in turn structures the agency of individual police officers.

The political framework and government responses to disorder also impacts significantly on how the police deal with crowds. If governments have a liberal stance toward protest and demonstration, police are likely to display more tolerance in dealing with crowds. Authoritarian government responses to protest and demonstration will almost inevitably lead to repressive protest policing, as was clearly the case during the apartheid years in South Africa. Similarly, in the early 1980s when the British government intensified the training and equipping of the police for crowd events, this led to a greater use of force on the part of the police than had been the case in earlier decades (Solomos and Rackett, 1991).

While government dictates and legal constraints are often seen as the key factors shaping policing, police behaviour is influenced by environmental features as well. The extensiveness of crime and disorder in any given society has a major influence on how the police behave. High levels of crime can lead to repressive policing methods. This is particularly the case in countries that are undergoing transitional processes. In the face of high levels of crime the police, who themselves are undergoing change processes, can be viewed by the public as ineffectual and even as dysfunctional. The public may then interpret the police as weak and call for tougher policing styles and methods. Police organisations that are seeking legitimacy and support from the public (particularly when governance has changed from authoritarian to democratic) may yield to these demands. As a result, police organisations that are gearing toward more democratic policing practices may revert to past behaviour. This is an easy slide when the police have a history of militarised and repressive policing (Nield, 2000). Both public opinion and the media, generally forces calling for more democratic policing, may be responsible for a reversion to harsh policing methods with an increase in crime or the fear of crime.⁸

The level of force employed by the police is also determined by the equipment that they have available to them. Typically, police will respond with force if they believe that lives or property are in danger. They will also use force if they feel their own lives are in danger or if they feel unprotected (Reiner in della Porta and

7. Keith (1991) writes particularly about police memories of riots in local areas. However, his approach can be applied to policing more generally.

8. More generally, public opinion and the media play an important role in shaping the behaviour of the police. The police are at pains in democratic societies to curry favour with the public and the press, and to harness their support.

Reiter, 1998). Police who are ill equipped or believe themselves to be so, may feel paralysed or unwilling to act. When policing crowds, particularly when crowds are potentially troublesome, it is crucial that the police are equipped with protective gear such as shields and helmets. If they are not, they may resort easily to the use of force as a 'defensive' response to a risky situation. At the same time, if the police are deployed to police a crowd with heavy equipment, this may antagonise the crowd and amplify levels of disorder (Reiter, 1998; Jefferson, 1990). Finally, if the police are armed with 'hard' weapons, there is always the potential that they will use them, sometimes unnecessarily.

Administrative decision making, situational cues, formal structures of police organisations, resources available and legalities all inform police protocols to varying degrees (Worden, 1989). However, 'the causal connections between act and outcome are complex and obscure, subject to different interpretations, and there may be several routes to a satisfactory (rather than "best") outcome' (Worden, 1989:705). There is always an intervening variable - the attitudes and assumptions that police have - that affects the decisions that the police make in any given situation. These assumptions and attitudes inform the interpretations that the police make of their behaviour and the situations they encounter. Indeed, as Worden (1989) argues, the actions of police officers may shape as much as they are shaped by their attitudes. Officers are constantly deriving meaning and lessons from their experiences while on the job. These experiences give rise to fundamental and deep level attitudes that, this chapter argues, have a profound impact on the courses of action that police choose and their willingness to incorporate new ways of responding and acting.

While it is important to understand the various factors that contribute to police behaviour, this chapter makes no certain claims as to what makes the police behave the way that they do. It is concerned with why police behaviour appears to be so resilient to fundamental change and why police tend to regress to past behaviour despite organisational reform processes. The chapter argues that deep level assumptions, attitudes and values are difficult to change. Police members hang onto established values, understanding of how things should be done, and views of their environment and the people they serve. This is particularly the case when the 'field' - 'the historical, structural relations between positions of power' - (Chan, 1996:116) has not changed in significant ways. The field is difficult to change when the rules and policies within the police organisation are not clear and specific enough; power relations within the society remain relatively unchanged; and police supervisors are not directive or supportive enough during change processes.

While behavioural change definitely did take place in Durban POP, there were still reversion to old and even dysfunctional behaviour. Chan's framework for understanding police organisational change is useful here. While police members may have 'reinvented' (Ogbonna and Harris, 1998) their axiomatic knowledge - they know that the mission of the police has changed - they maintain their stereotypical views of crowds

and even of the people they police ('dictionary' knowledge).⁹ Many of the police have even retained their 'menu' knowledge – their understanding of acceptable and unacceptable practices from the past. Given that the key components of the cultural knowledge have not changed significantly, behavioural change, while evident and noteworthy, is not consistent. Instead, behavioural change is perfunctory and determined by immediate situational demands and features. There are, of course, those officers who have assumed a new set of cultural knowledge. As Chan (1996) correctly argues, not all police in a single organisation share the same cultural knowledge. There are different understandings of, and differing levels of commitment to, transformation processes among police officers.

This chapter demonstrates that irresolute changes in cultural knowledge and basic assumptions held by the police will negatively impact on change objectives. Paradoxically, as this chapter shows that the traditionally hierarchical nature of police organisations facilitates police behavioural change. Police managers and supervisors are quite literally able to command and instruct desired forms of conduct, at least in the immediate term. In fact, the distinct levels of status and authority that exist in most police organisations, if judiciously employed, have the potential to promote change at a quicker pace than in many other organisations. However, in these organisations, behavioural change often results from compliance rather than a commitment to the value systems underlying them (Ogbonna and Harris, 1998). If this changed behaviour is not accompanied by a change in basic assumptions, values and knowledge base, it is most likely to be superficial and inconsistent.¹⁰

The precedent of the past

It is not possible to evaluate whether or not the behaviour and responses of the unit have changed without an examination of what behaviour was like prior to the transformation process.¹¹ There are many accounts of this past in the literature dealing with the history of state policing in South Africa. Haysom, for example, quotes an ex-lieutenant of the South African Riot Police who described this police body as brutal and unprofessional. According to this lieutenant, the riot police were:

... just hitting people. They didn't care if they were innocent bystanders or not. They were running after them even when they were fleeing, hitting them. It seemed to me that they were enjoying themselves, feasting on the people. The Squad stormed the kids like wild dogs. You could see the killer instinct in their eyes (cited in Haysom, 1989:139).

Haysom concluded in 1989 that most black people viewed the police as an occupying army in the townships. They were hostile to black people and this hostility led them to act aggressively toward the

9. See Chapter 3 for an explanation of the use of this concept.

10. Worden (1989) argues that large bodies of socio-psychological research show that peoples' attitudes are usually only weakly related to their behaviour. Behaviour is often inconsistent with attitudes. According to Worden, this is because police behaviour is more influenced by situational pressures – norms of reference groupings, social norms, behaviour and attitudes of the public, etc. However, the starting definition of 'attitude' in Worden's writing is individual predisposition. Attitudes and assumptions are not viewed as the deeply embedded components of organisational culture.

11. While the past conduct of units dealing with public order was dealt with briefly in Chapter 4, this short review will serve to highlight this past and that of the Durban POP in more detail.

township populations. According to Haysom, the combination of racial brutality and role frustration on the part of (white) members of the police led to 'a high incidence of police violence during the normal course of law enforcement in the black areas' (Institute of Criminology, 1989:143).

In 1992 the Internal Stability Unit was still characterised as extremely brutal. The Institute of Criminology at the University of Cape Town concluded in their submission to the Goldstone Commission that police officers in this unit were callous and unconcerned about lethal force. They made use of 'disturbingly few of the internationally accepted restraints before resorting to deadly force' (1992:2). While they were equipped with non-live ammunition when dispersing crowds, they still used live ammunition 43 per cent of the time. By 1992, the legislation governing the policing of crowds still did not require the police to negotiate with role players involved in demonstrations or protests. In fact, according to the Internal Security Act crowds would be given a short amount of time to disperse and if this did not happen quickly enough, the police could resort to force. Waddington gives an example of the policing of a funeral in Uitenhage during this time:

As the crowd participating in the funeral appeared, the Casspirs [armoured vehicles] blocked the road and the lieutenant stood on top of one of the vehicles and ordered the crowd to disperse. When the crowd refused, the lieutenant fired a warning shot which provoked a woman to throw a single stone. The lieutenant replied with the order to "Fire". Twenty people were killed by the fusillade that followed (in della Porta and Reiter, 1998:138).

Members of Durban POP corroborated these accounts when they recalled how the policing of crowds took place in the past. The accounts that were given indicated that those police engaged in crowd control displayed a complete lack of respect for members of the public, particularly black members. There was a definite sense of impunity within the unit. According to Captain Modise:

There was no tolerance in the members and the commanders. We did not see any dignity in the people. As a black person, it is your custom to know who to obey, particularly elders. But, at that time, you find the police grabbing an old man, kicking and pushing him. All those kinds of things made me very unhappy. We even used to take young boys and kick them in the face. We never told people their rights or told their relatives what had happened.¹²

The equipment available to those police responsible for the policing of crowds reinforced the acceptability of using forceful responses in dealing with crowds. According to Senior Superintendent Meiring who had been a member of the unit since the 1970s:

We had rubber bullets, R5 rifles, shot guns and tear gas. At that time [the 1980s] we didn't have crowd management, we had crowd control. It was a simple use of force. That was aggression. If the crowd didn't listen to what we said, there was force. We had no training in the use of batons or in using formations. The emphasis, you see, was not on

12. Interview with Captain Modise, April 2000.

crowd management, it was to stop these people from doing what they were busy doing. We just told people to disperse and if they didn't, we just used what we had at our disposal – gas and so on. You know what it was like.¹³

Meiring also spoke about the lack of consultation with any interested parties prior to or during a crowd event. All events were policed in the same manner; the goal of the police was to disperse the crowd and any means would be used to achieve this:

We did things just the way we were told to do it. Let me give you a simple example. There was a protest meeting at a stadium in Pietermaritzburg. Directly after the meeting we gave the people a certain limited time to disperse. But people had to get buses to be able to leave the meeting. There were thousands of people and there was no way you could get them to disperse in that time. They were still waiting for the buses to come. But then the unit just started to shoot these people. This was wrong because these people were waiting for transport... We had this hard rigid approach. You just did what you were instructed to do and what the paper said. We said we negotiated, but really we did not.¹⁴

According to Captain Naidoo, Head of Personnel Services at POP Durban, consultation with role players only began in the mid-1990s.

There was also no briefing or debriefing within the unit itself. Briefing police members prior to intervention is crucial so that members have knowledge and understanding of the situations they are about to enter. Debriefing is a crucial means of getting members to reflect on past action and for changing behaviour where this is necessary. The lack of briefing and debriefing meant that members simply responded to instruction with no real knowledge of the event they were policing. There was also very poor planning. Events were not treated individually. They were responded to indiscriminately as problematic situations that needed to be contained and terminated. The policing of public order and crowds was conducted solely in accordance with police objectives. According to an Inspector from the Public Order Police Headquarters, in the past all protest and demonstrations were dealt with in a uniform manner:

The aim of the police was always to disperse crowds, regardless of their purpose. The police were not interested in what the protest was trying to achieve or if there were legitimate goals. We would be deployed with absolutely no information as to the particular event and would be instructed to disperse, usually with rubber bullets or teargas, but sometimes even with live ammunition. We responded like Robocops.¹⁵

From 1992 onwards the Internal Stability Unit began to develop a computer database recording all events or incidents they policed. Each recording noted the nature of the event, the police response to the event and whether there were any deaths, injuries or damage to property during these events. The incident recordings of the Internal Stability Unit in Durban indicate that poor planning, excessive use of force and

13. Interview with Senior Superintendent Meiring, August 1999.

14. Interview with Senior Superintendent Meiring, August 1999.

15. Interview with an Inspector Gopal who works with the Incident Recording Information System at the Public Order Police Headquarters in Pretoria. The inspector had been involved in public order policing for the past 13 years. The interview took place in May 1998.

lack of negotiation characterised public order policing in the early 1990s, despite the national political negotiations that were taking place at that time.¹⁶ What is evident in these recordings is not only the excessive use of force by the police, but also the volatile nature of the public. There are consistent recordings of skirmishes between the police and crowds. The police were also called upon to intervene in violent confrontations between contesting groupings, usually in the African townships. This conflict was usually between ANC and IFP supporters and it is widely accepted (as was indicated in Chapter 4) that police played a role in fuelling this conflict. Instead of attempting to resolve this conflict, the police seemed to resort to the use of deadly force, usually against ANC supporters. The following incident was recorded in August 1992 and is typical of the recordings in the early 1990s:¹⁷

Warrant Officer N and his members were escorting 1000 IFP supporters from a rally that was held at Princess Magogo Stadium in KwaMashu. When they passed 'F' section Kwa Mashu which is occupied by ANC supporters with AK47 rifles, five male IFP supporters were shot and injured. Constable P fired eight rounds with his P38 and Sergeant H fired one round with his R1.

The report does not reveal how many people were injured or killed as a result of police shootings. What is clear, however, is that a lot of bullets were fired. Other incident reports are more detailed. The language of these reports alone indicates a hostile attitude toward those being policed (mainly black people) and an intolerance of crowds. This hostility and intolerance serve to justify (in the police member's mind) the aggression displayed by the police toward those being policed:

On 93-12-03 at 08:15, Captain N was called out to the R102 road at Ntshawini where a group of blacks were allegedly stopping busses, taxis and assaulting the commuters. On arrival he was confronted with the group of blacks ranging from youths to adults. This militant group were armed with sticks, spears and stones. The crowd was very aggressive. They refused to disperse. The police tried to stop them from stopping the forms of public transport. In order to avoid violence, injury and the possibility of death, twenty teargas canisters were fired at the crowd.¹⁸

On 93-01-01 at about 05:00, at Durban beach where Sergeant M together with four members were walking beach patrol. Next to the Cattleman parking they came across a Black male raping a Black female. The police apprehended the suspect and the crowd around them became aggravated and advanced in a threatening manner. An unknown Black man drew a knife and tried to stab Constable M. Constable M fired 1x9mm round to warn the crowd...The crowd became aggravated and moved toward Constable M.

16. The unit at both provincial and national level only began to keep proper records of its activities in 1992. These records are scant but do provide insight as to what the activities of the unit were at the time.

17. These incident reports are recorded on a computer in the operational room at the Durban POP base. I spent many nights and weekends in this room looking through all the reports and printing them from the computer. This had to be done when the unit was relatively quiet. There are no printed copies of these incident recordings in the unit. I have not changed the language of these written reports that at times reads very awkwardly.

18. Twenty teargas canisters is an enormous amount of teargas which, thrown into a crowd, could be lethal. It is now internationally recognized that both teargas and rubber bullets – said to be non-lethal – can in fact be lethal. This is dependent on the range from which they are fired and who they are targeted at. Children, for example, are known to have died from respiratory problems after inhaling teargas.

Constable N fired a 1x9mm round. A Black male of 20 years was shot in the back and taken to King Edward Hospital.

The following recording details the ammunition used and the injuries that followed:

On 93-05-15 at 06:30 at Bambayi area the police witnessed the red band and green band members involved in a faction fight with each other.¹⁹ On arrival of the ISD members, shots were fired at the ISD. The following ISD members returned fire. Sgt P fired 15x9mm rounds; Lieutenant Sergeant G fired 15x9mm rounds; Lieutenant D fired 32x9mm rounds and 6xNo.5 rounds; Sergeant B fired 22x9mm rounds; Constable M fired 6x9mm rounds; Sergeant V fired 30x9mm rounds; Sergeant H fired 2xgas grenades. The following members from the green band were injured. Black male Mlumna – 18 years – shot on left arm. Black male Vilikazi – 30 years – shot on right middle finger. Black male Mtethwa – 45 years – shot on left leg. Black male Ngcobo – 45 years – shot on left buttock. Black male Kala – 45 years – shot in left palm. Black male Mkolondo – 30 years – shot on left chest and right upper arm. Black male Ndlovu – 23 years – shot in left buttock. Black male Mzinkisi – 39 years – shot on left leg above the knee. Black male unknown – 50 years – shot in head. Black male Ngama – 45 years – shot in head. Black male Sigotu – 22 years – birdshot wound to chest and left eye. Black female Precious – 27 years – birdshot wound to right cheek. Black male Ngcobo – 27 years – shot in right calf and left chest. 12 shacks belonging to the green band were burned...Sergeant S sustained minor injuries to his right hand from a rock thrown at him from the crowd.

At least two members of the crowd died during this incident and many more were injured, most likely as a result of the ammunition used by the police. In contrast, one police member was slightly injured. The police made extensive use of live ammunition, and though the facts of the case are not entirely clear from the report, the crowd almost certainly did not have access to equal or comparable force.

It is important to note that it is clear from the incident reports that deaths and injuries as a result of police interventions in crowd events occurred mainly in the African townships during this period. Most crowd events (protests and demonstrations) in the central business district and in white suburbs were policed relatively peacefully during the early 1990s. The peaceful management of crowds in the CBD and suburbs and the more violent controlling of crowds in the African townships continued up until the year 2001 when the research for this dissertation was concluded. There are a number of possible explanations for this distinction in police response. First, 'blacks', and in particular crowds of black people, were defined by the police as 'aggressive' and 'militant' and as 'trouble makers'. In the police worldview, therefore, the use of force in maintaining or creating order is justifiable. Second, possibly as a result of violent police responses, high levels of antagonism existed between the police and the communities in the African townships. Whole areas then came to be defined as dangerous and problematic. Third, protest and demonstration in the townships were often guided by the liberation movement's philosophy of ungovernability and collective violence was used when peaceful protest did not achieve desired outcomes (Marks, 2001). Fourth, over

19. The conceptualisation of the 'greens' and 'reds' began in 1992 in an informal settlement in Inanda township, north of Durban. Two conflicting groups battled over scarce resources in the area between two ANC factions. The smaller one, known as the 'greens' felt itself to be increasingly marginalised by the local and regional ANC leadership. As a result of the high levels of conflict in the area, an ISU base was set up nearby and there were continuous ISU patrols in the area. There were allegations at the time that the ISU had sided with the 'greens' and this further heightened the tension between the two groups. In April 1993, the 'greens' made approaches to the IFP and later began identifying themselves as IFP supporters (*Truth and Reconciliation Report*, Chapter 3: 309).

time localised historical memories were created which in turn led to a perpetuation of behaviours and relationships.

It could be argued that the kinds of situations that police members had been exposed to brutalised them and had a deep impact on the way in which they perceived the communities they policed. General Marais recalled that people in the unit (the ISU and POP) were exposed to 'bodies blown apart'. This, he said, made a big impression, particularly on the young police members. They believed they were 'going after the enemy'. The police were also seriously injured and many were killed during confrontations with members of the public in the 1980s and early 1990s. This instilled a belief among those police who worked in the townships that they were fighting a war and as a result, the use of deadly force was justifiable.

The following conversation with a platoon commander further illustrates this point. We were talking about the use of force in the past and I was querying whether or not the use of excessive force use was not partly due to the relatively small number of members that were deployed to control crowds.²⁰

10/05/2000

Monique: If you went in with so few members you must have felt compelled to use forceful methods to achieve your goals.

Captain Meetha: Yes, we used force in those days to achieve our goals. It is not like today when you have to be very careful about what you do. In those days we just used the force we wanted to and we did not even think twice about it.

Monique: How did you feel about this at the time?

Captain Meetha: To be honest it used to worry me because I could see what we were doing. But, that is how you had to respond and you just got used to it. But, I must tell you that we have seen terrible things in the past. For example, I remember going in to one of the townships and seeing a child whose head and limbs had been cut off. We began to think that black people were just like animals.

Monique: Are there other similar experiences that come to mind?

Captain Meetha: Yes, I remember one day sitting in a vehicle having lunch. Someone threw a grenade at us. I don't know how it happened, but we didn't get hit. But, ten people from the community were standing nearby and ten people were killed. When we got out of we found them with shrapnel in their faces and completely dismembered.

A Sergeant who had been working in Inanda township in the 1980s told an even more horrific memory to me:

...I will never forget this one scene. There was a little girl, maybe six years old. She had been eating rice. Next minute, someone came and hacked her at the back of her head. Her brains fell into the rice. Can you imagine dealing with such people?²¹

This policeman seems to be indicating that such events lead the police (particularly white and Indian police officers) to view the townships as spaces of barbarism and black people as fiends. These images,

20. When policing crowds it is important to make use of large numbers of police personnel. This provides the police with a sense of security and usually reduces the potential for the use of force (Waddington, 1991). The flipside of this is that large numbers of police officers can also antagonize a crowd (Jefferson, 1990).

21. This incident was recalled to me by a Sergeant while I was accompanying a section on a crime prevention operation in Umlazi, June 1999.

localised historical memories, brutalising experiences and stereotypes of groups of people and of crowds are enduring and continued to shape the behaviour of Durban POP members five years after the transformation process in the unit had begun.

Indications that change had taken place in POP Durban

My observations of the unit and the self-conscious understandings of members of the unit as well as incident reports provided me with a basis for assessing whether or not change had taken place in Durban POP since the onset of the transformation process. As was discussed in Chapters 4 and 6 new policy documents and training were instituted from 1996 aimed at changing the behaviour and responses of police involved in the policing of crowds. More broadly, the South African Police Service Act (No. 16731) of 1995 and the Constitution of South Africa (Act 108) of 1996 committed the entire police service to a philosophy and practice of community policing. A community-oriented approach to public order policing demands an entirely new set of assumptions on the part of the police (and the public) and turned the traditional frames of reference of the South African police upside down. The move toward a community policing philosophy required the police to focus on the individual rights and liberties of all people. A new vision of crowds was also required. Crowds should be assumed to be purposive and essentially orderly and peaceful. Participants in crowd events need to be viewed as ordinary members of the public who do not otherwise commit criminal acts. Furthermore, the police need to understand that they play a key role in forestalling or provoking disorder (Heuns, Ryckeghem and Hendrickx, 1998).

The 'new' Public Order Police unit was expected to apply a whole new set of principles and procedures when responding to the public. These are in accordance with international standards of crowd management and public order policing. As was mentioned in Chapter 4, there has been a general trend within democratic countries toward a type of policing style that emphasises soft, tolerant, selective, legal, preventive, consensual and flexible policing of crowds. Police tolerance of the behaviour and grievances of citizens is viewed as essential in the quest to avoid violent confrontation and antagonism between the police and the public. The use of forceful methods is viewed as counter-productive (Jaime-Jimenez and Reinares, 1998). In all forms of policing, the principles of human rights and community policing are central to the new doctrine of the policing of crowds.

Aside from the new philosophic and moral framework, the SAPS is also expected to follow procedural guidelines when policing crowds. These are outlined in the Regulations of Gatherings Act (205 of 1993) and the *Public Order Police Policy Document on Crowd Management* (1996). According to these documents, all crowd management operations must be carefully planned (except in cases when crowds emerge spontaneously or without prior warning). Negotiations must be held with key role players including the conveners of the event and the local authority. The coming together of these three parties is known as the 'golden triangle' and should be used as a forum for consultation and negotiation before, during and after the event.

Having correct and adequate information is seen as key to the proper management of crowd events. Information should not only be used for planning by commanding officers, it should also be passed to front-line supervisors and those under their command. All members should be briefed about the operational plan. Debriefing should take place after each event so that members are able to review actions taken. The documentation also has clear stipulations and guidelines with regard to the use of force. The decision to use force should only take place when participants act in ways that threaten life and property. According to the Act, the police need to notify the convener and participants that reasonable grounds exist to use force. Before force is employed, the command structure must be in place, and non-lethal weapons (water canons, tonfas, smoke grenades, chemical agents) should be used. Live ammunition should not be used for the dispersal of crowds during crowd management operations. Restraint on the part of the police requires that all members be provided with the suitable protection and equipment before they are deployed. If they are not, the operational commander can withdraw them.

The change in principles and procedures expected in the unit were considerable and they did lead to members of Durban POP seeing their role and responses as having changed significantly from those of the past. The change in self-perception is evident in the results of a recent survey carried out in the unit. The changed responses and self-perception of members of the unit must be seen in the context of the decline of violent protest in South Africa since 1994. According to Lodge, since 1994, black South Africans have tended to favour civic protest – demonstrations, rallies and petitions – which, he argues, ‘implies a recognition of authorities legitimacy’ (2001:12). Della Porta (1998) stresses that the nature of protest and the interaction between protesters and the police is a crucial variable that influences protest policing styles.

The following three tables are indicative of members’ belief that behavioural change has taken place in line with new policy and training.

Table 9: Statement: Since the 1994 elections, POP has become more community oriented in their approach when dealing with crowds

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative per cent
Strongly disagree	7	4.9	5.0	5.0
Disagree	12	8.4	8.5	13.5
Neutral	17	11.9	12.1	25.5
Agree	76	53.1	53.9	79.4
Strongly agree	29	20.3	20.6	100
Total	141	98.6	100	
Missing	2	1.4		
Total	143	100		

There were however, racialised responses to this statement. While 71.4 per cent of African members agreed that Durban POP had become more community oriented since 1994, only 47.4 per cent of white

members did. Indian members seemed most convinced that the unit is more community oriented in its approach. 95.6 per cent of Indian members agreed with the statement. It is difficult to interpret these findings since it is unclear whether members are referring to their own behaviour, their reference groupings (which may be racially based), or the unit as a whole. However, Indian and African members seem convinced that there was a shift in behaviour, while white members appear to be far less certain of this.

Table 10: Statement: POP members are more hesitant to make use of force since the 1994 elections

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative per cent
Strongly disagree	3	2.1	2.2	2.2
Disagree	29	11.9	12.4	14.6
Neutral	15	10.5	10.9	25.5
Agree	63	44.1	46.0	71.5
Strongly agree	39	27.3	28.5	100
Total	137	95.8	100	
Missing	6	4.2		
Total	143	100		

The majority of respondents believed that force was used more circumspectly since 1994. Cross-tabulations specify that there are racial differences in responses to this statement. While 87 per cent of Indian members and 72 per cent of African members believe that members are more hesitant to make use of force, only 64 per cent of white members agree with this statement.

Table 11: Statement: POP members are more tolerant in their conduct toward crowds than they were prior to the 1994 elections

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative per cent
Strongly disagree	3	2.1	2.2	2.2
Disagree	13	9.1	9.4	11.5
Neutral	26	18.2	18.7	30.2
Agree	69	48.3	49.6	79.9
Strongly agree	28	19.6	20.1	100
Total	139	97.2	100	
Missing	4	2.8		
Total	143	100		

While a greater percentage of Indian members (78.3%) responded positively to this statement, this response was not significantly different from those of white members (68.8%) and African members (69.8%). It seems that members across the racial divide are united in their perception that the unit has become more tolerant in their conduct toward crowds. This is not surprising given that the key 'mind-shift' emphasised in the training and policy document is a move toward greater tolerance when policing crowds.

Tolerant behaviour is one of the most important principles outlined in the new policy document. POP members are expected to tolerate members of the public taunting, swearing at, and even throwing bottles and stones at members of the unit, rather than react or retaliate in any way.

Members surveyed seemed to believe that they were more guarded in their responses to the public after 1994 possibly due to new policies and the retraining that they had experienced. Tables 9, 10 and 11 indicate that in general rank-and-file members believe that significant changes have taken place with regard to their behaviour in carrying out crowd management operations.

Between 1997 and 2000, I observed the Durban Public Order Police unit in over 20 crowd management situations. I was impressed by members' composure despite verbal and physical abuse on the part of crowds. In some instances, members of the public threw bottles and stones at the unit, and members of the unit simply observed this behaviour but did not appear to be antagonised. Members (usually African) also displayed an enormous amount of patience in policing events that were tedious and boring.

The following incident recorded in my research diary demonstrates new ways of thinking about 'good' police behaviour and commendable outcomes. I had been driving around with a Sergeant who was trying to locate one of the sections. We met up with them at the magistrate's court where some of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings were taking place. Since there was the potential that these hearings would allow for the venting of anger, disorder was always a possibility and POP were called upon to guard and secure venues where such hearings were taking place. I sat and chatted to some of the members who were in the courtroom waiting for hearings to resume after a break:

23/05/2000

Monique: How long have you guys been here for today?

Sergeant Ndlovu: About three hours. Most of the morning.

Monique: What exactly is your function here?

Sergeant Ndlovu: We have to go into the courtroom and see that there is no disruption and that things do not get out of hand. You see, they are dealing with very sensitive things here. Imagine, some people are having to meet the person who injured or even killed one of their family members. It can raise a lot of pain and anger and sometimes people can't contain this pain and anger and they want to shout at the perpetrator or harm him physically. We have to prevent this from happening.

Monique: I imagine that it is a bit boring sitting around here for so long just waiting.

Sergeant Ndlovu: Well, that is part of our job and we have to see that it is done. It is our primary function. You see, the station police are not able to do this job. We are specially trained to manage crowds and they are not.

Sergeant Ngubane: That is true, but I would rather be working on the outside doing something a bit more interesting. This is really frustrating work, sitting around the whole day.

Monique: What would you prefer to be doing?

Sergeant Ngubane: I would prefer to be outside doing proper crowd management stuff. At least there we are active, not just sitting around doing nothing.

Monique: Yes, but sometimes even outside you can sit and do nothing for ages.

Sergeant Ngubane: That is true. But, at least we are monitoring the situation. We are preparing for all eventualities.

Monique: But in most situations, nothing really happens.

Sergeant Ngubane: Well then it is a good day for us. We have not had to resort to any forceful means. That is what we are taught in crowd management training.

What Sergeant Ngubane and Sergeant Ndlovu say in this conversation is significant. First, even though the work they do may be very boring at times, they see it as their duty to be tolerant and patient when protecting the public. Second, Sergeant Ngubane makes the point that when an event takes place peacefully, this is an indication of good crowd management. New policy and training had clearly influenced the cultural knowledge of these two police officers.

The display of tolerance is closely associated with the restraint in the use of force. The vast majority of respondents agreed that police members are currently more hesitant to resort to the use of force than they had been in the past. It is this restraint that is in large part responsible for the low incidence of injury and violence in crowd management situations since 1996 as Table 12 below shows. While members may have come to believe that the use of force and reactive policing leads to an escalation in conflict and confrontation, their restrained and measured responses are likely to result from clear instructions from those in command not to use force or react to crowd provocation. This is particularly the case in a paramilitary unit such as POP where there is almost no space for individual discretion. Members most likely also fear recrimination from higher-ranking officers for unnecessary use and non-proportional use of force.

Whether motivated by a real shift in thinking or by fear of recrimination, Durban POP successfully policed three international events between 1998 and 2001. Each of these international events was attended by many thousands of participants from all over the world. The large number of people participating in these events, and the protests and demonstrations that surrounded these events could have presented a public order predicament. In August 1998, the Non-Aligned Movement Summit was held in Durban. Four thousand delegates attended. In July 2000, the 13th International Aids World Conference was held in Durban. Twelve thousand people participated and there were numerous Aids related demonstrations and protests that took place close to the conference centre during the conference. In August 2001, the World Conference Against Racism was held in Durban. More than 14 000 delegates participated. In the eight days during which this conference took place there were dozens of demonstrations, protests and pickets taking place in the surrounding area. Many of these crowd events were potentially volatile and there were large groups of people displaying open antagonism toward other groupings participating in the conference. Prior to the conference there were concerns that public disorder might eventuate as happened during similar forums in Seattle in 2000 and in Genoa in 2001.²²

Each of these major events was policed without incident by the security team that was co-ordinated and led by the Durban POP. At a march held by Aids activists that took place during the World Aids

22. According to newspaper reports, the Director-General of the National Intelligence Co-ordinating Committee had warned the police that more than 20 individuals identified as key players in the violent anti-globalisation protests in other parts of the world were heading for Durban. (*SundayTimes*, 02/09/2001).

Conference in July 2000, I noticed Durban POP members talking informally to participants and assuring them that they would be protected. The policing of the WCAR was declared a resounding success by the press and by the international community. On 2 September 2001 local newspapers in Durban commended the police for their good conduct and their preparedness during the WCAR. According to reports 'intensive planning, strategic deployment of manpower and consultations with groups organising protests had ensured that the police were ready to deal with the high numbers of protesters' (*Sunday Times*, 02/09/2001). Police remained unprovoked even when a large group of youth sang anti-apartheid songs, rebuffed calls by leaders to disperse and taunted the police. Earlier in the week the police ensured that 30 000 Congress of South African Trade Union and South African Communist Party supporters protesting the privatisation of state assets took place without incident (*Sunday Times*, 02/09/2001). The policing of the conference was viewed as so exceptional that United Nations chiefs of staff proposed that the security operation mounted for the WCAR conference 'be used as a model for international planning and security' (*Sunday Tribune*, 09/09/2001).²³

The three events mentioned were major public proceedings and the presence of the press and the 'eyes' of the international community may in part account for this good behaviour. Della Porta writes in this regard that 'media attention to social protest seems to have the effect of generating a shift toward more tolerant policing... The mere presence of journalists, in fact, appears to have a de-escalating effect on the police...' (1998:18). The attention and gaze of the international community would appear to have a similar effect. The public nature of the space in which these events took place (and the demonstrations that coincided with them) are also important considerations in understanding the commendable police behaviour. Herbert has noted in this regard that 'the distinction between public and private space is perhaps the most critical special delimitation that conditions police action' (1997:46). While police may be more cautious to act in private spaces (such as in cases of domestic violence), when they do act in these spaces their actions are far less subject to regulation and scrutiny than is the case in public spaces.

While the public nature of the three events mentioned may in part account for the good behaviour of the unit, members of Durban POP at both supervisory and rank-and-file levels must have internalised the new principles and practices in achieving this success in public order policing.²⁴ In order for the unit to behave in this exemplary manner, members of the unit must be aware of what 'appropriate' and 'acceptable' responses are and they must have had the relevant the skills and knowledge to make such responses possible.

23. Durban POP was not the only unit policing the event. The entire security operation consisted of 16 000 security personnel including Durban City Police and the South African National Defence Force. However, Durban POP played a central role in the planning and co-ordination of the security operation.

24. Later in this chapter I will demonstrate that when the police act in more private spaces and when they are less open to public criticism and view, their behaviour can change dramatically and they can revert to past and problematic behaviour.

Changes in the field such as new policy and training had a profound impact on two of the levels of cultural knowledge outlined by Chan (1996) - directory knowledge and recipe knowledge.²⁵ Most members were, by the year 2000, fully aware of the new tactics, strategies and action modes that are to be employed in the managing of crowds, as well as the principles and processes which should be adhered to. This led to new ways of responding to crowds and situations of collective public disorder, particularly when instructed and monitored by capable and informed supervisors. This change in behaviour in turn led to a dramatic decrease in the number of incidents of violence during crowd management situations. Prior to 1995, the majority of protests, demonstrations and gatherings that were policed resulted in injury and even in the death of participants and sometimes the death and injury of police. According to the Provincial Commander of Public Order Policing in KwaZulu-Natal, there have been minimal injuries in the past five years in crowd management situations, and the death of one participant during a crowd event.²⁶ Table 12 below examines the types of crowd management events policed by the Durban unit from Jan 1993 until June 2000. The table indicates that since 1995, there have been no other incidents like the one at UDW in 2000 where the unit was responsible for the death of a civilian. Over the past seven years, an increasing proportion of events have been defined as 'crowd management peaceful'. This term, used by the POP incident recording system (IRIS), refers to crowd management events where there are no reports of injury, damage to property, or death.

There are still incidents that are marred by violent occurrences. For the most part, however, the violence is often not due to police intervention, but relates to the nature of crowd itself. For example, if police arrive at M. L. Sultan Technikon and students are breaking classroom windows, the incident will be recorded as 'crowd management unrest'. In other words, IRIS classifies incidents that are marred by violence of any sort as 'crowd management unrest'. Table 11 shows that by 1999, only 8 per cent of crowd management events were defined as 'crowd management unrest'. This is significantly different from 1993 where almost half the crowd management events would have been defined as 'crowd management unrest'.²⁷

25. See Chapter 3 which deals with the theoretical approach used in this dissertation in detail.

26. This incident took place at the University of Durban Westville in May 2000 when a student died after being shot with live ammunition by a member of the Durban Public Order Police unit. Members of the Durban unit were deeply affected by the death of the student. According to the Head of Labour Relations in the unit: 'We are all still struggling to explain the shooting. We are shocked that this has taken place and many members are feeling very demoralised at the moment. It is the first death in a crowd management situation in many years'.

This event is discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

27. The statistics here are used very tentatively. The IRIS system, which distinguishes between crowd management unrest and crowd management peaceful, was only implemented in 1997. Prior to this, all incidents viewed as 'illegal' (the majority at that time) were defined as unrest even if no violence or damage to property was recorded. In order to create uniformity with regards to the incident records, all the statistics from January 1992 to December 1996 have been compiled and calculated by hand. This took an average of three hours work for every year calculated which I completed in the Operations Room at the Durban POP base. Accuracy is not guaranteed. The statistics were also compiled with the help of IRIS team at POP Head Office. It should be noted that incident recording during the period prior to 1997 was not standardised and in some instances was done poorly. There are no statistical recordings in the unit prior to 1992.

Table 12: Crowd management incidents January 1992 to June 2000 (Durban)

	Crowd management peaceful	Crowd management unrest	Instances when rubber bullets were used	Instances when tear gas was used	Instances when live ammunition was used	Civilians injured as a result of POP action	Civilian deaths as a result of POP action
1 Jan - 31 Dec 1993	68 (56%)	54 (44%)	1	22	4	20	4
1 Jan - 31 Dec 1994	155 (61%)	98 (39%)	15	43	4	5	2
1 Jan - 31 Dec 1995	169 (75%)	57 (25%)	13	7	1	3	0
1 Jan - 31 Dec 1996	237 (85%)	42 (15%)	8	17	1	3	0
1 Jan - 31 Dec 1997	323 (84%)	60 (16%)	4	5	1*	1	0
1 Jan - 31 Dec 1998	545 (91%)	53 (9%)	4	4	3**	2	0
1 Jan - 31 Dec 1999	478 (92%)	37 (8%)	4	4	0	5	0
1 Jan - 15 June 2000	131 (88%)	17 (12%)	1	1	1 (UDW campus)	0	1 (UDW student)

Table drawn up from IRIS statistics provided by Operational Centre, POP Durban

* Live ammunition was fired when police were fired at during a funeral in Chesterville.

** In one of the incidents where live ammunition was used, an armed crowd in Amawoti, KwaMashu, attacked police. In the other two incidents, police fired at warring taxi drivers who had fired at each other and at the police.

Table 12 demonstrates that there has been a greater reluctance on the part of the unit to use force – both lethal and non-lethal since 1995. Even the use of teargas and rubber bullets since 1997 is limited to four or five incidences, except in 1998. On reading the individual incident recordings of the three instances where live ammunition was used in 1998, it would appear that this was used defensively. According to police who were present at these events, members of the unit were fired at by warring taxi owners in two instances and by an armed crowd in Amawoti, KwaMashu. The UDW incident remains an isolated one, and will be looked at in detail later in the chapter.

There are two possible explanations (outside of police conduct) for the decrease in crowd management unrest incidents. First, the new democratic government has indicated a willingness to listen to and hear protestors' demands and grievances, and hence more forceful means of collective action are not deemed necessary by protestors. Second, participants in collective action are well aware of the Gatherings Act (1993) and are adhering to its stipulations and regulations. But, regardless of these factors, credit must be given to the POP members for the decline in the use of force and the decreased numbers of death and injury of participants in crowd events at the hands of the police. Alternative tactics to the use of force were used by the police to prevent public disorder after 1996.

The decline in crowd management incidents defined as 'unrest' is very important. It indicates a real change in behaviour with regard to the unit's primary function - that of managing crowds. There has been no research conducted into community perceptions of the unit in the past five years. In part, this could be because the POP does not serve 'a community'. It is a highly mobile unit that moves from one area to the next with no local base. The 'community' thus refers to the broad public that is served by the unit. Who is served by the unit is determined by where and when crowds form and if there is a potential for public disorder. Accountability of the unit to local communities is thus limited, which itself is a problem, but this will not be addressed in this chapter. None-the-less, there can be little doubt that the changed behaviour and outcomes of the unit have had a positive impact on the relationships between the broad population and the police. I witnessed occasions where members of the public expressed their appreciation of the courteous conduct of unit and their even-handedness. I was particularly touched by one occasion where such approbation was expressed:

08/05/2000

While waiting to go to Umlazi township with one of the sections, I sat chatting to Captain Reddy in the Public Relation office. While we were talking, an elderly African woman came into the office and stated that she wanted to talk to Captain Dada. She had made her way to the POP base so that she could speak in person with him. She looked tired, but she had a mission to accomplish. The woman explained that she had been part of a march that Durban POP had just policed. She was, in fact, one of the organisers of the march made up of victims of human rights abuses. The march was intended to end at the Mayor's office where a memorandum was to be handed over calling for reparations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. She recalled that the officials in the Mayor's office had been extremely rude to her; they had kicked her out when she tried to hand over the memorandum. The only people, she said, who had treated her with respect and tried to help her were Durban POP members. They had tried to find someone who would accept the memorandum and when this did not happen, they said that they would assist her with writing a letter to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and would fax it for her if she came to the unit. The woman hugged Captain Reddy and held his hands. She then looked at me and told me how wonderful these police had been. She made the point that this response from the police was completely unexpected. Her encounters with the police in the past had been extremely hostile. She had even been shot by the police during a protest march some years ago...I was very touched by the humane treatment the unit had shown toward this woman who could barely speak English and who was illiterate.

Another way of assessing the increased acceptability of the unit by local communities is by examining the number of times that POP members came under attack from community members, as well as the number of members who were killed or injured by community members. Table 13 below shows a dramatic decline in the number of attacks on POP Durban members over the past eight years.

Table 13: Number of attacks on POP Durban members, January 1993 - June 2000

	Attacks on ISD/POP members	Members killed by civilians	Members injured by civilians
01 Jan 1993 - 31 Dec 1993	127	3	45
01 Jan 1994 - 31 Dec 1994	177	9	35
01 Jan 1995 - 31 Dec 1995	178	6	31
01 Jan 1996 - 31 Dec 1996	86	0	16
01 Jan 1997 - 31 Dec 1997	16	4	11
01 Jan 1998 - 31 Dec 1998	25	4	10
01 Jan 1999 - 31 Dec 1999	18	3	6
01 Jan 2000 - 15 June 2000	8	1	5

Table compiled with the assistance of IRIS team at POP Head Office²⁸

Table 13 clearly shows that there has been a major decline in the number of attacks on POP Durban members over the past six years, and the number of members killed and injured by civilians is also following a downward trend. There are of course deviations from this trend (such as the increased number of attacks on members in 1996) that are difficult to explain without knowledge of the individual incidents. However, in general terms, Table 13 indicates that there has been a decrease in hostility toward the unit since 1996. While for the most part this could be the result of the changed behaviour and responses of the unit toward members of the community, the trend may reflect a more general change toward the South African Police Service since the transition to democratic governance.

28. These attacks did not only take place during crowd management incidents. They may also have taken place while members were carrying out their secondary functions such as crime prevention. Most of these attacks took place while members were on duty. A few members have been murdered while off duty.

There can be little doubt that significant changes have taken place in the unit, at a structural level, at the level of cultural knowledge, as well as at a behavioural level. However, to state that transformation has been fully achieved would be inaccurate. A more critical exploration of some of the outcomes of the unit's intervention indicates that there is still a long way to go before anyone can confidently conclude that transformation has been achieved. This is apparent in the occasional negative conduct of members of the unit as well as evidence that members retain disconcerting values and assumptions from the past.

Indications that transformation is incomplete

In May 2000, Durban POP received some very bad publicity both nationally and internationally. One Company²⁹ of the Durban POP had been deployed to the University of Durban Westville to monitor student demonstrations that resulted from the university's decision to deregister 540 students who had not paid university registration fees. On the 16 May 2000, Michael Makhabane, a second year BA student, was shot dead on the campus of the University of Durban Westville (UDW) during protest action (*Mercury*, 19/05/2000). A member of the Durban POP unit fired the bullet that killed the student. Both internal investigations and two post-mortems concluded that live ammunition had been used (*Independent on Saturday*, 20/05/2000). A member of a highly specialised grouping within the Durban POP unit, the Reaction unit, fired the fatal bullet.³⁰

While it could be argued that this was the result of undisciplined individual action, there are a number of other reasons that could be identified for the unfortunate and unjustifiable shooting. POP Headquarters conducted an investigation into the incident. In June 2000, POP Headquarters drew up a debriefing document about the incident that attempts to analyse the reasons for the disaster. Aside from stating that the proper procedures had not been complied with – there was no written plan, no threat analysis was done, and no joint operation centre was established – the document implies that transformation has not adequately taken place in the unit. The report concludes that:

...It is of great concern that the POP unit did not implement the tactics and techniques that are taught during training. Durban POP unit is fortunate to have five of the best trainers in the field of crowd management in South Africa in their personnel. All the officers on the scene of 16 May were apparently trained at the Platoon Commanders' course. It is unthinkable that members did not even apply the most basic principles of good command structure, techniques or use of equipment despite the fact that they were all trained...no members deployed in the operation up to very late in the operation were equipped with riot shield or helmets for personal protection against stone attacks. This could have been a reason why members resorted in self-defence to the use of firearms against protesters...The Regulation of Gatherings Act, the policy document for crowd management and the training curriculum for operational commanders are emphasising the importance of good information gathering and processing, reaching consensus

29. The Company was made up of members from all race groupings and included the Motorbike and Reaction unit.

30. The Reaction unit usually intervenes in high-risk incident. It is made up largely of white members of the unit who have a history of overzealous law enforcement. This information was obtained in informal discussions with a variety of commissioned officers from the POP who were present at the time of the incident.

through negotiation, consultation, in-depth assessment, detailed joint planning, and gradual police response in respect of using protective equipment in order to minimise the use of weapons. Shortcomings on the day regarding the above mentioned aspects implies that the new philosophy had not been implemented to the extent that it can be said that POP Durban is functioning in accordance with the policy of crowd management (POP Headquarters, June 2000).³¹

The disappointment expressed in this police document is not only due to the failure of the police to adhere to the procedures laid out in the policy and learned in training, but is also due to the perceived lack of change in the 'philosophy' or 'mindset' of members of Durban POP. The mechanisms for transforming the unit (new policy and training), the document seems to imply, had not given rise to a reorientation of values and attitudes.

There are other indications emerging from this event that suggest that old ways of thinking and responding still persisted in the unit. A local Durban newspaper reported that 'UDW staff members said that police had fired on students as they were running away. Several academics said students were pleading with the police not to shoot and that certain police were heard saying: "dit it is lekker" [this is nice/fun], while chasing the students' (*Mercury*, 19/05/2000). I was not particularly surprised to read this in the newspaper. I had been present with the unit on the campus for six days prior to the fatal shooting and had heard a number of individual members of the unit making comments that indicated they were ready for action. On the fourth day of deployment on the campus, one of the members said to me 'Miskien sal ons aksie hê vandag. Ek hoop so' [Perhaps we will have action today. I hope so]. On the second day, I overheard members saying that they should just shoot rubber bullets or teargas at the students during a pushback action on the campus. This, they thought, would sort the students out. Either they would stop the protest or a confrontation would develop and the police would 'have something to do with themselves.

These statements and the readiness of members to act in an offensive manner indicated that there were members within the unit whose attitudes and basic assumptions had not changed significantly in the five years since the start of the transformation process in the unit. University students for many decades have been viewed by the police in South Africa as troublemakers and as 'rebels without cause'. These images and perceptions persisted in the year 2000. The historically antagonistic relationship between the police and university students created a powerful precedent and universities had become localities of police-student confrontation. This has particularly been the case at UDW, a politically charged university campus.

While the incident on UDW campus is one of very few examples of 'retrogressive' police behaviour, there are many examples of such behaviour when members of the unit are carrying out their secondary function – crime prevention. Crime prevention work generally takes place in the townships that are far more hidden from the public eye than protest and demonstrations (which seek to gain public attention). It is in these more private spaces that the behaviour of members of the unit is more consistently problematic.

31. Debriefing of crowd management incident: University of Durban Westville on 16 May 2000, POP Headquarters, June 2000, Pretoria.

The night of the shooting on UDW campus I joined another platoon on a night patrol in KwaMashu township. I was in a vehicle with three white and two black policemen. I was horrified by the complete disregard for human rights that the police displayed in their behaviour to township residents. The following vignette describes the abusive conduct of the police toward the public throughout the night:

16/05/2000

...We got back into the vehicle and went 'looking for action'. We drove through a dark alleyway and found a group of young men hanging around on the pavement. The vehicle drew to a sudden halt and four policemen jumped out of the vehicle and pointed their guns at the youngsters. They did a search, shouted at them, and then got back into the vehicle. One of the inspectors got back into the vehicle and said 'Those fuckers have been smoking dagga [marijuana]!' I decided to find out what exactly was going on in the minds of these policemen.

Monique: what made you stop? Surely you are not concerned with dagga?

Inspector Botha: Yes, it is a petty thing. But, they told us who the dealer is and where to find him. We won't go there now. We will wait a week and then when he is feeling safe, we will bust the fucker. It is an easy arrest. We keep him in reserve for when our arrest records are low. We are not stupid. We know how to do things in here.

We drove on. The police radio system was reporting that there was a stolen vehicle in the area that had been used for several hijackings. The driver stepped up the speed, and said 'Lets go get them'. Again, we drove through the darkness of the townships with our lights off so that residents were not informed about our presence. Both police in the front of the vehicle had their pistols pointed outside open windows ready to fire. Sergeant Marais tried to explain. He said: 'These people [in the township] in this area are not normal. They have no respect for human life. You will see. Life means nothing to them. This is another world'...Another report came through on the radio. There was a kangaroo court in process in one of the informal settlement areas. We sped on through a maze of houses and back alleys. There are no street names in these areas, yet these cops knew exactly where we were going. They pulled up in a dark alleyway and jumped out the car. There were a couple of hundred of community people standing round an elderly man who they had beaten very badly and hit with wooden batons and whips until he was bleeding on his legs, torso, and head. The crowd was furious and clearly wanted to kill this man. They informed the cops that he had been raping young girls in the area for months. While they had reported this to the police station, no action had been taken. He had raped a three-year-old child that day and the community were furious. The police went to the man and shouted in Zulu 'You fucking Satan. You piece of rubbish!' They then spat on him. The people gathered around laughed. The mother of the child concerned was holding her child close to her and looked very frightened. They searched the man and found numerous pictures of young girls in his possession. They kicked him and shouted, 'you sick fucker'. The man did not respond. He was humiliated and speechless. He had no dignity - his pants had been pulled down and his private parts were present for all to see. The police decided that they would arrest him and take him to the police station. No one wanted to put them in their vehicle. They decided that they would get him to walk to the nearest tarred road where they would call the station police to come and pick him up and put him in the back of a police van. They told the man to get up. When he didn't move, they hit him over the head with a torch and swore at him. He was escorted down the road by the members of the community and the police...The sergeant in our vehicle shouted 'gooi die ding in die van!' [throw the thing in the van!]... It was by now 11pm. They decided to go down to a petrol station to get some coffee and something to eat. The following conversation took place on the way:

Sergeant Marais: It is fucking quiet out here tonight. Monique, it looks like you have jinxed us. There is nothing exciting taking place.

Monique: What do you hope will take place?

Sergeant Marais: A bit of shooting at least. That is what we live for. Tonight has just been child's play while we are waiting for more action.

While patrolling the road, the police spotted four guys on the pavement. They pulled the van to a stop and jumped out. I followed. They searched the four guys and found nine mandrax pills. They hit the four young men and asked them where they got the drugs from. They did not reply. The police hit them again. They pointed to the house behind them that was in complete darkness. The police looked at the house and debated for a few seconds whether to penetrate or not. They decided to go ahead. They broke the fence and crawled through the hole. I was told to follow. They knocked a few times and when there was no response kicked open the door and went into the house. I followed... There was also a small room on the property that they entered - of course, no warrants used. The house was completely bare. On the floor in one room there was one cup, a plate and some cutlery. A man was sleeping in another room on the floor with one blanket. He had not a single other possession. The police woke him and shouted, 'Where the fuck are your drugs the bastard?' The man said that he did not have any. They slapped him and told him if the guys outside said that he had sold drugs to them, and they would come and fuck him up. He cowered into the corner of the room, clearly very frightened. At the same time some of the other members were creating havoc in the small room on the property. They pulled the man and his girlfriend out of the bed and began to shout at them. Sergeant Marais shouted, 'Give us your mandrax and we will leave you alone. If you don't, we will fuck you up so badly until you speak and we will turn this room upside down!'... The sergeant walked back into the house and hit the man. He asked him again where the pills were. The man said he really did not know. The sergeant fetched a big rubber rubbish bin and put it on top of the man's head, upside down. He then moved the bin up and down hitting the man's head numerous times. The man cried out in pain. He then started to kick the bin on the top and on the sides, sending the man flying from one side of the room to the next. The man was wailing by this time and begged the policeman to stop. He did not. He carried on for a few minutes and then walked out, having achieved nothing...

We drove into an unlit area where the informers had arranged to meet us... The informer told us to stop the car. We were in the middle of nowhere. He pointed to a house in the distance... We got to the identified house. We were told to stay low. One policeman then screamed, 'Open the door, it is the police!' No answer. No lights were on. They continued shouting and banging the door. Eventually a middle-aged man in his underwear opened the door. They swore at him and asked where his gun was. He said he didn't have one. They began to search his house. They found nothing except a holster. They asked again. No response. They then hit him hard on the face a few times. He yelped. They continued. Eventually they got him on the floor and started to kick the side of his body and his head. Still they could not get an answer out of him. He repeated that he had no gun. One of the police then stood on his leg and jumped on it numerous times. The man cried out for him to stop and another policeman hit him on his face and kicked his head and told him to shut up. I was horrified. I didn't want to look but forced myself to. I didn't say a word though I wanted to run up to them and tell them to stop beating this man. Perhaps he really did not have a gun. Perhaps the informer had misinformed them. I said nothing. This continued for about ten minutes. I was petrified that other people nearby would hear the commotion and start shooting at us. Nothing happened. The silence of the night penetrated everything. The only noise was the cries of the man receiving more and more slaps and beatings. Eventually they kicked him one last time and told him they would be back... Again, police staked the house and shouted for the people inside to open the door. The light went on but the woman inside refused to open the door. 'Open the door you fucking stupid bitch', yelled one of the sergeants. No response. They banged the door and threatened to break it down. Eventually, I heard the door open and they went inside. I could see nothing as I crouched on the path outside the house. A few more shouts and banging around inside and the police came out once again: 'The bitch says she doesn't know anything and her husband is not there. She says he is out at work.' I could see they were angry at not finding any weapons. This was not turning out to be a good night for them. We crept back along the path and back in to the vehicles. We found

out that one of the police from the other vehicle had been shot in his hand and had been taken to a nearby hospital. The police in my vehicle were amused.

Inspector Olivier: Now he can join the team. We have all been shot now.

Sergeant Ndinda: Yes, but he was only shot in his hand and that doesn't count. It is minor. He just won't be able to pick his nose now.

They all burst out laughing...

Throughout the night the police showed complete disregard for due process and a disdain for the basic human rights of township residents. The philosophy and practice of community policing was of absolutely no interest to them. These police officers believed that what they were doing was justifiable in their quest to fight crime in the area. They informed me that they were fighting a war against high levels of crime in the township – a space that they described as chaotic and where people behaved 'atrociously'. These people, according to them, only understood force. Hard-hitting methods, they argued, were required in order to be effective in the eyes of the public and the unit hierarchy.³² Furthermore, these members showed almost no concern that their 'deviant' behaviour would be exposed or that they would be castigated or chastised for such behaviour. They were certain that no one (including myself) would ever report their behaviour to any superior or authority. At one point I asked them if they were worried that one of the people that they assaulted would report this conduct to a police authority or an oversight body. They responded that they were not worried at all. In fact, according to them, the harder you 'klap' (hit) someone, the less likely they are to report you since they are scared that they will be hurt even worse in the future.

I witnessed similar types of behaviour when I joined another platoon which been stationed at one of the hostels in Durban. This hostel, Glebelands, had been the site of extensive inter-group violence. Between November 1997 and September 1998 alone there were 50 murders within the hostel (*KwaZulu Natal Briefing*, September 1998).³³ Durban POP members were deployed at the hostel in order to 'stabilise' the area and prevent further violence from taking place. Rooms in the hostel were regularly raided as Durban POP members searched for weapons. I accompanied seven members of the unit on an early morning weapon raid in the hostel. While I understood that the volatile environment in which these members were operating demanded extreme vigilance and a demonstration of authority, I was shocked by their maltreatment of hostel residents:

09/071998

...The passages were quiet. It seemed like hostel residents were still asleep. I noticed that the floors were dirty and that there was a smell of urine. Empty bottles had been left outside the doors of some of the rooms...Without knocking, one of the sergeants kicked a door open and the other six members of the unit pushed their way into the tiny room with their rifles pointed in front of them. There was a small table near the door with dishes and cups on it which one of the members knocked over, breaking one of the cups. A man was lying on the floor. The sergeant who had kicked the door open pressed the nose of the rifle into the man's chest and shouted at him in Zulu. When he failed to respond, one of the other policemen present kicked his head and also shouted at him...Eventually,

32. As will be discussed in the chapter to follow, the key performance indicators used in the unit were arrests and recoveries of weapons, drugs and stolen weapons.

33. 30 000 people live in this hostel which is meant to house 15 000. The deaths that have occurred are said to be the result of ongoing violence between two ethnically divided groupings, many of whose members are armed with live ammunition.

after searching the room, the police left the room without any recovered weapons. They slammed the door behind them as they walked out into the passage.

The display of complete disregard for human rights and the use of strong-arm tactics by these police officers are familiar responses. In the past, such responses were commonplace and were regarded as 'normal'. While the political and legislative environment has changed dramatically, brutal behaviour on the part of the police was still (in the year 2000) viewed as effective in achieving police objectives. While this indicates an unwillingness or unreadiness on the part of these police to relinquish past ways of responding, such behaviour is also reinforced by the statements of political elites. Reprehensible statements as to what commendable policing is have been vocalised, even by high profile and influential individuals. In 1999, the new Minister of Safety and Security, Steve Tshwete, made numerous statements that feed into problematic conceptions on the part of the police as to what good and appropriate policing should be. Tshwete made it clear that police should view criminals as 'scum'. Police, he stated, should not be timid in responding to criminals. In public forums he proposed that the police should deal with criminals 'in the same way that a bulldog deals with a bull' (cited in Laurence, 1999). Such statements can be seen to encourage the use of excessive force and the employment of illegitimate and unlawful means in the war against crime.

Statements such as Tshwete's arise in part from the pressure the government is under to respond decisively to the problem of crime. Consequently, over the years following the 1994 democratic elections, politicians have begun to speak less of community-oriented and democratic policing, and more about the need for tougher policing. 'Tshwete, has emphasised the crime fighting role of the police, and has encouraged a more strong-arm approach to criminals, with far less emphasis on the internal problems of police reform. This discourse has found favour with the South African public which was increasingly concerned about crime, and with a police service which had felt disempowered by the period of police transformation following the first election' (Rauch, 2000:7).

Results of the survey conducted in 1999 indicate that a large percentage of members had retained old ways of thinking about their work, about the environment in which they operate, and about crowds. How police perceive or view crowds is an important determining factor as to how they will respond to crowds. Generally, police hold conservative views with regard to crowd behaviour. King and Breary (1996) argue that police philosophy regarding public order is often based on the theories of crowd behaviour of Le Bon and Smelser that essentially view crowds as irrational, emotional and unreasonable. In this view, the individual in the crowd is deindividuated: protesters descend along several different rungs in the ladder of civilisation. These authors maintain that there is 'a link between collective behaviour and irrationality' (Keith, 1993:79). Critcher and Waddington (1996) argue that police adhere to a Durkheimian view of crowds and disorder. They believe that there is an erosion of the social fabric and that social control has been broken down when dissatisfied crowds emerge. Rollo contends that policemen trained in riot control in particular 'view events such as demonstrations and pickets as provocative, likely to cause disorder and

therefore they are to be restricted and prevented from doing so' (Rollo, 1980:198). Police who view crowds as irrational and destructive are likely to use any means available to them to disperse these groupings. The normative police view of crowds justifies the use of force in policing crowd events; strong-arm tactics against crowds is thus legitimised. Initially bad behaviour such as throwing projectiles or hurling insults may be tolerated since those who participate in crowd events are childlike and senseless, eventually they may need to be 'neutralised' and 'disciplined' (della Porta, 1998).

The new training that members of the unit had received is premised on the assumption that participation in demonstrations and protests is a basic human right and that crowds are generally rational and peaceful. However, as the tables below show a large proportion of members continued to view participants in crowd events as menacing:

Table 14: Statement: People who take part in public protests are generally troublemakers

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative per cent
Strongly disagree	9	6.3	6.5	6.5
Disagree	38	26.6	27.3	33.8
Neutral	24	16.8	17.3	51.1
Agree	48	33.6	34.5	85.6
Strongly agree	20	14.0	14.4	100
Total	139	97.2	100	
Missing	4	2.8		
Total	143	100		

Table 15: Statement: Crowds tend to be irrational

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid per cent	Cumulative per cent
Strongly disagree	4	2.8	2.9	2.9
Disagree	16	11.2	11.7	14.6
Neutral	46	32.2	33.6	48.2
Agree	53	37.1	38.7	86.9
Strongly agree	18	12.6	13.1	100
Total	137	95.8	100	
Missing	6	4.2		
Total	143	100		

Table 16: Statement: Why do you think public events like protests and demonstrations become violent?

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid per cent	Cumulative per cent
A strong police presence antagonises participants	12	8.4	8.8	8.8
There are always individuals in the crowd who want violence	66	46.2	48.2	56.9
Most crowds use violence to achieve their ends	33	23.1	24.1	81.0
When the police use force, crowds respond with force	25	17.5	18.2	99.3
Other	1	0.7	0.7	100
Missing	6	4.2		
Total	143	100		

As is the case with any statistical data, a wide number of interpretations can be offered for the results. What tables 14, 15, and 16 do indicate, however, is that many members of the unit share an extremely conservative view of crowds much in line with the theories of Le Bon which informed all police training on 'riot' control prior to 1995.³⁴ Almost half the members interviewed still maintained that people who participate in crowd events are troublemakers and that crowds as a phenomenon are irrational; only 14 per cent of respondents disagreed with the statement that those who participate in crowd events are irrational. When violence occurs in a crowd situation, the view of the police surveyed is that this is because of 'inherent' dynamics within the crowd itself, and not as a result of the conduct of the police. These very basic assumptions contain within them serious implications for what these police are likely to view as appropriate and effective ways of dealing with crowds - the police are solely responsible for social ordering and for the containment of violence in crowd situations. Following this logic, the role of the police is to restrain collective action, rather than facilitate it. The premise conveyed during the recent training in crowd management that protest and demonstration are basic democratic rights, and that protests and demonstrations are for the most part purposive, seems not to have significantly shifted enduring value systems cultivated within the police in the past.³⁵

34. Interview with Head of Training, POP, KwaZulu Natal, April 1998.

35. The belief system underpinning police training in crowd control in the past is clearly evident in the textbooks in the training colleges. The following is a quote taken from one of the police training textbooks published by the University of South Africa:

The barbarism and irrationality of the group is so strong an influence on the individual that, no matter how civilised and rational he may normally be, he descends to the level of an animal and does things he would never do in normal circumstances (van Heerden, 1982:232).

The easy recourse to the use of force is also understandable if one accounts for the way in which members of the unit view society more generally. As the table below demonstrates, 74.9 per cent of members surveyed have a very pessimistic view of the basic nature of South Africans.³⁶

Table 17: Statement: Our society is full of dangerous and violent people

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative per cent
Strongly disagree	5	3.5	3.6	3.6
Disagree	10	7.0	7.2	10.8
Neutral	17	11.9	12.2	23.0
Agree	58	40.6	41.7	64.7
Strongly agree	49	34.3	35.3	100
Total	139	97.2	100	
Missing	4	2.8		
Total	143	100		

Tables 14, 15, 16 and 17 seem to indicate that while important aspects of the field may change in police organisations, and there may even be significant changes observed in the habitus, axiomatic cultural knowledge, as defined by Chan, may remain unaltered. In other words, the basic rationale for policing appears to be more difficult to change, and it is this level of change that is crucial to the transformation of police culture.

The most worrying finding of the survey, however, was the clear nostalgia that members of the unit have for past as the table below indicates.

Table 18: Statement: I preferred working in the unit before the 1994 elections

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid per cent	Cumulative per cent
Yes	81	56.6	60.9	60.9
No	52	36.4	39.1	100
Missing	10	7.0	100	
Total	143	100		

It is difficult to make any inferences with certainty. However, what Table 18 does show is that the majority of members surveyed preferred working in the unit prior to 1994. This was particularly the case for white members – 94 per cent indicated that they preferred working in the unit prior to 1994. Even a majority of

36. Of course, the police in South Africa are not alone in holding this view of the world. Reiner (1992) argues that one of the core components of police culture is a sense of mission among the police. Police view the world with a great degree of suspicion and pessimism and believe that their role is protecting good from evil.

African members – 59 per cent agreed with this statement. However, only 48 per cent of Indian members preferred working in the unit prior to 1994. There are many reasons that could be suggested for this response: members enjoyed the considerably greater powers at their disposal in the past; the command system may have been considered as more effective; or the perceived worsening of conditions of service. These were all been suggested to me in interviews conducted with members of the unit. Whatever the individual reasoning for this response, it is clear that there is some disquiet with regard to the change processes underway in the unit.

Fond memories of the precedent of the past

Memories are central to the collective identity of police organisations. Memories, articulated in official and unofficial discourses can also be used as a strategy of legitimisation. Specific memories are favoured in this discourse and reconstructions of the past. These memories can also have 'profoundly material consequences' (Mulcahy, 2000:69) and thus significantly shape the behaviour of the police. In Northern Ireland, for example, the discourse of the Royal Ulster Constabulary includes an historical memory of sacrifice, bravery and commitment.³⁷ It also includes claims of community support (across the population, despite evidence to the contrary) and accountability (via police complaints mechanisms and structures).³⁸ This memory has in recent years been used to reject large scale and far-reaching reform that is key to the peace process.

The nostalgia for the past and the importance of remembering the past was evident in the way in which members spoke both during formal interviews and while working in the field. These memories shaped the way in which members of the unit talked and reasoned. Some of these stories were relayed to me the day after the shooting incident at UDW. I had joined one of the platoons (who had not been present on the campus the day before) when they were deployed to the student residences. Students had been asked by the university administration to vacate the residences until the university, which had been closed following the death of the student, was reopened. It was clear to me that the police officers I was accompanying longed for the past when they were able to robotically curtail student activities:

10/05/2000

.... Members were informed by radio that students had broken into the residence the previous night and were being evicted again by private security companies. The students had thrown a petrol bomb at one of the private security officers and they had requested that POP be present. We drove down to the residence in our Nyala [armoured vehicle]. When we arrived at the residence, students clapped and shouted. They were clearly infuriated with the police after the events of the previous day. Members were annoyed and aggravated. One of them commented, 'We should just shoot these students like we used to in the old days'...We sat and waited. Members knew that they should not act

37. Mulcahy (2000) writes that members of the RUC believe that they have made enormous sacrifices in very difficult and dangerous conditions to ensure peace and public order in Northern Ireland.

38. According to Mulcahy (2000) the 'official' discourse of the RUC makes moral appeals claiming that the RUC members who died did so not in vain but for peace. It also claims that support for the RUC was 'hidden' and that while many supported the RUC, this support was from behind closed doors by 'decent' people.

unless this was really necessary. After a while, one of the Inspectors started to talk to me about the 'good old days'.

Inspector Moonsamy: Monique, can you see how we are not policemen anymore? We don't even act. We sit around doing nothing. In the past we would have got out of the vehicle and gassed the students by now.

Sergeant Pillay: We have just become glorified security guards now. It is pathetic.

Monique: What would you like to be doing?

Sergeant Pillay: Well, we shouldn't be saying this but we have been trained over the years to act, not just to sit around. We are used to the old way of being. This is very frustrating for us.

Inspector Moonsamy: Our commanders are useless now. They don't have any backbone. In the past our commanders would have given us clear instructions. We would come to an area, do our job and leave. We had a proper job then. Now, you sit around, do nothing and students swear at you; they think we are a big joke. I miss those times when we could really have action and be productive.

Monique: What is it that you miss?

Inspector Moonsamy: Our best days were during the times of the red and green bands – the war between Inkatha and the ANC. We would go into areas that were on fire that time. We would beat the living daylights out of these youngsters. They were just like barbarians. For example, you would be in the townships and you would see a sea of Inkatha members heavily armed coming up the hill. We would move in and finish them off. Things were hectic then, even in the early nineties. We have seen some terrible things. Children with limbs cut off...Shacks had been set alight. We would rush in there and take one child under each arm and get them out of the area. We really worked in those days and we had excellent commanders.

Monique: It seems like you really preferred to work in the unit in the old days. Is that correct?

Sergeant Pillay: That is true. We felt productive in those days. Maybe what we were doing was not right, but we were doing something. We really prevented complete chaos in the township. Okay, there were problems in those days. We Indian members were discriminated against. White members were always superior. If we went out with a vehicle which had white members in it, we would guard the vehicle while they carried out the operation. This was not nice. But, in general I preferred working in the unit in those days.

Inspector Moonsamy: I remember one time, there was a problem in the township. There was a fight between ANC and IFP groupings. We came in and shot so much teargas that nobody could see or even breathe. We fought a small war in that place.

Monique: It sounds like the past was very turbulent. I want to ask you a question. I did a survey recently and found that more than half the members of this unit preferred working in the unit prior to the transformation process. What do you guys think of this result?

Inspector Moonsamy: I think most of us feel this way. We are wasting our time in the unit now. We are not able to use our skills and experience. Most of the time we sit around doing nothing...

Monique: There is something else I have been thinking about recently. It seems to me that while people have changed their behaviour in many ways, the way they think is still the same. Does this make sense to you?

The members all laughed and nodded

Sergeant Pillay: To tell the truth, I am not sure that members think differently. We obey instructions in this place. That is the real story. We understand the changes but we don't feel like policemen anymore.

The stories told here by Sergeant Pillay and Inspector Moonsamy reflected deeply embedded knowledge of the roles of the police, appropriate and effective responses, and the nature of particular communities that are served. The past behaviour of the unit was seen as justifiable given the social dynamics in the townships and the political environment, both local and national. According to Sergeant Pillay and

Inspector Moonsamy, the townships would have been both chaotic and barbaric had it not been for the interventions of the unit. As can be seen from the interaction quoted above, past experiences and ways of responding shaped the identity of these policemen. In their view, being a 'productive' policeman meant being active and decisive (and often forceful) in responding to actual or perceived public disorder³⁹. Training in the past prepared members to respond in more forceful ways, and this training seems to have had a lasting impact on the way in which members view their role and function. Training also provided them with 'skills' and 'expertise' that they are not keen to relinquish. These Indian members quoted above genuinely preferred working in the unit prior to 1994 despite their own experiences of racial discrimination within the unit.

Memories are partial and discriminatory accounts of the past. Memories are also highly selective as the conversation below reveals:

09/08/98

Monique: When you joined the unit in the 1980s it had a very bad name. Did this bother you in any way?

Sergeant Mamela: For me it was a new experience. Whatever was said about the unit, I found was not entirely true. Unless you go into a unit you cannot know for yourself. I think the unit was doing what it had to do. We did our work thoroughly. For example, if there was a situation where there was a big crowd, you control the crowd to the best of your ability. You have then done your work. But, you find that you come out and the media had a lot to say and communities always had a lot to say.

Monique: Why do you think the media and communities had these bad things to say?

Sergeant Mamela: You see, what they were trying to achieve they could not achieve because of us. We would stop them from doing the things they wanted to do. We were a prevention team.⁴⁰

Sergeant Mamela remembers the 'good work' that the unit did. The unit was unpopular, according to him, not because what they did was inherently problematic, but rather because what they did obstructed the goals of others. Like Sergeant Pillay and Inspector Moonsamy, he seems to imply that in the past the police worked hard with an objective in mind – to disperse and control crowds.

Shearing (1995) argues that new training and policy will never bring about real change in police organisations because they are unable to transform the legendary stories that are told. One way of changing these stories is to expose police to new stories and therefore new tropes and new metaphors. This is difficult to accomplish when the membership of the organisation remained essentially unchanged. New recruits who entered the unit with different conceptions of policing and trained to be community policing officers found it almost impossible to impress their new stories and perspectives on the older and more experienced members of the unit. A young constable who joined the police in 1999 shared his frustration with me:

39. According to Jefferson (1990) this is typical of men who join paramilitary units. They are usually young and seek action and excitement.

40. Interview with Sergeant Mamela, June 1998.

I was very excited to join the police. I really wanted to help people and to be part of the new police service. At the police college we were taught about community policing. That was in fact what we focussed on. Of course we learned other things like how to shoot and we did do physical training, but community policing was what were mostly taught. After doing my field training, I decided to join POP, mostly because the unit was near to my home. I was shocked at the way the unit behaves. There is no respect for communities. These guys are not interested in community policing. I thought in the beginning that I could talk to them about community policing and the way I was trained. But, I have come to realise that they are the ones that are experienced. They know what is going on and how to do things. I don't really agree with a lot of what they do but they have been through a lot and I have no experience compared to them... I still think that community policing is right. Once I have enough experience I will probably leave this unit and go to the stations. I don't think this unit will ever follow community policing.⁴¹

If the identities of police officers in the unit continued to be shaped by memories of the past and if the majority of members in the unit still had a preference for the past, why did their behaviour change in significant ways? There were, of course, those members (mostly African) who could see that apartheid politics were untenable and that apartheid policing was extremely problematic. They were aware of the abusive nature of such policing and felt uncomfortable with this. They were also aware that this type of policing created antagonistic relationships between police and the public, and this was not conducive to effective, professional policing. However, the majority of members, it seems, felt that they had no choice but to change their behaviour. They were instructed by those in command and those in powerful positions to do so. The militarised nature of the state police in South Africa meant that orders from above could not be challenged. As Sergeant Beatrice Ngoba told me:

No one actually told us how we were supposed to change. But you get to know this from the instructions given. The police force is the military. You must be able to take instructions and have discipline. If you can't do that, you are not a policeman. Members must obey commands that are given to them...⁴²

The Head of Labour relations in the unit, Captain Padyachee concurred with this view:

No matter how much you talk about change and transformation, you as a person have to take that information and act on it. The one thing about the police, though, is that you have to follow instructions and commands, so sometimes you have no choice... Whether members like it or not, in some ways they have no choice about changing. Eventually members will see that they have to change. Some members who were negative a few years ago are now a lot more positive... I would say about 30 per cent to 40 per cent are willing to change.⁴³

One day when sitting in the training office, I listened to a conversation between Sergeant Gumedi (arguably the most experienced trainer in the unit) and an inspector who had come for retraining

41. Interview with Constable Prathab, May 2000. This constable was part of the platoon who policed the residence of UDW and whose members shared with me the stories of the 'red bands' and the 'green bands' cited above. I noticed that as a young and 'inexperienced' member of the platoon, he was excluded from the informal bantering.

42. Interview with Sergeant Ngobo, July 1999.

43. Interview with Captain Padyachee, August 2000.

unwillingly. They were discussing whether or not change had taken place in the unit given the deadly shooting incident at UDW:

Sergeant Gumedi: How would you say change has happened in the police?

Trainee Inspector: It was forced down our throats. We had to follow instructions to behave in new ways. We had no choice. Otherwise we would have to leave the police, but where would we go? There is nowhere for us to, except maybe private security.

Sergeant Gumedi: Do you think that we have really changed?

Trainee Inspector: Probably not.

Sergeant Gumedi: You see, Monique, police have changed because of instructions. But, when I am alone, my feelings dictate my responses. POP is always in the public eye. Therefore, we have to act properly. When we are out of the public eye we go back to our old behaviour. When faced with change, there is no real mind change. So, old ways sometimes leak out of us.

It would appear that police in the unit acknowledge that a fundamental change in values and beliefs had not taken place in the minds of most members (at least at the time that this research was done). Rather, changed behaviour was the result of compliance with new instructions given by those in command. The bureaucratic and hierarchical make-up of the unit in fact made change possible; members felt that they had no choice but to adhere to instructions for changed behaviour. However, as Sergeant Gumedi warned, the problem with directed change is that the past ways of acting to 'leak out'. This will particularly be the case if the past is viewed as the 'golden age of policing' as a large number of members in the unit seemed to believe.

Conclusion

Significant behavioural change did take place in Durban POP. There was a greater display of tolerance by the police during crowd events, there were very few incidents where force was employed during crowd events, and new procedures and tactics were employed. Because of this changed behaviour, there were indications that the public was more appreciative of the unit; there were far fewer violent attacks by members of the public on the unit than there were prior to 1996. This changed behaviour was the result of important changes in the field. The socio-legal-political environment in which the unit operated had changed dramatically. Members were aware of new Acts and police policies. They were aware that a changed political dispensation required new styles of policing. They were also aware that the public had new rights and that bodies had been established to monitor police behaviour. These socio-legal-political shifts meant that police had to significantly change their behaviour, particularly in public spaces.

Despite the real and evident changes in the behaviour of Durban POP, this chapter has shown that there were times when members of the unit reverted to old and perhaps more familiar methods of policing. Many explanations could be given for these reversions. The historical relationship, for example, between police and students at the University of Durban Westville may be an important consideration. The fact that members of the Durban POP unit are (perhaps unnecessarily) always armed with live ammunition may

have made the familiar resort to force easy to achieve. The pressure that the police are under to combat crime (by any means) may account for their preparedness to use heavy-handed methods when doing 'crime prevention' work. It is also important to note that changes in the field are partial. Local power relations have not changed fundamentally. Black township residents remain, for the most part, poor and disempowered. The police know that if they 'klap' them very hard, they are unlikely to have the confidence or resources to lodge formal complaints. These are all important considerations. However, it is the lack of change in the cultural knowledge of the police that seems to be the prime factor accounting for retrogressive police behaviour. The stories that Durban POP members tell, the informal comments they pass during operations, and the responses to the survey questions are all indications that members of the unit have retained old ways of thinking and believing. Members also indicated very clearly that they have a deep sense of nostalgia for the past, despite the condemnation of the past performance of the unit.

Changes in attitudes, values and assumptions seemed to lag behind more mechanical behavioural change. Change in police organisations is largely dependent on the attitudes that officers have toward change, and these attitudes do not change spontaneously. In the case of POP Durban, the value systems from the past have not entirely been relinquished and replaced with new value sets that are more in line with broad political and institutional changes that have taken place in South Africa since 1994. To borrow terms used by Ogbonna and Harris (1998), existing values have been re-invented or reinterpreted. A reorientation of value systems had not occurred in the minds of many members of Durban POP. Furthermore, the stories that were told were reinventions of the past and the tropes and metaphors embedded in these stories served to justify old practices and ways of thinking.

Given that police values and assumptions and indeed views about the very rationale of policing appeared to be resistant to change, it is not surprising that there were instances when members of the unit revert to old and familiar (even glorified) styles of behaviour. Reversions to past behaviour seemed to occur mainly when members made use of individual discretion, when supervision and leadership was weak or absent, when planning was poor, and when the actions of the police were not directly open to public scrutiny.⁴⁴ This chapter illustrates that there is a contradiction within the unit - patterns of behaviour have changed significantly yet old and perhaps redundant ways of thinking and believing have endured.

Real change within police organisations requires change of attitudes of both management and rank-and-file officers. This involves, among other things a constant review and reinforcement of the successes of changed police conduct and responses as well as a monitoring and rebuking of retrogressive behaviour and responses. This requires careful and well-informed front-line supervision at all times. However, close supervision should not simply be imposed on rank-and-file members. In order for police to engage with

44. When doing crime prevention work, members of the unit no longer operate as a squadron. They usually work in sections made up of members who are very familiar with one another. When quick decisions are required, they are made by one or two members and usually supported by the others in the section. During crime prevention operations such as the one in KwaMashu described above, there is no real supervision of members operating in sections.

new value systems and belief systems, an environment needs to be created where all police members are able to actively participate in change processes. This demands a fundamental shift away from traditional and typical management styles and structures in police organisations towards more participatory forms of management (Reiner, 1992; Bayley, 1994), so that members do not feel that change is 'forced' upon them. As the chapter to follow will show, new and participatory forms of supervision and management were lacking in the unit and this in itself was an obstacle to sustainable change.

CHAPTER 8

SHIFTING GEARS OR SLAMMING ON THE BRAKES? POLICE MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISION

It is important to get recruitment, training and resources right, but these elements will make little difference to the trajectory of reform if the basic institutional framework does not reflect and support democratic policing. Academy training will not substitute for standards set by immediate supervisors and commanders. Nor will good practice last long if bad practices go unchecked. The staffing and structures of the police leadership and of internal and external accountability mechanisms are two of the most important elements of institutional police reform (Neild, 2001:29).

In the previous chapter it was noted that the hierarchical and rule-bound nature of police organisations can, in fact, spur on behavioural change. This is because members of police organisations are expected to comply with commands and instructions. When supervisors and managers command, the rank-and-file are expected to act on demand. However, behavioural change that is brought about as a result of decree is usually mechanical and unreflective. Given that police values and assumptions appear to be resistant to change it is likely that police will resort to old and familiar ways of behaving if the space is provided. This is particularly the case when supervision and leadership is weak, when planning is poor, and when the actions of the police are not directly open to public scrutiny. While police supervisors and managers need to provide direction to their subordinates when trying to facilitate and inspire change, they also need to be encouraging of 'good' work, and familiar with the labour that their subordinates are engaged in. To effect changed responses, however, they also need to rebuke behaviour that falls outside of stated objectives and principles.

The transformation of police organisations is a complicated task. It involves changing the very nature of how work is organized. In accordance with new labour regulations and public service legislation there is an expectation that within the police service space should be created for increased participation and ownership on the part of rank-and-file members. This, it is hoped, will lead to increased morale and organisational responsibility on the part of individual members of the organisation and in turn, improved service delivery. At the same time, however, I argue that for police organisational transformation to take place, there needs to be a commitment to vigilant supervision. Police leaders play an important role with regard to police transformation. They have the capacity to reinforce and embed police culture as a result of the issues they pay attention to and how they measure and control police performance.

Schein proposes that proper and effective management and supervision is of prime concern when attempting to maintain or change police culture. Managers need to be both directive and supportive to rank-and-file members. He argues that:

'The key to producing change...is first to prevent exit and then to escalate the disconfirming forces while providing psychological safety. This is difficult to execute, but precisely what effective turnaround managers do. By using the right incentives, they make sure that the people who they want to retain in the organization find it difficult to leave. By consistently challenging old assumptions...they make it difficult for people to sustain the old assumptions. By consistently being supportive and rewarding any evidence of movement in the direction of new assumptions, they provide some psychological safety. If psychological safety is sufficient, members of the group can begin to examine and possibly give up some of their cognitive defences' (Schein, quoted in Chan, 1999:131).

Enduring and discerning change in police organisations requires a managerial and supervisory style that facilitates cultural change. Police managers and supervisors can contribute to the changing of police culture in three significant ways:

- By employing participatory management styles. This management style facilitates increased understanding of what is expected from police members and why such change is required. In turn, this leads to a greater potential for rank-and-file police to 'buy into' change processes. A democratic and participatory practice within the police organization also provides police with a model for democratic practices in their work with the public.
- By providing clear direction and supervision. This allows police to learn what good practices are and what behaviour should be rewarded or reprovved.
- By providing appropriate measures of performance. This provides police members with incentives for good work and common understandings of how work is evaluated.

Direct supervision and intervention, coupled with participatory management styles, facilitates change in the assumptions that police members hold.

This chapter argues that neither participatory management nor directive management had been adequately developed in the Durban POP despite legislative and governmental pressures for new modes of management. As a result, rank-and-file police members did not feel that they were able to actively contribute to decision-making or ideas for change. The lack of decisive leadership led to feelings of uncertainty and a lack of clarity as to appropriate ways of responding to the public. Finally, the paradoxical combination of an inflexible yet irresolute leadership led to a deep alienation between top management and rank-and-file members. Consequently, members felt unsupported in the change process and their commitment to the unit was in limited supply. This contributed to a limiting of cultural

change (in its deep level sense) and ultimately the incomplete nature of behavioural change in the unit, as was discussed in the previous chapter.

Imperatives for changing management styles and culture

Since the shift to democratic governance in South Africa there has been an emphasis, particularly on the part of central government, on both professional service delivery and democratised labour relations within the public service. Legislation since 1994 (including White Papers, Acts and Regulations) have insisted that new management and human resource practices need to emerge within the public service. In particular, the Labour Relations Act (1995) established the principles of 'employment justice' that protect employees from unjust and unfair relationships with their employers.¹ The Act stresses that every person shall have the right to fair labour practice. This includes the right to form and join trade unions and other representative organisations as well as the right to bargain collectively. Employee participation in decision-making in the workplace is also promoted in the Act.² In short, the Labour Relations Act (LRA) is aimed at more open, flexible and participative management structures. SAPS members are considered as 'employees' or 'workers' and they are 'now accorded internationally recognised labour rights or freedom to work; to associate; to collective bargaining; to withhold labour; to protection; and to development' (Bouwer, 1997:395).

The Labour Relations Act of 1995 (informed by Chapter 2 of the South African Constitution of 1996 and the Bill of Rights) yielded an entirely new labour dispensation for the public service. Prior to this, labour relations in the public service were enmeshed in a deeply paternalistic and rule bound system. This did in fact begin to change in the mid-1980s when the trade union movement started organising in the public service. Black public servants began to make their grievances heard and in fact became a very volatile labour sector by the late 1980s. In 1990, the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) was formed, aimed at uniting teachers. In 1989 the Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union was formed and organised mainly Black police and prison wardens. In 1993, the South African Police Union (SAPU) was formed which organised mostly white police members.³ Between 1989 and 1993, South Africa witnessed the biggest strike waves in the history of the public service. This social movement unionism within the public service indicated that there was a clear need to transform labour relations in the public service. Such transformation, as encapsulated in the LRA, 'entailed overcoming racial and gender imbalances, a commitment to education and training to develop public servants'

1. While initially the police were to be excluded from the Labour Relations Act, in the last phases of drawing up the Act, the police were included. The military and intelligences services are excluded from the Act.

2. According to the Labour Relations Act (1995) workplace forums should be established in workplaces where there are more than 100 employees. Workplace forums are made up of representatives of the employee body and management is expected to consult regularly with the workplace forum about all issues that affect employees in the workplace. It is via the workplace forums that joint decision-making should take place between employer and employee. The establishment of workplace forums does not apply to the public service.

3. For more detailed information on POPCRU and SAPU and police labour relations more generally, refer to Marks (2000a; 2000b).

skills, eliminating discrimination in salaries and benefits, and changing the public service's authoritarian culture and outmoded work practices' (Adler, 2000:13).

Aside from the LRA, there is a set of legislation pertaining specifically to the public service that calls for improved service delivery and improved labour practices within the public service. According to the White Paper on Human Resource Management in the Public Service (1997) human resource management in the public service must become a model of excellence in service delivery. This requires a move toward human resource management that strives for efficacy and efficiency, that is service delivery oriented, and that takes into account the needs of both the organisation and the employees. According to the White Paper on Human Resource Management in the Public Service the human resource management culture of the public service must change. The White Paper acknowledges that this change must be fundamental:

Turning into reality the vision of a diverse, competent and well managed workforce, capable of and committed to delivering high quality services to the people of South Africa, will require something close to a managerial revolution within the Public Service. Central to this revolution will be a shift from administering personnel to managing people (1997:10).

Managers, in accordance with this legislation, are compelled to assess individual employees' performance once per year against mutually agreed objectives. This represents a move away from a public service that is over-centralised, rule bound, and excessively bureaucratic with underdeveloped performance management. The White Paper insists that diversity must be valued, affirmative action practices must be improved, and representativity must be evident in the workforce. All employees are supposed to have written contracts that stipulate period of employment and terms and conditions under which they are employed. Managing performance is seen as essential to ensure that employees know what is expected of them. Managers are expected to evaluate employees according to expectations. Poor performance should be identified and rectified, and good performance should be recognised and rewarded.

The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (1997) – known as the *Batho Pele* (People First) Paper - also stresses the need for performance management and measurement. This White Paper stipulates that individuals and groups in the public service be recognised and appropriately rewarded for performing well, particularly with regards to customer service. Service delivery improvement programmes are to be developed and should include proposed service standards, how such standards will be monitored and reported on, and the supervision and appraisal arrangements that would ensure that staff behave in accordance with the principles of 'people first'.⁴ The main

4. This White Paper is in fact called *Batho Pele* (People First), indicating a philosophy where people (i.e. the customer community) and their needs and satisfaction are the primary concern informing service delivery.

concern of the *Batho Pele* programme is to improve service delivery to the public. In order to do this, the conditions of service of public services workers need to be optimised and their performance must be subject to monitoring and evaluation. This requires a major shift in management style in the public service.

The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (1997) states that 'to implement a service delivery programme successfully, public service managers require new management tools' (1997:11). In particular, managers need to begin to delegate managerial responsibility to the lowest level, take individual responsibility for decisions about the use of resources, and reward innovation and creativity. In so doing, the 'energy and commitment of public servants will be freed up to allow for the best possible service delivery to the public' (1997:13).

Despite the various legislative attempts (and related implementation plans) to transform public service labour relations and service delivery, public service management proved somewhat resistant to change. Albertyn and Adair (2000) argue that by the end of the twentieth century, the public service in South Africa remained highly centralised with hierarchical management structures, a rule bound rather than goal oriented culture and a management system that was both unskilled and unproductive. Similarly, Adler concludes that:

Notwithstanding massive efforts to transform the old public service, and the increasing importance of collective bargaining in place of unilateral determinations by the old Public Service Commission, managers still do not 'manage'. They are responsible for ensuring that employees abide by a complex set of rules and regulations, rather than concentrating on output and service (2000:35).

This slow pace of change in management systems and workplace culture was also true of the South African Police Service by the end of the twentieth century (Marks, 2000a). This is hardly surprising given that internationally police organisations are typically highly centralised, bureaucratic and designed on the premise of division of labour and unity of control (Birzer, 1996). Police managers are also preoccupied with the need for 'discipline' within police organisations and they see participatory forms of management as operating in contradiction to this. As Jefferson argues, police forces aim to produce officers who are 'disciplined agents expected to follow orders within an organized bureaucracy with militaristic leanings' (1990:62). Bureaucratic, militaristic management styles are even more salient in paramilitary (public order) police units such as Durban POP.

Democratizing management

In October 2001, I asked the Operational Commander of Durban POP if the Platoon and Company Commanders had any clue about how to be participatory managers. He gave me the following answer: 'To be honest, most people who are in management positions in the police in South Africa

are there because of their rank. They simply got promoted and are now in management positions. But, they know nothing about managing'.

The lack of management skills among the police is not isolated to the South African case. Bayley argues that:

For years police organisations have been criticized for failing to develop skilled managers – that is people who can manage complex organisations as opposed to commanding field operations. Senior police have been called 'reluctant mangers' who do not anticipate needs and reshape their organisations to accomplish new objectives (1994:85).

Police managers try to avoid being derided and to avoid this, they tend to create 'an elaborate hierarchy of command, an insistence on compliance, and punitive supervision based on detailed rules covering almost everything that a police officer may do (Bayley, 1994).

Decisions are traditionally made at the top and passed down what is referred to as the chain of command. 'Decision-making is rarely participative or collegial across rank lines' (Bayley, 1994:61). Because police management tends to be highly centralised and bureaucratic, officers who are in closest touch with operational problems have little opportunity to shape policy. Centralised management puts a premium on compliance rather than on initiative (van Heerden, 1982). Police managers, Goldstein (1990) argues, are not good at innovation and the introduction of new ways of supervising. This is because they are often very focussed on the small details of running an organisation. They are preoccupied with internal procedures and with efficiency. They are not often concerned with substantive issues unless there is a crisis.

This ideal type of police management is even more notable in police units that specialise in public order functions. This is because during times of riot or disorder the police must quickly become a rigid, central unit of operation. 'A clearly defined and strict chain of command becomes critical to applying force efficiently and to initiating a quick response to social upheaval' (Birzer, 1996:9). Furthermore, such units generally have a military-like structure and operate as squadrons that reinforce a commanding leadership style (Jefferson, 1990). As the Captain in charge of training in Durban POP once told me: 'The rank-and-file must be like Robocops. They must respond quickly to orders. They are not here to learn to negotiate. Their job is to respond without question to the commands they are given'.⁵

There have, however, been some shifts in police thinking on management styles in the past 20 years. According to Reiner (1993) in recent years (particularly in Britain) there has been a concern with

5. Interview with Captain Mohamed, Chatsworth Training College, March 1999.

ensuring high quality police management or what Reiner has called a 'corporate management style' that incorporates a participatory management dimension.⁶ This has coincided with 'the emerging consensus around a service-based, consumerist approach to policing' (Reiner, 1993:267). Police have come to see themselves as service providers to a client base. In order to provide the best quality service possible, management has to be professional and directed by clear objectives that can be evaluated.

The shift toward a more localized, community-oriented policing style⁷ demands more participatory types of police management. This is because such a policing style demands more flexible responses to community problems. Police supervisors thus need to promote, rather than restrict, creativity and problem solving approaches.

In adjusting their own command styles, supervisors will find that it will make good sense to allow the line-level personnel who are most familiar with problems in the community to have a say in developing solutions to these problems. In fact, effective community-oriented policing requires input from line-level personnel (Birzer, 1996:9).⁸

While community-oriented policing may call for more participatory (even corporate) styles of management, there are also intra-organisational rationales for introducing such management styles. Like any work-based organisation, it is crucial to bring all members of the police organisation on board during processes of change or transition. It is crucial to allow employees to make an input into the change process. Goldstein (1990) argues that participatory management is in fact key to police organisational change. Change must make sense to those on the front-line. If this does not occur, rank-and-file police officers are likely to feel threatened by change and feel that change is not necessarily in their best interest. According to Dean (1995), if reform in the police is to succeed, it must be designed from the bottom up, and not from the top down.

Goldstein (1990) is adamant that participatory management is crucial to the success of police transformation. According to him the inclusion of rank-and-file in decision making processes cannot be overstated. In general, rank-and-file police are treated like children by their supervisors, and, Goldstein says, they resent this. More participatory management styles lead to a greater understanding of change processes, and this in turn makes change more acceptable to police members (Washo, 1984; Sykes, 1990). This understanding, in turn, motivates police members to

6. Goldstein (1990), however, argues that attempts to introduce more participatory management styles have been 'modest', at least in the United States.

7. A discussion of what is meant by community policing in the South African context can be found in Chapters 4 and 6.

8. There is another reason for the introduction of more participatory forms of management. According to Goldstein (1990) there have been demands from rank-and-file officers for a greater role in influencing decision making related to working conditions. Thus, workers in police organisations are following international trends with regard to the organising of work and management systems. Participatory management is now a well-established practice in many industries.

actively involve themselves in projects aimed at change. And, it is argued, high morale promotes pride, efficiency and harmony, and in turn this enhances the acceptability of the profession and the quality of the service rendered (van Heerden, 1982). Excluding rank-and-file members from information and from decision making processes with regard to change may leave them feeling disillusioned, manipulated, frustrated, and lacking motivation.

The importance of developing participatory forms of management to enable organisational change is not peculiar to police organisations. Wilms (1996), after conducting extensive ethnographic studies in four companies undergoing change processes, concludes that creating new work practices and cultures requires changing the very system or work itself.⁹ He argues that if the work structure is not altered, ingrained beliefs prove difficult to change because existing authoritarian power relationships (which are not conducive to learning processes) within the organisation remain the same. And training, he says, is not an adequate tool for changing culture. Wilms notes that companies that had employed new and innovative forms of participatory management revealed evidence of deeper change. The personnel were also personally committed to doing high-quality work. Managers in these companies not only involved workers in planning and problem solving, but also guided them in how to do their work better and supported them in the change process.

Organisations require a force great enough to induce change and such a force needs to be 'powerful enough to cancel out individuals' natural fear of letting go of their core beliefs' (Wilms, 1996:252). This great force is a leadership style that brings the entire workforce together in a trusting environment and allows them to agree on mutual obligations and allows employees the space to disagree and express unpopular points of view. For Wilms '...no serious restructuring can take place if it is mandated from above. It must be embraced fully by employees at every level of the organization' (1996:284).

Existing beliefs are difficult to change because they have been 'reinforced by experience for years, give direction and security to individuals as they navigate through their daily lives' (Wilms, 1996:152). In order for police to engage with new value systems and belief systems, an environment needs to be created where all police members are able to actively participate in the change process. This requires a fundamental shift away from traditional and typical management styles and structures in police organisations. This shift, of course, is difficult to achieve. It is particularly difficult in organisations, like the police, that pride themselves on responsiveness to commands and a disciplined workforce. It is even more difficult in specialised public order police units that are 'formed into squads under a hierarchy of command akin to military formations' (P.A. J. Waddington, 1991:136).

9. While these ethnographies were carried out in private companies, Wilms argues that they carry powerful suggestions for redesigning public sector organisations (1996:258).

It is hardly surprising, given the police occupational ethos that informs management styles, that participatory forms of management had not really been developed in Durban POP.¹⁰ However, there was evidence that there had been a move away from overtly militaristic management styles within the unit, possibly due to the broad campaign in the SAPS to demilitarise. When present at the unit I noticed that members spoke freely amongst themselves across ranks. Military-like saluting, which had been compulsory before 1995, had ceased and members were infrequently expected to perform parades. Even low-ranking officers acknowledged a change in management style, as the following conversation demonstrates:

Monique: Would you say that the police service has changed since the elections?

Sergeant Mbele: Yes. Management is better now. You can say something to the management. Before 1994 there was a closed-door policy. Management did not take care of us. Today you can tell the Unit Commander directly what you feel inside.

Captain Naidoo, one of the Platoon Commanders, agreed with this sentiment. He told me that:

The military structure of the police has been dismantled. There is now more openness. Previously we were told to act, now we give reasons. There is more of a focus on self-development and upliftment. We now have the opportunity to air out our views and there is more room for choice.

But, many members still felt that there were serious weaknesses with regard to management and supervision in the unit. In fact, when members were asked what the key problem in the unit was at the time of doing the survey, poor management was identified as the second biggest problem in the unit. The biggest problem identified, not surprisingly, was a resource problem, as Table 19 below shows.

Table 19: Question: What would you say is the biggest problem in Durban POP at the moment?

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid per cent	Cumulative per cent
Not enough vehicles	52	36.4	37.1	37.1
Racism	12	8.4	8.6	45.7
Poor management	49	34.3	35.0	80.7
Poor communication	12	8.4	8,6	89.3
Other	15	10.5	10.7	100
Total	140	97.9	100	
Missing	3	2.1		
Total	143	100		

10. Police occupational ethos alone cannot account for the autocratic and bureaucratic management style of the police in South Africa. Historically, the management culture in the entire public service has been hierarchical and authoritarian. Mc Lennan (1997) argues that the public service bureaucracy was characterised as having an ethos which is authoritarian, hierarchical, non-consultative and non-participative. This ethos has persisted and will most likely continue, at least in the short and medium term, to permeate 'new structural arrangements and prevent the development of effective public service' (Mc Lennan, 1997:107).

Even the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Unit Commander was aware that there was a problem with regard the calibre of managers, in particular middle managers, in the unit.¹¹ When asked whether he thought that Platoon Commanders and Section Leaders were adequately equipped to lead the unit he responded:

No. There are many captains who have not been on an officer's course. They have not had any training to be different from other guys. They have had no management training. They don't seem to realise that officers have to motivate members and be responsible for state property. They also lack skills in communication, and, as I have said, they are not capable of motivating members.¹²

Indeed, while Platoon Commanders, Company Commanders and Operational Commanders had received training in how to plan for and carry out a crowd management operation, they had had no training that provided them with skills or expertise in managing. Not a single officer in a management or supervisory role in the unit (including the Unit Commander) had ever participated in any training geared toward participatory management. It is hardly surprising, then, that the discourse that high-ranking managers used indicated that they maintained an autocratic approach to managing the unit. The following conversation with one of the Operational Commanders was noted in my research diary:

18/05/2000

Senior Superintendent Patel: The problem in this unit is that the members are not disciplined. They don't want to work with their commanders. You see Monique, they are not even worried about the consequences of their actions. They are not here to work. From now on I am going to do something to the members to know what they need to do. I am going to write up what is expected from them and make them sign it. If they do something wrong, I will get rid of them.

Monique: Would it not be wise to involve members in deciding what is to be expected from them? That way they might feel that they have some ownership over the criteria used to evaluate them.

Senior Superintendent Patel: There is no way I am going to do that. I know what is expected of them and I am simply going to tell them what to do. That is the end of the story!

Rank-and-file members were well aware that autocratic tendencies among supervisors and managers in the unit were prevalent. This worried and angered them deeply. In early 2000, a group of rank-and-

11. There are a number of different management layers in the unit. First, there are front-line supervisors. These are the Section Leaders and Platoon Commanders. Front-line managers/supervisors direct the operations of the rank-and-file. Middle management refers to Platoon Commanders who both direct the rank-and-file and supervise the Section Leaders. Top management would refer to the Company Commanders, Operational Commanders and the Unit Commanders. This top management layer is responsible for supervising the other managers and for establishing operating policies as well as guiding the organisations interactions with the environment. These three management/command layers are commensurate with the 'Gold, Silver, Bronze' system of command that P.A. J. Waddington refers to in his work on public order policing units. According to him 'the intention is that command should follow the military model, with the Gold commander setting the strategy, which is translated into tactical deployment and objectives by the Silver commander to be implemented by the Bronze commander' (1991:142). Waddington acknowledged that there are times when this command model does not work effectively such as when Gold commanders abandon the chain of command and instruct the Bronze commanders directly. A fundamental flaw with this command model is that often Bronze and Silver commanders have to make the most sensitive and complex decisions and may not be adequately trained or empowered to do so. Please refer to the organogram in Chapter 5 for a graphic display of the hierarchical structuring of Durban POP.

12. Interview with Director Wiggins, September 1998.

file members formed a committee that they called the 'Empowerment Committee'. This committee met regularly to discuss problems in the unit and to try to strategise mechanisms for changing the way in which the unit operated. While both middle and top management were sceptical of this committee, they allowed it to operate. Members of this committee were vociferous in their belief that radical change in management style was required in the unit. I had the following encounter with one of the members of the empowerment committee:

28/07/2000

I was sitting in the canteen reading a newspaper when one of the inspectors from the unit came and sat next to me. I had been on two field operations with his section so we were familiar with one another. He offered me a cigarette and he told me that he was becoming an 'activist' in the unit. I thought this was a strange word for a policeman to use to describe himself – particularly this policeman who had been a long-serving member of the unit.

Monique: What exactly does it mean to be an activist in the unit?

Inspector Moonsamy: Well, I am one of those people who is trying to change this place. You know, there are so many problems in this unit. There are many Hitlers in this unit. They are so authoritarian. I thought Hitler died a long time ago, but that is not the case in this place. He is still alive in this unit.

Monique: I am still not clear what you mean.

Inspector Moonsamy: The commanders here don't know how to treat us. They behave toward us like we are children. They just order us around and treat us like we can't think for ourselves. They never ask us what we think, or what we feel about things. It is pathetic. Our Platoon Commander is a real problem. He just tells us that he knows his job and that we must respect him. Respect does not come like that. We are going to the labour relations guy to tell him that we want to get rid of our Platoon Commander.

In part, the retention of autocratic management styles was due to a glorification of the past and a belief that restraint and control (i.e. 'discipline') is key to 'real' policing. The 1998/1999 acting Unit Commander indicated to me that more participatory forms of management compromised the 'professional' police image. He commented that:

We need to get back to the military set up I spoke about earlier. Although discipline was harsh and rigid, it happened. Discipline is lost from the force now. I will give you a good example. Nobody salutes an officer anymore. In the old days, if an officer walked past in the morning someone would shout attention. It was a sign of respect, and it gives the police pride in themselves. Nobody comes to salute anymore. We are talking about basic things, Monique. They [members] must get away from this sloppy approach and go back to saluting an officer. It is very sad. We just need to ensure that our buckles are shining and that our shirts are tucked in and our shoes are clean. We have to present ourselves in a certain way to the community. The quicker these police start to do it, the better.¹³

While most rank-and-file members felt discontented with the autocratic tendencies of the management of the unit, they seemed to share the view that police organisations are intrinsically militaristic. One young woman officer had the following to say in this regard:

13. Interview with Senior Superintendent Meiring, October 1999.

The police force is the military. You must be able to take instructions and have discipline. If you can't do that, you are not a policeman. Members must obey commands that are given to them. The police will always be the same. It will never change. So, when you come into the police force you will know that that is what is expected from you.¹⁴

Members believed that maintaining discipline in the unit was important but they were also disheartened and frustrated by the fact that they had little opportunity to participate in decision-making and give input to planning and policy making. They expressed deep alienation from middle and top management in the unit and they deemed this to be deeply problematic. As Sergeant Mbele told me:

What actually happens is that by the time the communication comes down it is often too late for us to have any say. It would be better if we had a say because we do the dirty work. The person at the top just throws things down. So, I can say that even if we look at the Unit Commanders they have not changed. They are just the same...those above your immediate peers, like your Platoon Commanders and those above them, we only see them when there is an instruction. You will try to get on with them but we never come into contact with the top leadership...I actually never see them. I don't even know what kind of people they are. Even the Platoon Commander, I only get to know him when he tells us what the commander says.¹⁵

When asked whether Platoon Commanders or Company Commanders had ever discussed the policy document or the change process with them, rank-and-file members unanimously informed me that this had never taken place:

The Unit Commanders never have proper discussions with us about what is happening in this transformation thing. In my unit, the only time we have a meeting is because members are complaining about transport. All the changes, I have never heard such a discussion. Maybe the senior officers talk about it. When we raise things with them, we never get a feedback.¹⁶

While middle management had been informed by top management that they needed to implement a new style of management, i.e. participatory management, they were unclear as to what exactly such a management style was. Most believed that practising participatory management meant simply allowing members to express their grievances. Having never been trained to develop management skills – let alone participatory management skills – they were at a loss as to how to develop a common vision and a shared approach in the platoons and companies. As a result, middle management also expressed demoralisation and stated that they were at a loss as to how to develop trusting and respectful relations between themselves and their 'subordinates'. The insert from my research diary below demonstrates this point very clearly:

14. Interview with Sergeant Beatrice Ngcobo, May 1999.

15. Interview with Sergeant Mbele, August 1999.

16. Interview with Sergeant Beatrice Ngobo, May 1999.

30/05/2000

...It is only a few days after the shooting incident at the University of Durban Westville, and both middle and top management seemed to be in a state of delayed shock following the fatal shooting of a university student. There was much discussion and debate taking place in the unit. Questions were being raised as to who was ultimately responsible for the disastrous incident. Rank-and-file members blamed commanders for giving unclear direction, and commanders blamed rank-and-file members for not obeying instructions...I wandered around the unit talking to members of all ranks about the incident. Everyone wanted to talk to me and share his or her point of view. Captain Govindsamy whose platoon had been deployed on the campus on the day of the shooting came and chatted to me. I noticed that he looked dejected and concerned:

Captain Govindsamy: I don't really know what to do about the members in my platoon anymore. They keep putting me before a firing line and telling me how useless I am. I really feel that my members are against me.

Monique: What are they saying?

Captain Govindsamy: They tell me I am not instructing them properly and that I am very autocratic. They tell me I am a bad manager.

Monique: What do you make of all of this?

Captain Govindsamy: I am really trying to do my best. I try to ask them what the problems are but then they refuse to listen to my instructions. I have informed them that I am going to pursue disciplinary action against them for their conduct at the University of Durban Westville. I am not prepared to fall on my own when they are the problem. They must account for their behaviour. They think I am very wrong to be doing this. I really need advice as to what to do. I don't know who to turn to. What do you think I should do?

Monique: I can't really comment on this. It is not my place. But, I do think that you guys have been put in a really difficult situation. You are trying to bring about changes but you yourselves have not been trained in new styles of managing. I really think that all you managers and supervisors in the unit need to have some training in how to implement participatory management. What do you think?

Captain Govindsamy: I think it is really important. We are instructed to hold participant management meetings but we have never really been told what this means. So I am trying, but I am not sure if I am doing the right thing. Now there is this Empowerment Committee and they are organising against me. I am not against this committee, but really, I have my limits as to the amount of attacks I can take. I have tried to be reasonable about this but the members are really making my life difficult at the moment.¹⁷

There was clearly conflict between Captain Govindsamy and his platoon members and this was experienced as both distressing and confusing for the Platoon Commander. There seem to have been three underlying causes for this discordant relationship. First, Captain Govindsamy had had no training in how to combine the need for clear instruction with the need to involve his members in participating in decision-making and planning. Second, while asking his members what their grievances were, he concurrently insisted on his authority to act punitively. Third, implicit in Captain Govindsamy's comment is a lack of support from top management for middle management attempting to introduce new management styles. While they were expected to be participatory managers (an entirely foreign concept to police management in South Africa), no training or advice was provided as

17. It is worth noting that Captain Govindsamy is Indian and that the members that were 'giving him problems' were also Indian. This means that there was no real racial dynamic operating and that racial conflict was not at issue.

to how to operationalise this new style of managing. This resulted in middle management feeling very vulnerable and the rank-and-file feeling frustrated and angry.

While the unharmonious interactions in Captain Govindsamy's platoon may have been more acute than in other platoons, commanders and rank-and-file members from other platoons indicated to me that similar dynamics were operating throughout the unit. Such dynamics led to an inability on the part of supervisors and managers to create a learning environment where old assumptions could be challenged and new values and practices accrued.

Providing guidance and a new schema

Participatory forms of police management are crucial for police organisational change. This is because, as discussed above, the involvement of all police employees in decision-making and planning around change processes helps in building a common purpose, allows members to buy into the change process, and facilitates trusting relations between managers/supervisors and rank-and-file police. This, in turn, creates the space for learning and co-operation to take place. However, it is equally important for police managers and supervisors to be able to provide leadership when new ways of responding and acting are required of the police.

The need for close supervision when police are on the streets or in the field is crucial. Goldstein (1990) argues that front-line supervisors are perhaps the most important leaders within police organisations. This is because, he says, the experiences that police workers have in their daily working lives are highly dependent on the degree to which front-line supervisors provide valuable and reliable guidance and direction. Supervisors should be present and visible when rank-and-file members are 'on-the-job', and they should be actively providing direction and monitoring the work of rank-and-file. The need for vigilant supervision is perhaps even more imperative within police units that deal with public order situations. Such units, like Durban POP, are organised into squadrons which have hierarchical command systems akin to military formations. In order to be effective, these units need to operate in a co-ordinated and disciplined manner and this requires greater levels of control and supervision than regular (more individualised) policing does (P.A.J. Waddington, 1991:136).¹⁸

Close and careful supervision is particularly needed when police organisations have a history of abusive policing (such as Durban POP) and when a change in both culture and practice is required. For desired change to take place within police organisations, it is crucial that police leaders and

18. P.A.J. Waddington argues that officers engaged in public order policing often become extremely emotive because they are very 'close to the action'. Public order or civil disorder events are often unpredictable in nature and this may lead to anxiety on the part of police officers policing such events. Heightened emotionality may lead police officers to resort easily to the use of forceful action during such events. In order to prevent this from happening, 'it is essential that officers engaged in public order situations are carefully supervised and controlled, for internal controls on behaviour are unlikely to prove reliable' (P.A.J. Waddington, 1991:137).

managers reinforce new cultural knowledge. In the case of Durban POP, this would require the following. First, axiomatic knowledge – the police mandate – needs to change from the control of crowds and a war-on-crime to crime prevention and the peaceful management of crowds. The dictionary knowledge – categories of people and environment – needs to change from racial and ethnic stereotypes to an open approach toward persons of all social groupings and an appreciation of diversity; police members need to appreciate the social, political and economic circumstances of the people that they serve. The directory knowledge – appropriate methods – needs to change from the use of forceful methods toward the use of problem solving and negotiation. This involves a retreating from using the fastest means of achieving an end toward achieving proper procedures and best long-term outcomes. Finally, the recipe knowledge – basic values – needs to reflect a real respect for the rights of all persons, in particular a respect for the right to freedom of expression, organisation and demonstration.

Such shifts in cultural knowledge do not develop spontaneously, nor do they develop as a result of new training and policy on their own. As was noted in Chapters 3 and 6 shifts in cultural knowledge and behaviour are forged on the streets when police encounter members of the public (P.A.J. Waddington, 1999). It is on the street, then, that the police need to be guided in new and appropriate practices and in the renegotiation of practices that are familiar and established. This means that wherever possible, frontline supervisors should be visible and present when rank and file members are 'on-the-job'. Apposite supervision should ensure that all operations are directed by proper planning, the correct assessment of equipment and tactics that are to be used, careful monitoring of the actions of rank-and-file members prior to and during the interventions at hand, and proper briefing and debriefing.

Briefing and debriefing is extremely important in police organisations. Proper briefing of members provides them with a common understanding of what is to be done. It also provides members with knowledge about the circumstances in which they will be operating and the rationale for choosing particular interventions. Such shared insight and understanding allows rank-and-file members to feel like active agents rather than unthinking Robocops. Debriefing allows police to reflect upon actions taken, to commend good work done and to learn from mistakes. However, results from the survey conducted in 1998 indicate that briefing and debriefing did not take place consistently in the unit. In fact, as Table 20 below demonstrates, only 26,6 per cent of members agreed that adequate briefing and debriefing was taking place in the unit.

Table 20: Statement: There is adequate briefing and debriefing in the unit

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative per cent
Strongly disagree	26	18.2	19.5	19.5
Disagree	40	28.0	30.1	49.6
Neutral	29	20.3	21.8	71.4
Agree	33	23.1	24.8	96.2
Strongly agree	5	3.5	3.8	100
Total	133	93.0	100	
Missing	10	7.0		
Total	143	100		

One of the reasons why briefing and debriefing did not take place was because commanders were often absent when active policing was taking place. Through participant observation and interviews with members of all ranks, it became clear to me that far too often supervisors and commanders were absent when the platoons were deployed.

On the 29 April 1998, I joined the Durban POP trainers on field visits. Trainers wanted to observe members in the field to ascertain whether skills and procedures learned in training were being implemented. We left the college at 9:30am and went to join a platoon that had been deployed at Marianhill Police Station. Marianhill is an African peri-urban area and a new Indian station commissioner had recently been appointed at the station. Rank-and-file members at the station were unhappy about the appointment; they felt an African commander should have been appointed. They had threatened the new Station Commissioner with physical abuse, and stated that they refused to work under his command.

The Station Commissioner had called the Public Order unit to intervene as station members were protesting and were organising strike action (which is illegal).¹⁹ When we arrived at the police station, the Indian Station Commissioner and two other Indian police officers were leaving because they feared being injured by African members at the station. A Durban POP platoon was present, as well as a small contingent of the South African National Defence Force. POP members were talking and simply hanging around. When I asked them what instruction they had been given, they informed me that no instruction had been given and that they were unclear as to what action should be taken. Furthermore, there was no Platoon Commander present at the station. At no point did any commissioned officer speak to either the police members or the protesting police officers as to what was taking place or what the role of POP was. There was no briefing, assessment or debriefing

19. The Labour Relations Act (1995) stipulates that any withholding of labour on the part of the police is illegal. This is because the police in their entirety are deemed an essential service.

throughout the event. (We stayed at Marianhill until the Provincial Commissioner of the South African Police Service intervened and POP was instructed to withdraw).

Once POP was withdrawn, we joined another platoon that was deployed at the provincial government administrative offices. Young school students from the African townships were protesting the poor state of education in their schools – lack of teachers, poor facilities, and insufficient textbooks. While a large contingency of Durban POP was present, once again, no Platoon Commander was present. The only instruction that the platoon had been given was to monitor the situation and ensure that no incidents occurred. Rank-and-file members complained to me that they had been deployed in the hot sun and had nothing to do. They were extremely bored and no provision had been made for members to take a lunch break.

In both these instances, Section Leaders had been present with the platoons. However, Section Leaders are not responsible for the planning of operations – this is the function of Platoon and Company Commanders. Furthermore, Section Leaders had no training in the command of operations. Section Leaders are non-commissioned officers and thus have limited powers with regard to instruction and deployment. It was therefore very problematic that no officer with authority was present during these events since proper monitoring could not take place and members were left feeling directionless.

These experiences were not uncommon. In fact, interviews with both rank-and-file members and with more high-ranking officers corroborated these experiences. I asked a sergeant why this happened so frequently in the unit. He responded:

I don't know why this tends to happen. It is a bad thing. When I was in charge of the bike unit temporarily, I was always out there to sort things out. When there was even a small problem, I would be there to sort things out. I had to take over when the Captain in charge took medical board. But, even when he was in charge, he was never with us when we went out into the field. It was a big problem. I told the commander that it is a problem to have someone with the same rank like me in charge of the others. That is why we need a Captain in the first place. But, the Captain that was supposed to be in charge would only rock up ten minutes before we were going to leave the operation. While he was not there, we simply had to take action and then say that he must take it up with the Director if he had a problem since he was never there.²⁰

Captain Botha, the Head of Personal Development in Durban POP agreed that this was a major problem:

20. Interview with Sergeant Pieterse, August 1999.

Commanders know that there are seconds in charge, like an inspector, who is capable of doing the work. So, 90 per cent of the time they are either not there or they don't want to be there or they have other things to do... This is wrong. They shouldn't do this. I mean, I am sure you have heard this from others as well. I don't think they show any interest anymore. They should never have been made officers in the first place. Really, members who are not capable or willing should leave the police force. If a platoon does not have a good commander, it will go backwards.²¹

Captain Modise, a female Platoon Commander stated that she was always present with her members when they were deployed and that those Platoon Commanders who did not join their members were contributing to low productivity and low morale in the unit:

What I know is that members tend to be negative because they think we, the commanders, don't care about them. We send them into the hot sun for a whole day. Maybe the commander is not around. He just leaves them in the field alone and goes home to do his own thing. You will find that there are no Platoon Commanders in some operations...I can tell you, if you can go through the commanders in this unit, you will see those who don't go to work with the members. Their platoons have low productivity. The Platoon Commanders just come to greet the Company Commanders at the unit, show that they have pitched for work, and then they just disappear. The guys stand around doing nothing. They are bored. They are stressed. They say, 'Hey, I am tired of working in this unit. I am tired of using that fucking broken down vehicle'. They do nothing. If you work, there is no time to complain. That is why you need to keep them busy. The Unit Commander should be visiting the platoons when they are operational to see if the Platoon Commander is there or not. If the Unit Commander just stays in his office thinking that his members are working outside, nothing can change...you need to get the members involved physically and show them how things must be done. You must show them how to love the community. This will create better communication and interaction in the unit.²²

Captain Modise believed that it is important to lead by example. It is also important, according to her, to be present in the field to give support to rank-and-file members. Should this not happen, rank-and-file members will feel demoralised. Captain Modise also identified another 'weak point' in the unit. The Unit Commander tended to be office-bound and as a result, there was no monitoring of the performance of commanders and commissioned officers in the unit. Direction and authority was lacking from the top down. For Bayley, it is management at the very top that is crucial to police organisational change. In a monograph published by the United States Department on Justice entitled *Democratising the Police Abroad: What To Do And How To Do It*, Bayley makes the point that:

Sustained and committed leadership by top management, especially the most senior executive, is required to produce any important organisational change. This is probably the most frequently repeated lesson of reform management...Significant reform cannot be brought about by stealth from below against the indifference or hostility of senior managers (1999:20).

21. Interview with Captain Botha, May 1998.

22. Interview with Captain Ncanana, May 1999.

Managers and supervisors in Durban POP did not seem to provide what Bayley refers to as 'sustained' and 'committed' leadership to rank-and-file members, which is crucial in times of police organisational transformation. There were a number of activities that I observed where it became apparent to me that supervisors in the unit were unable to provide direction to the members and where inadequate planning was evident. In the days leading up to the fatal shooting of the student on UDW campus it became obvious to me that those in command had no clear plan and they were in fact a bit confused as to what the jurisdiction of the unit was on the campus. The insert below from my research diary shows this very clearly:

11/05/2000

Captain Meetha and myself arrived at the University of Durban Westville at 9am. Students were protesting. 540 students had been excluded from the university because they had failed to pay fees. University authorities had told the police and the student body that they would not allow students to conduct a protest march on campus. Students were also informed that if they wanted to hold a public meeting, they could only do so in one place on the campus. When we got to the place where Durban POP was congregating, we found two Platoon Commanders trying desperately to determine what action the unit should take. Four Platoon Commanders were standing next to a car having a heated discussion. The platoon members were smoking and talking about 10 metres away from where the Platoon Commanders were meeting. A heated discussion was ensuing between two Platoon Commanders as to what action should be taken.

One of the Platoon Commanders was arguing that they should form a police line and push the students off campus and they would then have to protest on the streets. Another Platoon Commander was arguing that the campus was private property and that the police had no authority prevent the students from protesting on campus. The following conversation ensued:

Captain Dada: The university administration has told the students that they cannot march on campus and that they can only meet in the concourse. Campus security has stated that they want students to move off campus if they want to organise a protest demonstration. I think we should try to push the students onto the street where they can protest as much as they like.

Captain Padyachee: We can't do that. We cannot infringe on the students' right to protest unless they are endangering life or property. If the campus management doesn't want students to march, they must enforce this and not us. We can't act in the interest of management alone. We can only be here on standby in case something happens.

Captain Dada: The decision to do a push-back was made by the commander who was here yesterday. We need continuity.

Captain Padyachee: Yes, but this is not the right thing to do. We are not authorised to do this.

Captain Dada became very upset at having being contradicted by a peer in public. Eventually all commissioned officers present decided to hold a quick meeting to decide what course of action should be taken. They concluded that it was the responsibility of university management to limit the movement of students on campus. One of the Platoon Commanders reported this back to the platoon members. The platoon members had witnessed the interaction that had taken place and one of the sergeants asked: 'How are we supposed to know what to do if our management doesn't even know what is right and what is wrong?'

This incident highlights a number of problems that were present in the unit. First, middle management was not clear as to the role and limitations of the unit. Rank-and-file members seemed to be unconvinced of the capacity for Platoon Commanders to make informed decisions and they viewed this negatively.²³ Second, no prior planning had been done and consequently those in command were unable to adequately brief members or provide clear direction to them. The lack of planning and the uncertainty about the jurisdiction of the unit indicated that those in command were not implementing the skills (i.e. planning of crowd management operations) that they had learned in training and that they were unfamiliar with the relevant legislation and policy pertaining to crowd management.²⁴

As was noted in the previous chapter, four days after this diary entry, a student was fatally wounded on the UDW campus after Durban POP fired live ammunition. Following this dramatic incident POP Headquarters drew up a debriefing document about the incident in an attempt to analyse the reasons for the disaster. The lack of planning and direction on the part of those in command was viewed as the key contributor to the disaster on UDW campus. The document states that the proper procedures had not been complied with – there was no written plan, no threat analysis was done, and no joint operation centre was established. The report argues that:

The absence of written instructions or planning left the door open for uncoordinated actions and the use of inappropriate equipment and force...Planning was not used as an opportunity to share information and initiate new and creative tactics to enhance co-operation and reduce the risk of violence... The deficiencies in the negotiation, assessment and planning subsequently resulted in weak command and control...All the officers on the scene on 16 May were apparently trained in the Platoon Commanders Course. It is unthinkable that POP members did not apply even the most basic principles of good command structure, techniques, or use of equipment despite the fact that they were all trained. It is clear that the will to implement an acceptable approach to crowd management is lacking even at command level in the unit (POP Headquarters, June 2000).

The authors of the debriefing report clearly believed that those who were in command on UDW campus in May 2000 had not implemented what they had learned in the Platoon Commanders Course which emphasises careful planning, negotiation with relevant parties, and information gathering. The report in fact asserts that the command structure had neither the will to change, nor had they adopted a new philosophy in carrying out crowd management functions. The lack of direction and guidance on the part of the command structure was viewed as directly responsible for the reversion to the use of force on UDW campus.

23. Throughout that day, Platoon Commanders held regular meetings with campus administration. They would then hang out together as a cohort and made no real effort to consult rank-and-file members or provide them with feedback from the various meetings they had attended. Minimal reports were given to the members and at no point did the Platoon Commanders ask members how they felt or if they had any input as to what the unit should be doing.

24. The POP Platoon Commanders Course deals primarily with how to plan for a crowd management event and how to brief and debrief members.

Two weeks after the shooting incident at UDW campus, I accompanied the Head of Public Relations of Durban POP, Captain Dada, on a visit to Mangosothu Technical College in Umlazi Township. Students and staff were in uproar following the fatal shooting of a student by private security officers on the campus. That morning, students had gone on a rampage destroying campus property. Durban POP was called to the scene. There was no commanding officer present when we arrived and members were not sure what they should be doing. The Section Leader present was concerned that if a problem arose, and the members responded without clear instruction from the Platoon Commander, the unit would be compromised again. According to Captain Dada, the relevant Platoon Commander was on sick leave and no other commanding officer had been sent to replace him. The Section Leader present told us that his section had been busy monitoring one of the hostels when they were called out to the campus. Since they had been doing crime prevention work, they had no crowd management equipment with them. No meeting had been held with either students or campus administration to find out what exactly the situation was or to plan an appropriate police intervention should a problem emerge. The following conversation between Captain Dada and the Section Leader was recorded in my research diary:

31/05/2000

Captain Dada: Where have you guys come from?

Sergeant Ngubane: We were at S. J. Smith Hostel looking for drugs and weapons. We were just told to come here but we have received no briefing yet. Can you imagine? There are only six members down at this meeting of students. If something happens, we are just sitting ducks. These students are very angry.

Captain Dada: What equipment do you guys have?

Sergeant Ngubane: Three of us have side-arms [pistols]. We have no shields and no helmets. And, no-one has briefed us as to what we are expected to do. Captain, this is not a good situation. We don't feel safe like this. What are we supposed to do if a riot breaks out? Go out with our bare hands and try to push people back? Honestly, we are not prepared for this situation at all.²⁵

The lack of direction provided by the commanders during these crowd management events left rank-and-file members feeling unclear as to what the appropriate interventions were and also left them feeling vulnerable should negative consequences result from unplanned action. Furthermore, the lack of leadership apparent in this diary recording meant that there was no conscious implementation of the new crowd management principles and procedures. It also meant that there was a lack of necessary monitoring of the behaviour of members. This was linked to the lack of performance monitoring which will be dealt with later in this chapter.

The lack of clear direction and planning was not unique to a few crowd management events. It was also evident when members were involved in crime prevention duties as the following insert from my research diary illustrates:

25. Fortunately this event ended without incident. The meeting was closed and students left the campus peacefully. However, the situation on the campus was volatile given the death of a fellow student that morning and the fact that students had already damaged campus property in response to the shooting incident.

18/05/2000

.... We left the university residences. The Inspector parked the armoured vehicle in a park and everyone took out his or her lunch. African members shared lunch with one another while Indian members shared lunch among themselves. Those who were not eating lunch lay on their backs and smoked cigarettes. After sitting around for about an hour and a half doing nothing in particular, the Platoon Commander arrived. He called the members together and informed them that they should go and do crime prevention work in the central business district. He did not explain what exactly this 'crime prevention' exercise would involve, or why it was necessary. Members did not ask for clarity. After this short and imprecise briefing, the Platoon Commander said he had to leave and that he had other responsibilities to fulfil. I accompanied him as he walked to his vehicle and asked him what he meant by 'crime prevention'. He responded that it meant doing things like picking up people who were drunk in public. I thought this was a very poor description of crime prevention and was curious to know how platoon members interpreted their very vague instruction. I asked them what they intended to do and they replied that they would just drive around town and in so doing create a police presence in the area. They had no plan as to what they would do or which areas they thought were most in need of crime prevention work. The Section Leader in the vehicle gave no further direction and no discussion was held as to what could or should be done. Both the members present and myself were aware that this 'mission' was simply about passing time... We drove into town, found another recreational area, and parked the vehicle. I asked how sitting in a vehicle in a recreational area constituted crime prevention. I was informed that just by virtue of the fact that they as police were visible would detract people from engaging in criminal activities. I was also informed by one of the Sergeants that members of the platoon had no intention of going out and doing 'hard work' such as arresting criminals. This, he said, would reflect positively on the Platoon Commander and they had no intention of 'creating a good name for him'. I felt perturbed by the racialised informal interactions that were taking place. I was appalled by the lack of initiative and interest on the part of the members. I realised, however, that this whole situation is a result of poor management and supervision.

In the previous chapter it was also seen that in some instances rank-and-file members, with Section Leaders present, behaved reprehensively when commanders were not present to monitor and direct the activities of the platoons. The fact that more deaths and injuries did not take place during both crowd management events and during crime prevention operations was perhaps more due to peaceful nature of most crowds and fear of reprimand after the event than the result of good planning and intention on the part of the unit members.²⁶

Measuring performance

Proper performance measurement (of both individuals and the organisation more broadly) is crucial in any organisation, particularly those undergoing change processes. Performance measures help in assessing the success of particular programmes and in identifying areas where performance is weak or strong. They allow for improved allocation of resources, identifying training needs, developing

26. It should be noted that in early 2001 a new Operational Commander, who is African, was appointed. Together with the recently appointed Unit Commander he has made a concerted effort to ensure that Platoon Commanders accompany their members when out in the field. Furthermore, the new Operational Commander has personally accompanied the platoons when they are deployed in order to monitor and observe their activities. This has led to greater supervision of rank-and-file members and a decrease in absent Platoon and Company Commanders in the field. However, the introduction of the new Operational Commander falls outside of the timeframe of this research.

uniform promotion procedures and they help in the structuring of equitable workloads. They also allow for the development of reward systems (crucial for building morale and organisational commitment) and in clarifying roles and expectations.

The White Paper on Human Resource Management in the Public Service (1997) stipulates that the success of the Public Service in delivering its operational and developmental goals depends primarily on the efficiency and effectiveness with which employees carry out their duties. Managing performance is therefore a key human resource management tool to ensure that:

- Employees know what is expected of them.
- Managers know whether the employees' performances are delivering the required objectives.
- Poor performance is identified and improved.
- Good performance is recognised and rewarded.

Performance management, evaluation and the recognition of 'good work' are viewed as an integral part of an effective human resource management and development strategy. The White Paper argues that performance management should be an ongoing process whereby the employee and employer, together, strive constantly to improve the employee's individual performance and his or her contribution to the organisation's wider objectives. Since the performance of every employee contributes to the overall delivery of the organisation's objectives, it says, it follows that the performance of every employee should be managed. An important part of managing performance is developing performance indicators and applying these in evaluating individual contributions and progress. It is also important to evaluate the performance of the entire organisation.

However, in South Africa, and indeed internationally, the public sector has lagged behind the private sector in developing measures of performance. 'The near monopoly that public service bureaucracies have, their multiple purposes and diffuse clientele, and the belief (unshaken until recently) that because their formal goals say they do good, they actually must do good, help account for this' (Marx, 1976:1).

Developing performance indicators within police organisations is perhaps even less well developed than other sectors of the public service. Vanagunas and Elliot (1980) argue that there are many problems in measuring police productivity. It is not possible to translate police output to a monetary value. According to them, police output is a service and requires qualitative and quantitative measurement. Some aspects of police work simply cannot be measured. They are too intermeshed with other influences such as trying to provide a community with a sense of security.

Many police managers, including those in Durban POP, struggle to define what good performance is and how to measure this good performance. In many police forces throughout the world there is the belief that arrest rates indicate productivity. However, arrest rates are not a good indicator. Why? First, those that are arrested are not necessarily guilty of committing crimes. Second, questions remain as to whether arresting suspected offenders will make any difference to the problem at hand. Third, arrest rates may have nothing to do with the policing objectives of the police agency. For example, a high arrest rate does not necessarily reflect success in ensuring the peaceful policing of protest events or the prevention of youth delinquency. Fourth, the focus is on the rate of production rather than the process by which such production is achieved. The means of achieving goals and objectives is crucial to the practice of community policing. Fifth, and perhaps most importantly, adherence to measurement arrests made, clearance rates, and the speed of attending to calls will not enhance the delivery of new strategic plans.²⁷

Bayley (1994) argues that within police organisations there are both direct and indirect performance indicators. Direct indicators are those that indicate what the police have accomplished in the community such as the decline in particular crime rates, complaints against the police, satisfaction with police conduct, willingness to assist the public, and the reduction of fear of crime. Indirect indicators measure what the police have done but not their impact on the quality of community. These include arrest rates, response times, the recovery of stolen weapons, the number of patrols, and clearance rates. The police, Bayley says, tend to make use of indirect performance indicators most often. This is problematic since on their own they do not reflect the impact of their actions on the community. Increased arrest rates, for example, do not necessarily make the community feel safer – this is only presumed.

Police themselves prefer to be rated indirectly and police managers prefer to focus on what the police do most visibly and what can be quantified. However, Bayley argues, the greater the focus on the indirect indicators, the 'less attention will be given to maximizing the effects of policing' (Bayley, 1994:99). Using indirect indicators also deters from innovation. The use of such indicators inhibits creativity and programmatic innovation. For Bayley, then,

If the public's interest is to be served, then both sets of performance measures must be used. In order to achieve effectiveness, efficiency and rectitude, the police cannot be allowed to substitute the more convenient indirect measures for direct measures. The utilization of indirect performance indicators reinforces the traditional compliance-oriented style of police management... indirect measures shift attention from community problems to organisational activity (Bayley, 1994:100).

27. Alternative police performance indicators need to be developed if a community policing practice and philosophy is desired. These could include the restrained use of force, conformity to law, better community relations, and more effective conflict resolution (Marx, 1976). These performance indicators would pertain to both crime prevention and crowd management functions.

Despite the international move toward a new type of policing for the 21st century – community policing – there has been little writing on changes in supervision of line personnel required under a changed model of policing. If new types of policing are to be effective police agencies must rethink their ways of evaluating their personnel. Goldstein (1990) hence argues that while police officers are asked to commit themselves to programmes of change and to new styles of policing, there are often no changes in the ‘traditional criteria’ on which rewards and promotions are based.

The case of Durban POP reflects the problems raised in the policing literature with regard to measuring performance. Performance measurement was not viewed as a priority, and the performance indicators that were used tended to be indirect in nature.

As Table 21 below indicates, a minority (37.1%) of members in Durban POP felt that regular individual performance evaluation was taking place:

Table 21: Statement: We continually evaluate our individual performance in the unit

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative per cent
Strongly disagree	14	9.8	10.4	10.4
Disagree	35	24.5	25.9	36.3
Neutral	33	23.1	24.4	60.7
Agree	43	30.1	31.9	92.6
Strongly agree	10	7.0	7.4	100
Total	135	94.4	100	
Missing	8	5.6		
Total	143	100		

Perhaps there were some Section Leaders and Platoon Commanders who informally conducted individual performance evaluations. In reality, however, supervisors were not expected to conduct individual performance evaluations in the unit. A programme for evaluating individual performance was only introduced to the unit in October 2001, but by November 2001, individual performance evaluations were still not taking place. According to Captain Zungu, a Platoon Commander in the unit:

We have never really done individual performance evaluations. In fact, until mid-2001, we did not even have proper job descriptions for the various ranks in the unit. These were only drawn up in about July 2001. This is a big problem. How could we be expected to evaluate our members if we did not know what exactly they were supposed to be doing?²⁸

The case of Durban POP does not seem to be unique. According to Marx:

28. Interview with Captain Zungu, October 2001.

Individual performance evaluation is generally not well developed in police departments... Many departments make no effort to assess performance at all. The self-protectiveness of the police subculture and the fact that little concrete depends on the evaluations mean that many departments have abandoned them, or they have become empty rituals where almost everyone's performance is rated as satisfactory (1976:1).

Prior to October 2001, supervisors in Durban POP were expected to keep 'conduct records' of their subordinate members.²⁹ These conduct records focused mainly on disciplinary matters such as whether or not members were absent from duty, whether or not members were drunk on duty, and whether or not members had been involved in criminal offences. These conduct records tended to operate punitively and did not enhance individual performance or build individual morale.³⁰ According to Captain Mohamed, Head of Training at Durban POP:

We have always had individual conduct reports which immediate supervisors are supposed to fill in four times a year. These reports never really evaluated the jobs people did as such. They never added up to a formal acknowledgement of a person's work. They were used, negatively, if I can say that. What I mean is that they were usually about what somebody did wrong, not what they did well. The reports were used against you. Say for example you applied for a promotion. The supervisor concerned would take out your individual conduct report. If you had done something wrong, your promotion would be withheld based on your conduct report.³¹

These conduct records had little bearing how members actually performed in the field. In fact, as is the case internationally, evaluations tended to be based on 'conformity to internal bureaucratic standards, which may have little to do with how well a [police officer] does his job on the street or what he does' (Marx, 1976:2).

The lack of structured performance monitoring left members feeling that their skills and contributions were not recognised or rewarded. Linked to this was an absence of career planning and individual development programmes in the unit at all levels.³² One of the Captains who had recently completed his honours degree in Psychology expressed his frustration at the lack of recognition for his expertise:

29. For example, Section Leaders would complete conduct reports on their section members. Platoon Commanders would complete conduct reports on their Section Leaders, and Company Commanders would complete conduct reports on their Platoon Commanders. The Unit Commander would be responsible for evaluating the conduct of Company Commanders and administrative heads.

30. According to Marx (1976), this is not uncommon. He argues that performance evaluation in the police is used more to punish failure than to reward success.

31. Telephonic interview with Captain Zungu, November 2001.

32. It should be noted that in early 2001 a Performance Enrichment Process (PEP) was initiated in the public service. This process is meant to assess, reinforce and promote the best job related behaviours, outputs and expected deliveries. In accordance with PEP every member of the police is meant to be accountable and responsible for their performance and to develop their skills to their best ability. The objective of this process is to establish a performance culture in the police, a relationship of trust between supervisors and subordinates, and performance is supposed to be measured regularly. All of this is meant to encourage best performance possible. According to PEP, formal written performance appraisals of each employee must be done once a year. By November 2001, PEP had not been operationalised in Durban POP but discussions were underway as to how this could be done.

I have my degree now. I am working here. It is good, I don't have a problem being here. But, no incentive is given to me for having this degree. There is no structure in place to say 'okay, these are his skills and this is where he will be most effective'. It does not have to mean an increase in salary. It is about looking at the development of individuals. It takes place, but really in such a small way. That is members are waiting to see if they can do better somewhere else. Frankly, that is what I am waiting for as well, and I have applied for a position in the City Police.³³

Rank-and-file members also expressed frustration at the lack of performance appraisal and the lack of recognition of 'good work' in the unit:

Usually your Section Leader is supposed to reward you. But, most of the time this does not happen. A person must have something that will stimulate him to do better work. Maybe if you find a stolen firearm or make an arrest you should get a medal with your name on it. Like those medals they are giving to members who are serving in the police for a long time. Once a month they should see which members had successes and give them medals. Everybody would want to work more...at the moment we are not recognised. If you recover a stolen car, the Section Leader will be happy. But the Section Leader gets praise for this, not us. If we were rewarded maybe the police who are hesitant would feel more motivated. But, I can say that they don't motivate you in the police.³⁴

This Sergeant is making an important point. According to her, the recognition of positive achievements would enhance individual motivation and commitment to the unit. Embedded in her discourse are her understandings of what 'good performance' constitutes. This includes the recovery of stolen weapons and arrests, once again, indirect performance indicators.

Indirect performance indicators were used to evaluate and reward platoons within the unit. Until mid-1999, each month the Unit Commander would announce the 'Platoon of the Month'. The Platoon of the Month would be the one that had the highest record of arrests and the highest number of recovery of stolen weapons and vehicles. The 1998 Unit Commander kept a set of statistics that indicated the number of arrests and recoveries of each platoon. When he wanted to indicate which platoon was being productive, he would bring out his statistics and show the one that had a large number of arrests and a high rate of recovering stolen vehicles and illegal weapons. At no stage did he critically evaluate who was arrested and whether those arrested were ever convicted of any crime. He was also disinterested in how weapons were recovered. In other words, there was no questioning whether members of the platoon used forceful means to recover these weapons or whether they applied the principles of community policing in conducting their crime prevention work.

The fact that arrests were viewed as one of the key performance indicators meant that members would in practice arrest any person who was vaguely suspected of a criminal offence, even if there

33. Interview with Captain Padyachee, March 2000.

34. Interview with Sergeant Mary Magoda, March 2000.

was no substantive evidence of this. This became clear to me when I joined platoons on their various crime prevention operations. One of the platoons arrested a young township resident simply because he looked like he could be associated with the trading of marijuana. When I asked what evidence they had of this, they responded that they knew what such people looked like and if they were 'forcefully questioned' they would admit to buying marijuana. Their key motivation was that if they arrested a large number of suspects, they would be viewed by the Unit Commander as a productive platoon. At no time did they critically assess these indicators of 'good performance' in relation to the objectives of the unit. The use of traditionally accepted performance indicators thus reinforced old behaviours (unsubstantiated arrests and discriminatory profiling) and impeded the evolution of new and changed behaviour.

The Head of Labour Relations spoke to me about the fact that Commanders in the unit had not re-evaluated their performance indicators:

At this point in the unit we don't really have proper performance indicators. I suppose if you do a march and it goes without incident this is seen as good. But, other than that we don't have indicators. There is no real way of evaluating the unit. We have geared our work toward the recovery of vehicles and firearms. But these are not proper indicators, particularly for crowd management. Management are still with the old mindset about criteria. It doesn't look like things are really changing... The other big problem is that Platoon Commanders are not really evaluated when they are appointed. There are no performance indicators or job descriptions for them either. Once you are a Platoon Commander, you can stay in that position forever because no one will be evaluating you. There is no mechanism for ensuring that members are doing things properly or that they are effective in their work... Also, no one looks at how members behave when they are actually doing operations. They should be evaluated according to what their conduct was in an operation on any given day. How did they actually carry out that operation? The only way of reviewing is through debriefing, but this is not being done in terms of proper evaluation. There is nothing in place to ensure that Section Leaders or Platoon Commanders meet regularly with individuals under their command. A mechanism and criteria for evaluation should be given to the Section Leaders and Platoon Commanders.³⁵

Indirect performance indicators were clearly used to evaluate and reward platoons within the unit. The use of such indicators – arrests and recoveries – is problematic for two reasons. First, such indicators are indirect and fail to evaluate whether the unit had any positive impact within the community they serve. Second, these performance indicators are associated with crime prevention work while the primary function of the unit was that of crowd management. As a result, there was dissonance between the objectives of the unit on the one hand and the indicators of performance on the other. No incentives therefore existed for improved crowd management performance. This would have required recognising platoons for employing problem solving techniques, negotiating successfully with relevant

35. Interview with Captain Padyachee, March 2000.

interest groupings, and ensuring that crowd events took place without incident. The fact that such indicators did not exist meant that there was no incentive for members to employ new crowd management tactics in their daily work or to learn new skills. Without suitable performance indicators it is difficult to reward members for appropriate behaviour and to castigate them for behaving in ways that are incongruous with new objectives and value systems.

Support, motivation and commitment

The inability of supervisors and managers in the unit to manage in a participatory manner, the lack of direction and leadership in the unit and the absence of suitable individual and collective performance evaluation and career guidance all contributed to low morale in the unit. There was in fact a low level of commitment to the unit on the part of individual members, as Table 22 indicates:

Table 22: Question: Have you considered leaving POP recently?

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative per cent
Yes	64	44.8	45.1	45.1
No	78	54.5	54.9	100
Total	142	99.3	100	
Missing	1	0.7		
Total	143	100		

Almost half the members surveyed claimed that they had considered leaving the unit, indicating a problem with both morale and commitment on the part of rank-and-file members in the unit.³⁶ There were, however, vast differences between the various race groupings with regard to this response. Almost all white members (82.4%), over half of the Indian members (52.2%), and over a third of African members (36.4%) had considered leaving the unit. It would seem then, that white members were the most disaffected members in the unit. This is hardly surprising given that they viewed themselves as having the most to lose in the transformation process, particularly with the exit of white managers and supervisors in the unit. Members also claimed that they lacked motivation to work and found the work in the unit unstimulating. As a white Sergeant who was based in the video unit³⁷ told me:

To be honest, I feel really bored. We sit around doing nothing most of the time. I come to work and sleep in the office. I am not being challenged anymore. I am getting fat and more and more stupid. In fact, to tell you the truth I am embarrassed to wear a police uniform in public these days. When I go to the shopping centre I don't even

36. Dissatisfaction and lack of commitment to the police service is widespread within the SAPS. In fact, 33 000 police officers left the SAPS between 1994 and 1999. This represented almost a quarter of the strength of the SAPS (Govender, 1999).

37. The video unit is responsible for recording all crowd management events that the unit participates in. The video footage is stored as evidence to be used in the event of a court case against the unit. It is not used for training purposes.

wear my cap anymore. I can't be a policeman with pride anymore. I am really not doing anything that makes me feel like a policeman. I don't feel very motivated³⁸.

This young Sergeant claimed that he had been far more motivated to work in the unit prior to the transformation process. His pride in being a police officer had dissipated to the extent that he no longer felt pride in being publicly identified as a police officer. He felt that commanders in the unit were far more supportive in the past and that the work was more exciting in earlier years. He also stated, however, that he would not consider transferring to any of the stations as he enjoyed the flexibility of working hours in the POP.

But, there were many other members who informed me of their intentions to leave the unit, and they were actively planning to transfer to other specialised units. The following encounter with a white Sergeant illustrates this point:

I sat in the canteen and worked on my laptop. I was waiting for a meeting with Captain Pillay. While I was sitting there, a female trainer came and sat with me. She bought me a cup of tea and a cigarette and we chatted about babies and other 'girls' stuff'. While sitting with her I noticed a white sergeant who had waved to me. I decided to go and say hello.

Monique: Hi there, how are things going with you?

Sergeant Meyer: Well not too bad. I am just filling in a form at the moment requesting a transfer out of the unit.

Monique: Where are you wanting to go to?

Sergeant Meyer: To be honest, anywhere. To any other specialised unit. I applied to the child protection unit, but they did not accept the transfer. So, now I am applying the water wing unit. I don't know exactly what they do, but there are no other applications to that unit from here at the moment. I just want to get out of here.

Monique: Why do you want to get out so badly?

Sergeant Meyer: I have been in the unit for 16 years. That is a really long time. When I got here, we were trained completely differently. I am used to the old style. They expect me to change now, and to be honest I cannot change. I am used to that old way of doing things. You can't teach an old dog new tricks. I am also finding it difficult to get used to the new style of management here. I find that we don't really know what we are supposed to be doing anymore and there is no more discipline in the unit. We were promised when we joined the unit that after five years we could be transferred wherever we wanted to go. But, that has not happened. I have been trying to get transferred for a few years now, but they won't let me go. I think this is really unfair. I should be able to leave. You can't stay in a unit like this for so many years. Look at me now, I am still a sergeant. I have no career path in the unit anymore. Only Indians are being promoted. At the moment, they have put an Indian in charge of the bike unit. I tell you, he knows nothing about biking at all. This is very frustrating. At this point, if I were given any job outside of the force, I would leave the force altogether.

I tell you, I am going to apply to transfers to any other specialised unit until I get it. Even if this means filling in forms for the next month. When I joined this unit it was great. We were just like a family. I need to be somewhere where there is a strong team spirit.

38. Informal discussion with Sergeant Cronje, April 2000.

Sergeant Meyer was clearly a disaffected member of the unit. He was desperate to leave the unit and was prepared to move to almost any other unit just to 'get out'. While there was a multiplicity of reasons for his wanting to leave (including his self-perception that he was unable to change), it is clear that he was frustrated with the current management in the unit. He indicated that no career planning was taking place and that Indian members were getting preferential treatment in the unit.

Despite the perceived preferential treatment of Indian members, there were many Indian members who also expressed a desire to leave the unit. These members were both from the rank-and-file and from the commissioned ranks. In May 1999 I went to one of the hostels with one of the sections. While we were driving back from the hostels two Indian sergeants spoke to me of their desire to leave the unit. One of the sergeants told me that he was currently seeing a psychologist. He was hoping that the psychologist would diagnose him with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and that he would then be determined medically unfit. He would then be able to leave the unit with a severance package and be able to start a small business using the pay package as capital. The other Indian inspector asked me if I knew any contacts in the Royal Ulster Constabulary as he hoped to apply for a job in Northern Ireland. They both claimed that there were no career prospects in Durban POP.

A number of Indian captains in the unit also spoke to me about wanting to leave. In November 2000, the Head of Labour Relations left the unit and joined the SAPS Provincial Labour Relations Department. The Head of Training was transferred to POP Headquarters. The Head of Intelligence applied for a job in the Durban City Police, but was not accepted. The Head of Public Relations told me that he was saving money so that he would be able to open a fast food franchise. These high levels of discontent and disinterest indicated a lack of commitment at all levels to the unit and no doubt contributed a further obstacle to attempts at transformation in the unit.

There were a few high-ranking members of the unit who were alert to the high levels of dissatisfaction in the unit and they were aware that managers and supervisors had a key role to play in motivating rank-and-file members. One of the Platoon Commanders told me that those in command needed to support their members and provide them with positive role models. According to her:

I just try to motivate members. I try to command them in such a way that they feel respected. You must talk to members with humility and confidence. I don't shout at the members. I talk to them nicely and explain things to them...Change needs a very strong commander because only a commander can change the members. You need to sit with members and explain things to them and show them how to do things. Otherwise they are just lost. You see, management has to change first, and then the members will follow. It can't happen the other way round. You can hear things on TV and you can read documents about change, but you have to be commanded in a new way of policing. You know, Monique, they often use my platoon as an example. The top management point to my platoon and they tell others to look at how disciplined my members are and how committed they are to their work. And they say, look at

Captain Modise, she is on the field everyday from seven to seven. So you have to be there with your members for them to be motivated and for them to know what to do.³⁹

There may have been a few supervisors who shared Captain Modise's commitment and insight. However, they were definitely the exception rather than the rule. As a result, most rank-and-file members were left feeling isolated, despondent and unsupported. Such feelings are counter-productive to attempts at organisational change.

Successful organisational change is dependent on the extent to which individual members feel committed to change since organisational change needs to be geared toward 'restructuring' the people who work in these organisations. In order for individuals in an organisation to come on board change processes, the organization has to be experienced as a 'holding environment'. In other words, individuals in an organisation need to experience their environment as safe, accepting and trustworthy (Stapley, 1996). Such a holding environment needs to be created by management and leaders within an organisation. A good holding environment is one that has structure (predictable patterns of behaving) and offers members a sense of safety and protection while encouraging individual growth and identity.

The individual in a 'good' holding environment will always feel accepted and cared for. Such a holding environment allows individuals to feel secure during times of change (Hogg and Terry, 2000). If the holding environment is not perceived by organisational members to be 'good enough', they will seek to develop a culture that is advantageous to them under the conditions imposed on them by the environment. This may result in members opposing change via various means of resistance such as feeling little responsibility and identification with the organisation given that the organisation has never allowed for individual integration or provided environmental support. Alternatively, a poor holding environment may result in an overwhelming fear of being wrong which becomes greater than any understanding of the need for change. Consequently, members become inactive and dependent on others for direction (Stapley, 1996). Members in such organisational environments tend to feel that change is imposed and that they have very little control in change processes. In the case of Durban POP, many members clearly feel that their organisational environment was unsupportive and did not promote individual growth and development. They responded by expressing a lack of commitment to the organisation and in fact, a desire to abandon the organization.

Conclusion

While it may be relatively simple to make statements and commitments to new mandates, missions and rationales for policing (axiomatic knowledge), mechanisms for ensuring and maintaining sustainable change in the methods and strategies employed (directory and recipe knowledge) need to

39. Interview with Captain Modise, May 1999.

be developed. Police members need to be made aware of the positive impact and consequences of new ways of doing things. This requires positive feedback from police managers and supervisors when changed behaviour is attempted, and, if possible, positive reinforcement from the recipients of police services. Police need to be made aware that new methods do in fact work. This often requires a fundamental rethinking of systems of reward and of indicators of 'good' performance (Bayley, 1996). When these are lacking, as was the case with Durban POP, police members (particularly at the lower levels) may be unsure about what desirable behaviour is. On the other hand, they may disregard new objectives since their performance is not monitored, sanctioned or rewarded. Added to this, a lack of performance monitoring and appraisal can also lead, as in the case of Durban POP, to a demoralised and non-committed workforce.

In trying to facilitate and inspire change, frontline supervisors need to be encouraging of good work and to be familiar with the work that their 'teams' are engaged in. This involves frequent discussions about problems, opportunities, and ways of responding to these. Goldstein argues that good police leaders during times of transition must be

...comfortable in criticising the past, confident in their grasp of the complexity of the police function, and open to new ideas. They must be willing to invest substantial time to studying the behaviour problems their agencies must handle, to search for new responses to them, and to evaluating these responses. They must be prepared to abandon long-held notions about the nature of some problems when confronted with the hard data that redefine them, and be open to challenges of the value of existing responses. And, they must be willing to assume some of the risks entailed in departing from traditional policing (1990:155).

This means that police managers and leaders need to reward police members for good and proper conduct and this reward system needs to be based on the development of relevant and carefully considered performance indicators.

Real change is also dependent on constant reference to new policies and principles and a continual reinforcement of evidence that change in the habitus has positive results in the field. However, within Durban POP, briefings and debriefings were not taking place consistently, and this minimised the learning opportunities within the unit. Key opportunities were therefore lost whereby police supervisors could have communicated (during briefings and debriefings) evidence that more tolerant and situationally appropriate policing led to a peaceful exercise of protest and demonstration. Such forums could also have been used to demonstrate how the unit's diversion from stated principles and procedures led to an escalation of public disorder and to a breakdown in police-community relations.

Authentic change within police organisations can only take place if the attitudes of both management and rank-and-file officers are altered, and this involves a constant review of the successes of changed

police conduct and responses. The initial and sustained transformation of police behaviour depends heavily on careful and well-informed front-line supervision at all times. However, close supervision should not simply be imposed on rank-and-file members. In order for police to engage with new value systems and belief systems, an environment needs to be created where all police members are able to actively participate in change processes. This requires a fundamental shift away from traditional and typical management styles and structures in police organisations towards more participatory forms of management (Reiner, 1992; Bayley, 1994).

Such changes in management styles in the police would hopefully lead to greater understanding of change processes (Washo, 1984), and make change more acceptable (Sykes, 1990). This in turn would motivate police members to actively involve themselves in projects aimed at change. High morale, it is argued, promotes pride, efficiency, and harmony, and will consequently enhance the acceptability of the profession and the quality of service rendered (van Heerden, 1982). The importance of changing the work structure during processes of organisational change is of course not only an important consideration for the police. Wilms (1996) argues that real commitment to a changed culture can only come about if workplace practices and relations are transformed. A move toward participatory, person-centred management requires a completely revised way of organising the work process, and in turn a major change in the entire occupational culture - a change in values, assumptions, and ways of coping. Neither participatory management nor directive supervision had been adequately developed in Durban POP at the time that this research was done. Consequently, rank-and-file members felt alienated from both management and from decision-making processes.

Chan concludes that change is traumatic. In order for change to occur people must want to change and change has to be directed and continuous. Police supervisors and managers have an important role to play in motivating members and to helping them to understand and support change efforts. Such supportive mechanisms and feedback were lacking in Durban POP. Cultural knowledge is learned through positive reinforcement of behaviour and responses. In particular, supervisors need to engage members in solving problems and in finding appropriate mechanisms to avoid anxiety in 'painful' situations. This is particularly important when police organisations aim to operate within a framework of community-oriented policing, as was supposed to be the case Durban POP.

Supervision of course is not the only important route to changing police culture. It may assist in changing the habits, but the field also needs to change. There needs to be greater clarity with regard to policy, oversight bodies must be vigilant of police behaviour, government has to indicate a commitment and concern with equal treatment of all persons and with the eradication of poor practice on the part of civil servants. Citizens must be afforded the resources to contest the bad behaviour of the police. The police need to know very clearly and specifically what their legal powers are. The public must also indicate that they are intolerant of police misconduct. They also need to show both

respect and sympathy for the police. Finally, there needs to be both co-operation and unity of purpose within the police agency. This is difficult to achieve when there are deep social cleavages within the organisation, such as those based on race and race thinking. This is the focus of the chapter to follow.

CHAPTER 9

DIVISION OR DIVERSITY? SOCIAL CLEAVAGE IN DURBAN POP

The thesis so far has examined two dimensions of transformation in Durban POP. It has explored the extent to which the behaviour and responses of the unit have shifted to become more tolerant, predictable, flexible, and community oriented. It has also examined the changes that have taken place with regard to management and leadership in the unit. Both behavioural change and developing new management styles were crucial to the project of transforming Durban POP. However, equally critical to this project was establishing an organisational environment that was free of discriminatory practices and where all social groupings were represented at every level of the organisation.

The objectives of police transformation in South Africa as documented in the Police Act, white papers and the Constitution took into account the need to change the behaviour, philosophy, structure and composition of the police force. However, given the history of racial discrimination in the South African public service (and within South African society more generally), for many police members transformation is equated with affirmative action and the representation of black (and to a lesser extent women) police officers at all levels of the SAPS. Van Kessel (2001), having carried out interviews with police officers throughout South Africa, concludes that while it would be generally accepted that attaining a community policing practice in the police is the cornerstone of police transformation, there is a wide-spread belief within the SAPS that transformation is synonymous with affirmative action. She argues that 'a racially representative police came to be seen not only as a just cause in itself, but as a pre-condition for a more effective police force' (van Kessel, 2001:1). Such a belief is limited given that international experience has shown that a demographically representative police force is not necessarily a legitimate or effective police force (Cashmore, 1991). As van Kessel correctly notes, 'representativity may be a precondition, but it is in itself not sufficient to achieve either legitimacy or effectiveness' (2001:1).

It is, however, important to look at questions of representativity and affirmative action within Durban POP for three reasons. First, representation and affirmative action are viewed by police members as salient indicators of transformation. Their experiences and perceptions of both affirmative action and discrimination within Durban POP impacted significantly on their assessment of transformation within the unit. Second, representativity is a key component of the stated goals of police transformation in South

Africa. Third, and perhaps most importantly, discriminatory practices and stereotypical conceptions of social groupings within the police will be transferred to understandings of, and behaviour toward, members of the community. If police members are unable to transcend discriminatory practices and belief systems within the police organisation itself, it is unlikely that they will be able to provide an equitable and non-discriminatory service to the public. External democratisation requires internal democratisation.

This chapter focuses on questions of representativity, race thinking and racism, gender inequality and affirmative action in Durban POP. It is largely based on the perceptions and experiences of members of Durban POP. It is argued that despite changes in legislation (national and police) and structural changes in Durban POP, discriminatory practices and codes continued to prevail in the unit. This chapter demonstrates that the dictionary knowledge (categorisations and characterisation of people and communities) held by members of Durban POP was informed by past practices and codes and had become deeply entrenched. New policies and restructuring failed to transform this dictionary knowledge. This was in large part due, the chapter argues, to a lack of change in the organisational field in which these members operated.

It is hardly surprising that discriminatory codes and practices persisted within Durban POP, and in fact throughout the entire police service. The cultural knowledge of the police has been infused over the decades with racist and sexist assumptions and stereotypes. As Brogden and Shearing (1993) accurately note, there is a heritage within the police in South Africa of white Afrikaner (male) superiority. Since the 1920s and 1930s, they argue, white police have been recruited who have been socialised to believe that their 'special mission is to safeguard white (and especially Afrikaner) civilization against "die Swart Gevaar" (the Black Danger)...potential recruits to the SAP were heavily indoctrinated into police racism' (Brogden and Shearing, 1993:44). This racist culture has been reinforced in the police canteen and in daily police work. Black members, according to Shearing and Brogden, willingly adopted this racist police culture in their quest to prove themselves as competent members of the policing organisation.¹ This racist police culture operated within a wider 'host culture "Afrikanerdom" that spawned apartheid' (Brogden and Shearing, 1993:45).² This culture was reinforced by the religious and political discourses of white rule in South Africa. The police service itself was also structured internally to reflect this worldview.

1. Minority groups within the police in other countries have also conformed to the dominant culture of the police organisations. According to a representative of the Black Police Association in Britain, 'once a black person becomes a member [of the police] organisation, it becomes apparent that they must conform to the norm...If you do not do so, you will be very uncomfortable' (*BBC Online Network*, 19/04/99).

2. Afrikanerdom identifies Afrikaners as the 'chosen people' who face the adversity of black treachery. This cultural knowledge has shaped the worldview of the police and has provided them with justifications for their actions. The police were the defenders of a white endangered civilisation (Brogden and Shearing, 1993:45).

White police officers were awarded higher status and greater life chances within the South African Police. The cultural knowledge of the police also contains gender prejudicial values and assumptions, and this knowledge has resulted in chauvinist practices and ideologies. This is largely the result of the sexist nature of the organisational and broader social environment of the police. The South African cultural context has been, and continues to be, chauvinistic. Morrell has gone as far as to say that South Africa, until recently, was a 'man's country' (2001:18). He argues that:

power was exercised publicly and politically by men. In families, both black and white, men made decisions, earned the money, and held the power. The law (both customary and modern) supported the presumption of male power and authority and discriminated against women...For white men, the uneven distribution of power gave them privileges but also made them defensive about challenges (by women, blacks, and/or other men) to that privilege. For black men, the harshness of life on the edge of poverty and the emasculation of political powerlessness gave their masculinity a dangerous edge' (2001:18).

This sexism, and the masculinities that resulted from it, was reproduced in all institutions in South African society. Within the South African police, for example, women were excluded from operational duty, were clustered in the lowest ranks of the police force, and were expected to conform to traditionalist 'feminine' conduct and appearances (Cawthra, 1993). Until the late 1980s, for example, unmarried mothers were not accepted into the police force. Women police officers were expected to obtain approval from their senior male officers before they could marry and police standing orders insisted that they wear skirts which restricted their ability to work operationally.

In general terms, South African society is characterised by deep social cleavages at every level and in all institutions. Bowling, Phillips, Campbell and Docking (2001) argue that where societies are divided by ethnic, class and racial differences, it is to be expected that the police service too will be affected by these same divisions. If police officers share widely held beliefs that women and individuals from ethnic minority communities are inferior, and if they share existing stereotypes about ethnicity and gender, this is highly likely to influence the ways in which police officers from different backgrounds relate to one another. Police prejudice is not simply the result of individual racist or sexist attitudes. Rather, it is a reflection of the racism and prejudice prevalent in the societies from which police are drawn as well as the localised experiences that police have in working with particular groupings in society (Chan, 1997).

Racist and sexist practices and rules (formal and informal) have become institutionalised within police organisations, and institutional racism and sexism is extremely difficult to deconstruct. There are both explicit manifestations of racism and sexism in policy and less explicit, 'informal' racist and sexist practices within the police organisation. Racism and sexism is often subtle and indirect but it is pervasive

and is practiced by overtly prejudiced individuals. It is also embedded in the mode of operations of the organisation and may be unintentional or even unwitting. It is, however, no less damaging than more formalized racial policies (Lea, 2000).³ An interplay between existing police culture, the social and political environment, and institutional discriminatory practices and codes is responsible for racial and gender cleavages and discrimination within the police organisation in South Africa.

Racist and sexist practices, as well as insufficient representativity, hinder police organisational transformation. Equality within the police is crucial for building unity and a shared vision within the police organisation. Organisational change is dependent on common purpose and collective effort (Schein, 1997) both of which can be undermined by deep social cleavages and discriminatory practices within an organisation. Furthermore, racist and sexist practices and culture within police organisations is transferred into ways of relating to the public and thus compromises the quality of service that the police provide to communities that they serve. So long as important aspects of police culture (schemas, perceptions and values) remain unreconstructed, interactions both within the police and between the police and their client communities will remain prejudicial.⁴ Finally, police members who feel discriminated against in the workplace are likely to suffer from reduced morale. In turn, this may impact on commitment to the police organisation and on levels of productivity.

Police representativity and equality in context

Since the 1960s there have been attempts in Western democratic⁵ countries to ensure representativity of minority groupings within police organisations.⁶ This coincided with the degeneration of relations between the police and minority groupings, particularly in Britain and the United States (Decker and Smith, 1980;

3. Lea argues that institutional racism incorporates 'processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people' (Lea, 2000).

4. Whether or not representativity positively impacts on day-to-day policing is a topic of much debate. Smith and Decker (1980) argue that the representativity strategy in the United States has not been successful in increasing the legitimacy of the police in the eyes of minority groupings. This, they say, may be because black police have become so much a part of the dominant police culture. Similarly, Brogden and Shearing (1993) assert that police culture appears to be resilient to changes in recruitment patterns. Police culture does not change simply because more black people and women have entered the police force. Culture reproduces itself and minority groupings enter police organisations and 'assume a commitment to the organisation and to the status quo, and absorb the "working personality" of other officers' (Brogden and Shearing, 1993:99). Fielding (1988) argues that police socialization exerts a homogenising effect upon police recruits. They are more likely to identify themselves with their colleagues than with others outside of the police organisation.

5. While the author acknowledges that South Africa is not a Western democracy, most of its legislation and institutional transformation programmes are based on those of Western democracies. It is for this reason that a comparison is made with Western democracies. Second, there is an extremely scant literature dealing with race and gender representation in state police organisations in Africa.

6. The first three police officers from visible ethnic minority communities in England and Wales were recruited in 1966. There has been an increase in the proportion of serving police officers who are from ethnic minority communities. In 1986 ethnic minorities represented 0.7 per cent of the police forces while by March 2000 they represented two per cent of the police service (Bowling, Phillips, Campbell, and Docking, 2001).

Brown, 1997). Police authorities, scholars of the police and policy-makers agreed that in order for the police to build good relationships with minority groupings in the communities that they serve, it is crucial to recruit police officers from minority communities. According to Weitzer, since the 1960s in the United States of America, 'an official consensus has emerged on the value of proportional representation of minority officers in the cities they serve: Greater diversity is expected to result in improvements in police treatment of minorities and also to provide a symbolic sense of "ownership" of police departments' (2000:313).

Minority recruitment efforts are viewed as a way of defusing minority group criticism of the police and thus ultimately enhancing law enforcement activities. The inclusion of minority groupings in police organisations is viewed as increasing the legitimacy of the police in the eyes of minority groupings. This is premised on the assumption that, for example, black police officers have a better understanding of the dynamics at play in black communities and are more sensitive to the needs and concerns of black people. It is believed that if the police are representative of the communities that they serve, they will better understand these communities and the police will thereby garner support and co-operation from them. This will assist the police in carrying out their key functions (especially crime combat). There is thus a widely held assumed link between representativity and effectiveness. This is reflected in both statements of police authorities and the press, even in South Africa. According to the *Cape Times*, for example:

There is only one way that the police force will ever be able to act decisively and catch those who refuse to play by the rules of society and that is if it enjoys the support of the majority of society. To gain this support the police force needs to mirror in its composition the demographics of the country. The importance of representativity lies not so much in the need to provide workplace equity and the need to redress past imbalances, but rather in the desperate need for a solution to crime in this country (*Cape Times*, 22/07/1999).

In an attempt to increase the representativity of both women and ethnic minority police officers, affirmative action⁷ and equal opportunity programmes have been instituted within police organisations. This is because, on their own accord, police organisations are unlikely to change. As Bent has argued:

Most police organisations can accurately be described as closed systems. Recruitment and selection for entry are conducted for only the lowest level of the organisation, and promotions are made from within, with only the members of the organisation competing for these positions. The essentially inbred nature of police bureaucracy lends itself to a commitment to the status quo throughout the hierarchy. This accounts for the characterization of the police bureaucracy as a 'closed fraternity', and the longer the men

7. Affirmative action can be defined as a policy designed to help reduce racial and gender inequality. It is a process that actively recognises a history of discrimination and aims to assuage this history. Affirmative action programmes are not gender or race blind, as equal opportunity policies and practices are. 'The operational goal of affirmative action in police employment is to have an agency workforce that reflects the composition of the working population at large' (Hochstedler and Conley, 1986:319).

remain in the organisation, the more tied they become to the hierarchy that nourishes and absorbs them' (Bent, 1974:21).

It is not only minority ethnic groupings that have been targeted by affirmative action and equity programmes. There has also been a concern in Western democracies for a greater representation of women in police organisations. While the first English policewoman was recruited in 1916, it was only in 1927 that equal opportunity legislation was introduced for the police. Despite this legislation, it was not until 1983 that a woman became a Chief Constable in England. Brown notes that 'historical analysis demonstrates that the entry of women into policing was contested in all jurisdictions within the British Isles, and their roles restricted to caring for women and children' (2000:106). The unwillingness of police forces to incorporate women in the early years and the restriction of women to certain roles within the police could partially account for their under-representation in Britain.

In the United States of America, where affirmative action and equal opportunity policies have existed since the 1960s, white males still held 77.2 per cent of supervisory positions in the early 1980s (Townsey, 1982).⁸ In 1990, it was estimated that women represented only about 10 per cent of police personnel in the United States. The number of women in supervisory roles at this time was very small – 3.3 per cent at municipal level and 0.7 per cent at the state level (Prenzler, 1995).

Cox (1996) argues that while women in the police have shown themselves to be as capable as men, attempts to recruit more women into the police in the United States comes more from a response to affirmative action and equal opportunity requirements than from the belief that such recruits can serve the police as well as white males can. Male officers and administrators continue to doubt the ability of women to perform, particularly in violent or potentially violent situations (such as in public disorder incidents). 'Policemen tend to view police women as incompetent and unfit for police work and working with female police officers does not appear to have a positive effect on such opinions' (Cox, 1996:145).

Despite affirmative action and equal opportunity programmes, women and minority groupings remain under-represented in police organisations in Western democratic countries. In England and Wales in March 2000, ethnic minorities represented two per cent of the police service despite the fact that they represent around seven per cent of the economically active population (Bowling, Phillips, Campbell and Docking, 2000). In the United States of America, where affirmative action and equal opportunity policies for women have existed since the 1960s, it was estimated that in 1990 women represented only about ten per cent of police personnel. The amount of women in supervisory roles was also very small –

8. For an interesting account of the history of minority police officers in the United States of America, see Cashmore (1991).

approximately 3.3 per cent at municipal level and 0.7 per cent at the state level (Prenzler, 1995). In the early 1980s, Townsey argued that black women were at most 'negligibly present even among the sworn supervisory and command personnel of the five most progressive agencies in the United States of America. White males hold 77.2 per cent of supervisory positions' (1982:463).

The continued under-representation of ethnic minorities and women in Western democratic police organisations can in part be attributed to specific masculine and Eurocentric norms which permeate all aspects of police work and neither supervisory officers nor senior officers appear to be concerned with challenging and changing these aspects of police culture (Bowling, Phillips, Phillips and Docking, 2000). The lack of interest of police managers and supervisors in dealing decisively with the discriminatory aspects of police culture is a serious impediment to transforming police organisations.

Schein (1997) argues that police leaders play a major role in embedding and reinforcing organisational culture. There are a number of mechanisms that police leaders employ to do this. What leaders pay attention to and measure, their reactions to critical incidents and organisational crises, role-modelling and teaching, criteria for allocation of rewards, and criteria for selection and promotion are all important mechanisms that influence police assumptions, values and schemas. Ultimately, police leaders are responsible for integrating the different subcultures 'by encouraging the evolution of common goals, common language and common procedures for solving problems' (Schein, 1997:275). Police managers who are not committed to reform processes or who are unable to create involvement and participation of members are unlikely to facilitate the move towards a police organisation based on equity and the tolerance of diversity.

Representation and discrimination in the South Africa police

The South African police have also had to confronted issues of representativity. With regard to the representation of women, these questions have been similar to those in Western democracies. With regard to racial 'minorities', however, the issues have differed somewhat from those confronting police organisations in Western democracies. There have always been a significant number of black policemen in the South African state police. Black police were called upon even during early British rule in South Africa (Brogden and Shearing, 1993). By the late 1980s, there were almost equal numbers of white and black police.⁹ By 1995, the South African Police Service was 35 per cent white, 54 per cent African, 8 per cent coloured and three per cent Asian (Cawthra, 1997).

9. In fact, it was during the most repressive apartheid years that black men were recruited into the South African Police. Black men were recruited into the South African Police to dispel public perceptions of white-on-black policing. Following the 1976 Soweto Uprisings where the key images were those of white police clubbing black protesters, police leaders made a determined effort to recruit black men into the SAP (Brogden and Shearing, 1993). This is discussed in some detail in Chapter 4.

While black police have always been represented in the police forces in South Africa, up until the early 1990s, black police officers received discriminatory treatment. No training was provided to black police until the late 1930s. Black members were not expected to be literate and this institutionalised career inferiority. They were not allowed to arrest white people, and they were only allowed to enforce the law in certain designated geographic areas. Up until the late 1970s, black police were not allowed to wear the same uniforms as white police.¹⁰ Black police officers also earned roughly two-thirds of the pay of their white colleagues (Brewer et al, 1988).

Black police members were also excluded from certain career rungs. The SAP appointed its first black Major in 1978 and its first black Lieutenant Colonel in 1980 (Brewer et al, 1988). Only in 1980 was the first black police officer given authority over white police and the first black station commander was appointed in 1980 (Brogden and Shearing, 1993). By 1993, white officers occupied 93 per cent of the highest-ranking positions in the SAP (Scharf and Cochrane, 1993). The lack of representativity of black police in management structures is perhaps the most chronic legacy of institutional racism in the South African police.

Accompanying the transition to political democracy in South Africa in 1994 were concerns about the representativity of historically disadvantaged groupings. The new government was particularly concerned that there should be adequate representativity and equity within the public service. A number of formal interventions to eradicate racism and sexism in the South African public service were introduced. Affirmative action, representativity and equity policies and practices were viewed as crucial to the transformation process in the public service, of which the police are a part. The White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (1995), Chapter 10, states that

representativeness is one of the main foundations of a non-racist, non-sexist and democratic society, and as such is one of the key principles of the new Government. The Interim Constitution also stresses the need for a public service broadly representative of the South African community... Achieving representativeness is therefore a necessary precondition for legitimizing the public service and driving it towards equitable service delivery (1995:52).

To achieve this 'representativeness', a proactive approach, affirmative action, was seen as vital. The White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (1995) defines affirmative action as 'laws, programmes or activities designed to redress past imbalances and to ameliorate the conditions of

10. Black police officers in the United States of America confronted similar types of discriminatory treatment in earlier decades. According to Cashmore, 'many US police departments had what were called "Negro police forces" in the 1940s. Black officers were given separate offices to work in, they rode bicycles or walked instead of driving cars and they patrolled only black neighbourhoods. New York City employed Afro-Americans and assigned them specifically to areas such as Harlem...' (1991:93).

individuals and groups who have been disadvantaged on the basis of race, colour, gender or disability' (1995:53). Through affirmative action programmes, targeted groups (black people, women and people with disabilities) were to be identified and appointed at all levels of the public service. The White Paper also outlines a timeframe for affirmative action. It states that 'within four years, all departmental establishments must endeavour to be at least 50 per cent black at management level. During this same period at least 30 per cent of new recruits to middle management and senior management echelons should be women. Within ten years, people with disabilities should comprise two per cent of public service personnel' (1995:53).

Following the Constitution and the various White Papers pertaining to the public service, legislation applying to the SAPS states that there should be representativity at all levels of the SAPS, including the highest levels, in order to reflect the diversity of South African society. Affirmative action programmes are seen as crucial in addressing the legacy of inequality. Like the need for professional and democratic service delivery and new management practices, the need for affirmative action must be contextualised as part of the broader process of change in the South African public service. The need for affirmative action in the SAPS is directly linked to the need for better performance on the part of the police. As the 1998 White Paper on Safety and Security states, 'improving service delivery is directly related to the creation of a representative, democratic and accountable Department of Safety and Security' (1988:2).

In 1997, the SAPS decided to formulate its own equity policy in line with the general instructions for the public service. The SAPS Credo for Affirmative Action was devised which states that:

In order to manifest commitment to [the equity] policy and constitutional responsibility, the SAPS shall strive to reflect the demographics of the country in all occupational classes and at all levels of the organisation... in terms of race and gender' (1997:1).

The Credo states that by the year 2000, the service shall attain a minimum of 50 per cent black people at management level. Women should comprise 30 per cent at middle and senior management levels. Paradoxically, it was essentially white police managers who were responsible for ensuring this took place, and this meant that white managers were also responsible for phasing themselves out – a difficult task to imagine. To facilitate this process, there have been processes of fast track promotions, accelerated management training programmes and shadow postings.

When the transformation of the South African police began in the mid-1990s following the elections, the issue confronting the police force/service was less about numerical representation of black police members and more about the representation of black police at the higher levels of the police and riding

the police of discriminatory practices against black police. However, gender numerical representation was viewed as a priority for the transformation of the new police service. Minister Sydney Mufamadi stated in a media release shortly after the election of the new democratic government that:

The SAPS and especially its leadership must become visibly more representative of the population – including gender distribution. This process should be seen as a means to enrich police work and bring diverse talents to bear on policing problems. Sexism in all its various forms must be combated as widely as possible, in both its open and concealed manifestations...it is vital for the legitimacy and credibility of the SAPS that more blacks be brought into the top structures of the SAPS (<http://www.polity.org.za/govdocs/pr/1994/pr0525.html>).

Despite the commitment of government officials and police authorities to ensuring greater representativity of black police in high-ranking levels of the police, by the late 1990s this had not yet been achieved. In 1998, the SAPS had a total force of roughly 130 000 SAPS members. Nearly 70 per cent were black (African, Indian and Coloured). However, it was in high-ranking and leadership roles that black members were severely under-represented. Of a total of 12 182 commissioned officers in the SAPS, only 4064 (33, %) were black (Marks, 1998). This means that those in positions that enabled them to instruct, guide and make important policy and strategic decisions were, for the most part, white. This problem was even more acute at the level of middle management. In 1998, for example, at the Superintendent level, of 2530 members, 1928 (76, per cent) were white.

The poor representation of black members in management positions led to accusations of racism in the SAPS. In 1998, an Independent Commission of Inquiry into Racism in the SAPS was appointed. The aim of this committee was to conduct a lengthy investigation into racism in the SAPS. The Commission found that institutional racism was extensive in the SAPS and was evident in the rank breakdown according to race as Table 23 below indicates.

Table 23: A National Profile of the SAPS for 1999

RANK	ABSOLUTE NUMBERS	AFRICAN %	COLOURED %	INDIAN %	WHITE %
Commissioners	91	19	7	4	70
Directors	283	19	2	3	76
Senior sup.	931	18	3	5	74
Superintendent	2489	16	2	5	77
Captain	8286	25	5	8	77
Inspector	23535	44	8	4	43
Sergeant	58940	68	8	3	21
Constable	13636	79	8	2	11
Student	912	57	12	21	10
Civilians	20127	47	10	3	40

Source: The Independent Commission of Enquiry into Racism in the SAPS (1999:22)

These statistics raise serious questions regarding promotions and appointments in the SAPS. Following these findings, the Independent Commission of Inquiry into Racism in the SAPS concluded that 'the occupational pyramid of the SAPS displays a white apex with an overwhelming black base...from the rank of Sergeant down to that of the Constable, white officers are under-represented by a margin of 10 and 20 percentage points respectively below what their normal representation in these ranks should be' (Report of the Independent Commission of Inquiry into Racism in the SAPS, 1999:22). White officers are seldom subordinates in the SAPS. This feeds into experiences and perceptions of racism amongst black members in the SAPS.¹¹ The Helen Suzman Foundation based in Johannesburg also noted that representativity problems in SAPS led to complaints about racist practices and rules:

The promotion of Indian and white officers over Africans is a long-standing grievance. Since its inception in 1994, the provincial government's Safety and Security Portfolio Committee, which has representatives from all seven of the provinces' political parties, has repeatedly voiced its concern about racially-biased police promotions and appointments. They have criticised the lack of affirmative action policies in the force, of

11. There is also evidence that black members in management positions have been marginalised in the police force. According to the Human Rights Commission's Inquiry into Racism in the SAPS Vryburg District, the lack of adequate representativity in management results in black officers being denied training opportunities. In turn, this results in division and polarisation of black and white officers who are then unable to work as a team. It was reported that in Vryburg, there were cases of white officers undermining black officers and also the outright abuse of black officers by white managers (South African Human Rights Commission, 1999).

training programmes and of transparency – especially the failure to provide accurate statistics on the racial breakdown of police management. Chris Serfontein, KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Commissioner, finally released statistics to the committee on February 2 1999 showing that out of 182 police stations in the province only 29 had African station commanders... Jacob Zuma, the ANC provincial leader went further...he accused the police of deliberately attempting to sow racial divisions between Africans and Indians. The promotion of Indian police officers into senior positions had been designed to raise tensions between them and their African colleagues, he said (http://www.hsf.org.za/Briefing_10/Indians_under_fire.htm).

The ongoing racialised practices and outcomes within the SAPS have received much attention from black police officers, and is an ongoing point of mobilisation for the police unions in South Africa. Black members of the SAPS have complained of ongoing racist treatment toward them with regard to promotion, deployment and abuse by high-ranking officers. Mary de Haas, longstanding police violence monitor in KwaZulu-Natal, reports that innumerable numbers of black police officers have turned to her for assistance 'with problems they are experiencing such as discrimination and racism in the workplace, tardiness in receiving monies due to them, and a lack of success in applications for promotion' (1998:4). Racism, or perhaps lack of affirmative action, can best be exemplified if one is to look at the racial breakdown of police management where the numbers of black high-ranking officers are in short supply.

Concerns about racism have featured high on the list of concerns of the police unions and other representative organisations of black police officers in South Africa. The continued racism toward black police members angered and frustrated the Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union (POPCRU).¹² In the late 1990s, despite serious consequences for its members, POPCRU decided to engage in militant collective action in protest against the continual appointment of what they called white, racist police officers into management positions. In the last nine months of 1998, POPCRU in KwaZulu-Natal embarked on a number of actions against local and provincial police management. This included an illegal sit-in at police headquarters.

The purpose of the sit-in was to demand the resignation of the provincial commissioner given what they claimed to be his lack of commitment and willingness to transform the service (*Mercury*, 11/05/98). Members of the police union blocked the entrance to the building and would not allow anyone to enter or

12. POPCRU was launched on 5 September 1989. One of the main reasons for the formation of POPCRU was to provide a voice for black police officers who by all accounts worked under extremely poor conditions in the SAP. A second reason for the formation of POPCRU was to protest the use of the police, by the government, in upholding apartheid laws and policies. The social base of POPCRU was and remains essentially black.

Police unions were not formally recognized in South Africa until 1993. By this time, another essentially white trade union, the South African Police Union (SAPU), had been formed. Many perceived the formation of SAPU as aimed at countering the existence of POPCRU. While white police officers tended to join SAPU, by 1999, the majority of members of SAPU were also black. For more information about SAPU and POPCRU see Marks (2000a) and Cawthra (1993).

leave the building. This resulted in the forceful deployment of the Durban Public Order Police unit to remove their fellow police officers. In another incident, POPCRU members engaged in a work-to-rule action at Durban's main police station, leading to a disruption of services. About 100 members left their office workstations and congregated in front of the main gate of the police station, disrupting services and making access to the police station extremely difficult. They were protesting against the promotion of white officers and the poor representation of black police in management positions (*Daily News*, 05/05/98). Following this incident, 29 members participating in the collective action were dismissed from the police. However, this action did propel police management to begin a series of discussions with the unions about fast tracking the affirmative action process. POPCRU has also stated that it intends to make racism and affirmative action its prime focus in the years to come. In October 1998, POPCRU launched its programme of action. One of its main campaigns, according to spokesman Siyavuya Jafta, was to make a 'decided sweep at the old guard of the police force notorious for its racism' (*Mercury*, 31/10/98).

High-ranking officers also created their own representative organisations to fight against racism in the SAPS. In June 1998, the Black Officers Forum (BOF) was launched. The BOF was also troubled by the lack of affirmative action procedures in the SAPS. However, unlike POPCRU, they were also concerned that black police in management positions were 'not challenging the existing culture and power relations within the organisation' (Marks, 1998). The BOF opposed what founding member, Mpho Mutle, called 'token affirmative action' whereby black members of the police were placed in management positions while lacking proper training and expertise to effectively carry out their functions.

Gender representativity has also been a source of anxiety for those concerned about equity in the SAPS. It was not until 1972 that the South African Police embarked on a deliberate recruitment of women. They began by recruiting white women and in the early 1980s began to recruit women from other ethnic and racial categories (Brogden and Shearing, 1993). In November 2001, the SAPS official website noted that women represent 12 per cent of the total organisation. This compares well with other Western democracies. In the United Kingdom, women represent 16 per cent of the police force. In England, they represent six per cent of the police force and in the United States of America they represent nine per cent. (<http://www.saps.org.za/profile/icomp.htm>). However, women were vastly under-represented in the specialised units of the SAPS and were in short supply in high-ranking levels in the late 1990s. This is evident from the provincial Status Report on Transformation in the South African Police Service in KwaZulu-Natal for the period June 1998 to May 1999 below:

Table 24: Representativity in SAPS of senior management in KwaZulu Natal

RANK	African Males	African Females	Coloured Males	Coloured Females	Indian Males	Indian Females	White Males	White Females
Provincial commissioner							1	
Assistant commissioner	1						6	
Director	8				6	1	17	
Senior superintendent	15	1	2		15	1	56	5
TOTAL	24	1	2	0	21	2	80	5

Status Report on Transformation in the South African Police Service in Kwa-Zulu-Natal (1998-1999:2)¹³

As Table 24 indicates, even in the late 1990s, women were barely represented in the senior management echelons of the SAPS despite affirmative action legislation aimed at policewoman. There were no women Commissioners and only one (Indian) policewomen at Director level. Women represented a total of five per cent of senior management in the province of KwaZulu-Natal.¹⁴

Sally get your gun - Women in Durban POP

Very few policewomen chose to join Durban POP. As can be seen from Table 6 (Chapter 5), by May 2000 there were only 19 women in the unit. This represented a very small proportion of the unit whose total strength was 816 members. Of the 19 women working in the unit, only seven were operational. The remaining women carried out administrative functions. This is not surprising. Jefferson argues that public order police units are 'the province of men' (1990:115) and that the entry of women into these units will be resisted given the widespread patriarchal assumptions about policing prevalent in such units. Although there is no policy that excludes women from the Special Patrol Groups in England, the practice is to do so given the masculinist assumptions that pervade these units (Jefferson, 1990).

13. It should be noted that in the entire population of the SAPS in KwaZulu-Natal during this period, women constituted 5.9 per cent of the organisation. In the 1998 round of Kwa-Zulu-Natal appointments, 62 per cent of promotions to senior positions went to white men (*Financial Mail*, 13/03/98).

14. This table also demonstrates that senior management positions in the SAPS in KwaZulu-Natal were dominated by Indian and white policemen. It should be noted, however, that in the year 2000, an African policeman was appointed to the post of Provincial Commissioner for the first time.

Members of Durban POP recognised that women were not readily received in the unit, as Table 25 below demonstrates.

Table 25: Statement: Women are easily accepted in POP

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative per cent
Strongly disagree	30	21,0	21,6	21,6
Disagree	46	32,2	33,1	54,7
Neutral	36	25,2	25,9	80,6
Agree	22	15,4	15,8	96,4
Strongly agree	5	3,5	3,6	100,0
Total	139	97,2	100,0	
Missing	4	2,8		
Total	143	100		

According to this survey, answered essentially by male members of the unit, only 18,9 per cent of felt that women were easily accepted into the unit. Men in the unit, for the most part, seemed to feel that women did not have a role to play in the unit and that if they did join, they served the purpose of creating a serene environment. In general, though, rank-and-file members viewed having women in the unit as a nuisance. This is not unique to the South African context, nor to Durban POP. In fact, according to Brown (1997), policemen often oppose the recruitment of women into police organisations. They argue that such recruitment leads to an increase in exposure to the risk of rule bending or breaking. When asked why so few women join the unit, a male Inspector told me that:

We do not have a need for women in the unit. If you work in the township, what is a woman supposed to do there? A female cannot go into the township and do what a male can do. Men see it as disrespectful to take an order from a woman. Although we sometimes do have a need for women in the unit. This is particularly important when we do searches on women in the community. Females can also look after the criminals when they are arrested. When we penetrate a house and there are kids and women inside, female members can calm them down¹⁵...Female members get associated with a mother figure which can be important. There are those advantages to having women in the unit. But, I would say that there are more disadvantages to having them in the unit than there are advantages.¹⁶

15. Interestingly, Jefferson argues that the fact that paramilitary public order units are dominated by males contributes to the construction of an 'amplifying spiral' by these units since most of the recruits are ambitious young men who are 'anxious to be active' (Jefferson, 1990:134). He argues that recruiting women into such units may assuage the strong masculine ethos.

16. Interview with Inspector de Bruin, July 1999.

Despite such conservative views, a few women did choose to join the unit. Women were first allowed to be part of the specialised unit dealing with riots and public order in the early 1990s. At this time, they were restricted to administrative duties. It was only in 1995 that policewomen were permitted to participate in the operational duties of Durban POP. There seemed to be very few women who were eager to work operationally in the unit at this time, and they received a lot of antagonism from men in the unit on joining them 'in the field'. Inspector Marike Vosloo, one of the first white women who chose to do this, shared her experience with me:

I was one of the first three women to work outside in the unit. That was in 1995. Prior to that we were only allowed to work in the operational room and in administration. And, it was only in 1994 that we were allowed to work in the ops room. It was a big fight to get to this point. We had to fight with management. The Provincial Director of the Public Order Police unit was opposed to this initially. I think it was because he had a daughter of his own and he was worried about the dangers of working outside. He is very protective, you see. Initially it was only white women who wanted to work outside. Personally, I wanted to work outside because I didn't join the police to work in an office. Why did we get trained in SWAT and other things if we couldn't get to utilise our skills? But, I can tell you, it wasn't easy to become part of the platoons. You get tired of being a woman in a male's world. If a man can run 100 metres, you have to run 150 metres. You need to show all the time that you have the ability to do things like a man, even better. The first mistake you make, men come down hard on you. You see, a lot of men in the unit don't want to work with females. They feel that they need to protect you all the time and this makes their work more difficult. When you break into groups, men will not choose you to go into their groups.¹⁷

African women who became operational in the unit later that same year corroborated Inspector Vosloo's experiences:

Monique: How did it feel to join POP as a woman?

Sergeant Mary Nene: Hey, we were very much afraid. I remember when we first arrived from the college, they told us that they really don't like to have women in the unit and that there was a certain officer that did not take shit from anyone. We were very frightened then...I just knew that I had to do what I was told. Before that, I was working in the leave office in the unit writing leave forms for people when they were sick. We were not allowed to do operational work at that time. They used to make us make tea and whenever there was an operation they would say: 'No you ladies can't go out'. So, we said 'No man, we were trained to work be police not tea ladies'. But in those days, they wouldn't let us go out. We just had to sit there and do admin, make tea and such things. This was very painful for us. So, one day, my friend said: 'No Mary, this is enough. I am going straight to the commander and ask him whether I was trained as a tea women or a police officer'. Then after that they stopped telling us that we can't go outside. But they still argued that keeping us in admin was for our own safety. So, we said, 'No, we want to go outside. When we joined the police we wanted to serve the community. How can we serve the community making tea for the officers?' Eventually in October 1995, we were allowed to

17. Interview with Inspector Marike Vosloo, November 2001.

join the platoons...Most men think that they are better than the females, but we are proving them wrong.¹⁸

Entering and working in Durban POP was tough for women members. They confronted real gender discrimination and stereotyping which led to clear divisions in the unit. Men seem to have created closed status groupings within the unit. This in turn led to low levels of representation of women in the unit as well as a lack of gender diversity within the platoons.

Gender representativity was not only restricted by intra-organisational factors. Whether or not women would or could enter the unit was also, to some extent, dependent on the family circumstances of these women. The demands of the job called for partners who were supportive both emotionally and physically (in terms of sharing household responsibilities). Inspector Marike Vosloo, despite her passion for working operationally, decided to return to administrative work in January 2001 because she believed the demands of the job were impacting negatively on her daughter's well being. As a single parent, she felt she had no choice but to prioritise her daughter's needs:

Earlier this year, I had to go back to administrative duties in the unit. You see, I am a single mother and my daughter started to be very anxious about my work. You see, I had a boyfriend in the unit. He got shot and my daughter was very upset by this. Every time I put on my uniform, she would cry and tell me not to get shot. She doesn't have a father and so I think she worries a lot about me getting hurt or dying. So, for her sake, I stay in an admin job now. I see myself primarily as a mother, and then as a policewoman. If I was married with a supportive husband maybe that would be different. But, to be honest, I am bored in admin. I really want to be operational but what can I do?

In contrast, Captain Modise, the first woman Platoon Commander in the unit, had an accommodating husband and this allowed her to work in an unpredictable environment with long periods of absence from home:

I think what scares a lot of women about the unit is the night shift and the times that you have to go away. But, there is nothing wrong with the night shift. It is the same as the day shift. But, you have to have somebody like your husband to be on your side. If your husband is angry at you doing night shifts, you won't be able to do anything. You will just have to work in administration. On my side, it is another story because my husband supports me in the work that I do. He is a good man with a big heart. Sometimes he stays with the kids for a month, or for two weeks, and he doesn't complain. But you have to compromise. You have to see that the house is in order before you leave. The cooking and washing must be done and then you can convince your husbands, motivate them.¹⁹

18. Interview with Sergeant Mary Nene, July 1998.

19. Interview with Captain Modise, April 2000.

Although rank-and-file policemen seemed to be skeptical of incorporating women into operational functions in the unit, management in the unit appeared to be extremely supportive of women in the unit. In fact, Captain Modise was one of the first woman Platoon Commanders to be appointed in the country. In late 2000, she was promoted to Company Commander, and in November 2001 another African woman was appointed as a Company Commander. The Unit Commander informed me that it was crucial to encourage women in the unit and to try to recruit more women to the unit:

We really need more women like Captain Ncanana in the unit. We noticed early on that she had excellent potential. So, we promoted her to Platoon Commander. Men in the unit were not very happy at first, but look now, she is one of our best Platoon Commanders. Most of the members in her platoon are happy and they are doing very well. I wish we could find more women like her to incorporate in the unit. But, it is not easy to find women who want to join this unit.²⁰

Captain Modise greatly appreciated the support she had received from the unit management. She believed that she had proven herself as an effective commander and that as a result, men in the unit would change their gendered assumptions. She believed that being a woman brings 'special qualities' and skills to the unit:

At the time I became Platoon Commander, the platoon was full of members who used to drink on duty and misbehave. That platoon was restructured and I was put in charge. I did not feel afraid that I had been given such difficult men to deal with because everything depends on motivation and I am able to motivate my men at all times. And things have happened. I have turned the platoon around. Now there is discipline and productivity in the platoon. The platoon was useless before. So now I have seen that I joined the unit, became a platoon commander and I have worked with these members and things have changed. In the beginning they were unwilling to co-operate with me. Three months later, things had changed completely. They came to see that no, this woman is good and is even better than a man. She understands, she listens, she can cope with our difficulties...I can do anything they can do. Look how fat I am but I am fit and I am excellent in weapon training...I actually feel that at least half the Platoon Commanders in this unit should be women. We would then achieve a lot. There will be no booking off sick and no taking long leave. You know what happens now? If I am not at work, my members phone me at home and ask, 'Mammie, why are you not at work? We are missing you a lot. Please tell us that tomorrow you are coming'... There is going to be more restructuring in the unit and my guys have informed me that I must tell the bosses that they want to remain with me. They don't want anybody else to command them...So, I can say that if we put more women in the field, society will gain a lot. If I go to the university to solve a certain problem, students don't go crazy because of the wonderful thing they see before their eyes. Instead of seeing a man with a gun, they see a woman smiling, waving hands and talking to them nicely. In all instances, people co-operate with me.²¹

20. Interview with Senior Superintendent Meiring, August 1999.

21. Interview with Captain Modise, April 2000.

Policing scholars who advocate that there should be a 'gender balance' within police organisations tend to agree with Captain Modise's approach. Brown, for example, argues that while men in police organisations tend to focus on 'external issues and prefer to exchange hard information, women talk to establish or reinforce a personal connection or exchange experience' (1997:23). Equal opportunity policies, therefore, have the potential to lead to a better working environment, particularly for minority or disadvantaged groupings.

Despite the support that managers in Durban POP have extended to women in the unit, there was still antagonism on the part of men in the unit toward their women colleagues, as Table 25 above indicates. It would also seem that there was some antagonism toward Captain Modise as a result of her fast-track promotion. Sexist perceptions persisted despite, or in some instances because of, the perceived preferential treatment awarded to Captain Modise. According to Inspector Marike Vosloo:

Many males feel negative toward Captain Modise. They are threatened by her and perhaps there is also jealousy toward her. They feel she has been fast-tracked unjustifiably just because she is a black woman. They don't understand how oppressed we women have been in the police for such a long time and that we deserve a break. Men in the unit think very negatively about women in the unit. They think we are promiscuous and that we get where we are by sleeping with men. Do you know what they call women in the unit? State mattresses! Can you believe that? They really treat us with no respect. But, I have to say that when you work consistently with them in the field, they do eventually change their attitudes toward you.²²

Despite attempts by managers in the unit to augment gender representativity and deconstruct gendered stereotypes and assumptions, women were vastly under-represented in the unit, and men continue to question the value of women in the unit. Affirmative action strategies, as in the case of Captain Modise seemed to have triggered resentments. This is not unusual or unexpected. As Crosby and Clayton (1990) have argued, affirmative action processes often have negative consequences. They can create or reinforce prejudicial belief and highlight a person's minority group status. Those not targeted by affirmative action processes may feel frustrated and unfairly victimised by preferences (Taylor, 1995). There was evidence of this in Durban POP.

The gender cleavage within Durban POP remained stark five years after the transformation process began in the unit. It is highly unlikely that Durban POP, or any other public order police unit in South Africa will ever attain the goal of 30 per cent representation of women as stated in the SAPS Credo for Affirmative Action. However, the appointment of women officers to supervisory functions in the unit, and

22. Interview with Inspector Marike Vosloo, November 2001.

the inclusion of women in the operational work of the unit are likely to result in cultural change, particularly in the gendered dictionary knowledge of both men and women in the unit.

A racially divided organisational field – a poor basis for equality

Chan (1996) argues that racist cultures are likely to persist in police organisations so long as the field in which the police operate remains racially prejudiced and stratified. As was noted above, South African society is characterized by racism and race-thinking (Maré, 1999) and as a result, its institutions are suffused with racial divisions and discriminatory practices. Durban POP was no exception. The organisational field of Durban POP was racially determined in two ways – platoons were racially constituted and supervisors were not trained in the management of race relations. This organisational field proved to be an obstacle to the construction of non-discriminatory occupational culture.

Table 6 in Chapter 5 illustrates the racial breakdown (according to rank) of Durban POP in May 2000. The majority of members in the unit were African (53 per cent). Indian members were the next largest represented grouping (37 per cent), white members constituted nine per cent, and coloured members constituted only one per cent of the unit. While the Unit Commander was African, Indian members occupied the majority of middle management and top management positions in the unit. This meant that the majority of Platoon Commanders and Company Commanders in the unit were Indian. This, as we shall see later in the chapter, resulted in antagonism and resentment between the various race/ethnic groupings within the unit.

A further structural problem that existed in the unit was that the platoons and companies were not racially integrated, as Table 26 below demonstrates.

Table 26: Breakdown of race in the platoons of Durban POP, March 2001²³

	INDIAN	COLOURED	AFRICAN	WHITE	TOTAL
Alpha	36		60	1	97
Bravo	24		93		117
Charlie	17		110	4	131
Delta	11	5	88		104
Bike	8	1	1	6	16
Field	1	2	22	5	30
Reaction	1	2	1	12	16
RDP	0	2	10	9	21

23. This table was given to me by the Unit Commander in March 2001.

There are a number of points that can be deduced from Table 26. Firstly, of the 37 white members who were operational in the unit, 32 were in the specialised platoons.²⁴ The Charlie and Delta companies were almost entirely constituted by African members. While Indian members were present in all companies, they were poorly represented in the Delta Company and were barely represented in the Field and Reaction Platoons. As was noted in Chapter 5, the over-representation of white members in the specialised platoons led to much controversy in the unit. African and Indian members complained that white members were receiving preferential treatment since these specialised platoons had greater resources than the other platoons. Members in these platoons were also awarded more overtime payment than other members were.²⁵ The following conversation took place when I joined a largely African based platoon on a crime prevention operation in KwaMashu Township:

14/09/2000

Sergeant Ngema: You see, white members are all in this RDP platoon. They come into the area for a short time and then they leave again. If there are any problems with the way in which they conduct themselves, we who are permanently in the area have to deal with it once they leave. We [African members] are the ones who have to work in dirty conditions and at the end of a shift we have grease all over our uniforms and have to go home and wash them before we can wear them again the next day. The RDP unit are always clean. They don't get to do the dirty work. They are also paid overtime for the same work that we do all the time but don't get paid extra for. So, we can only say that blacks and whites are treated differently in the unit.

Monique: What about Indian members? Are they treated differently to African members?

Sergeant Ngema: Well, look at the unit. What do you see? Indian members are all doing office jobs. I think that is not right.

The precedent that had been set within Durban POP was that members worked most often with others of the same racial groupings. Despite the animosity that this created within the unit, members expressed a sense of dislodgment when members of the same racial reference group as themselves were not present. As a white sergeant informed me:

This unit has changed a lot in the last few years. One big change is that there are no white members anymore. I don't mean to be racist, but now I feel like an outsider in the unit. Before there were a lot of whites. I enjoyed being with them. We spoke the same language. At the moment, I feel like a German in Zambia. Most of the white members have left, and in the video unit where I work, I am the only white member at the moment.²⁶

24. This point has been dealt with in Chapter 5. Chapter 5 also outlines what the functions of these specialised units were.

25. Top management in the unit recognised that the racial character of the platoons was highly problematic. In March 2001 they introduced a plan to restructure the platoons. This process of restructuring was underway when this dissertation was being written and the outcome of this process can, therefore, not be evaluated.

26. Interview with Sergeant de Bruin, August 2000.

In mid-2000, the Unit Commander began to inform rank-and-file members in the platoons that he intended to restructure the platoons to ensure that racial integration was taking place and so that perceptions of preferential treatment were eradicated. However, members in the specialised platoons made it clear to me that they would do everything in their power to ensure that this did not take place. The following conversation was recorded in my research diary:

15/05/2000

Inspector Botha: Monique, do you know that the new Unit Commander is thinking of disbanding the RDP unit as part of his restructuring plan?

Monique: I have heard that.

Inspector Botha: That is very stupid of him. We are the hardest working and most productive members in the unit. Let me show you our performance records. (Takes out a book with recordings of their 'successes'). Last month we arrested 43 suspects, recovered 25 vehicles and recovered 18 guns. Now, that is what you call productive. The other guys in the unit don't have half of our recoveries and arrests. In fact, probably the whole unit together does not get the same results as us.

Monique: You may be right.

Inspector Botha: Well, the Unit Commander will never succeed in shutting us down. We will cause chaos in the unit if he tries to do this. We will get the support of the Area Commissioner and the KwaMashu community and we will organise a petition.

Monique: That sounds pretty serious. Why do you think the Unit Commander wants to disband you in the first place?

Inspector Botha: Because these fucking lazy Indians have got it in for us. They claim that we get preferential treatment in the unit. What they don't report is how productive we are and that we are really committed to being policemen. These Indians have no stamina. They have no backbone. They won't do anything that is a little bit dangerous. They don't take risks. It is their nature to be like this. Those Indian captains are just pathetic. They don't know what they are doing but it is only Indians that are promoted in this unit. But when there is a real problem, they call us okes [guys] to come and sort it out.

Sergeant Marais: I can tell you one thing, if they close down our platoon I will take permanent sick leave. There is no way that I will go and work with those guys in the other platoons.

Members of the specialised platoons had a vested interest in ensuring that they were not disbanded. They were familiar and comfortable with the other members in the platoon, and they believed that they had an effective modus operandi. In a sense, they had developed a closed status grouping within the unit and their language was imbued with negative stereotypes about other groupings (racial and functional) in the unit.

The racial clustering of members into particular companies and platoons meant that racial integration was limited in the daily working lives of members of the unit. This undermined attempts at creating racial diversity and equality in the unit. This in itself weakens organisational change efforts. Organisational theorists such as Schein (1997) and Kiel (1994) argue that diversity facilitates organisational change

efforts.²⁷ Racial clustering within the platoons led to a reinforcing of racial (and ethnic) identities and stereotyping in the unit, as we shall see below.

A second structural problem in the unit was that middle and top management had received no diversity training and felt ill-equipped to deal with racial tensions within the unit. Like their subordinates, they were products of their environment (social, political and organisational) and were thus unable to resolve or mediate racial tensions within the platoons. They were also unable to display role-modelling behaviour aimed at racial equity. In fact, a number of Platoon Commanders informed me that they were at a loss as to how to break down the racial cleavages in their platoons and in dealing with accusations of racism that were abundant in the unit. The racialised make-up of the platoons did not assist in breaking down perceptions of racial discrimination and preferential treatment of white and Indian members in the unit.

There were various occasions where I noticed that both unit leaders and rank-and-file members socialised only with members of the same racial groupings. Even where platoons had members of all racial groupings present, during rest periods, members choose to associate only with those of their reference groupings which were usually racially determined. I recorded the following observation in my research diary:

11/05/2000

Things settled down a bit on the campus and the unit retreated to the sports field. The Platoon Commanders had instructed members to withdraw and to relax until they were called upon to intervene. It was by now about 13:00 and some members decided it was time to have something to eat. They took out their lunch and started to share with one another. I noticed that Indian members sat with one another and shared with one another, across the rank boundaries. I asked the Indian Platoon Commander present if his platoon was made up only of Indian members. He pointed to a vehicle where about ten African members were sitting. I asked why they were sitting separately from him and his peers. I was told that African and Indian members seldom mix socially and that this would take at least fifteen years to come right. ...The African members were sitting in the Nyalas [armoured vehicles] talking; some were lying with their eyes closed. African members were in one vehicle and Indian members were standing around together talking and eating food which they were sharing with one another. I asked one of the Captains why this was happening and he informed me that this was just how things were and that it was because members come from such different 'cultures'.²⁸ It became clear to me that even while members from different race groups may work together, there is little attempt or interest on the part of members to develop social relationships across racial divides.

27. Kiel (1994), for example, argues that diversity in the workplace allows for a variety of different responses to organisational challenges, and this in turn can lead to new organisational processes ranging from decision-making, to problem-solving, to leadership roles. Diversity, Kiel (1994) argues, creates multiple opportunities for creative solutions to problems.

28. The term 'culture' was often used to explain divisions based on race. It was used unreflectively and served as a justification for racialised interactions in the unit.

Far from being role models of racial integration, Platoon Commanders reinforced these social practices. They tended to engage at an informal social level only with members of the same racial groupings as themselves. Consequently, social cleavages based on race remained unchallenged and the dictionary knowledge of members of the unit was infused with stereotypical schemas of 'the other'.

Ainsworth (1995) writes that stereotypes are used when time has not been taken to understand another person or group of people. Categories are created that 'allow the observer to make predictions about others' attributes, personality and even their behaviour. They are able to do this by referring to their existing knowledge base of others who are in the same category' (1995:10). Stereotyping, he argues, is a way of taking 'cognitive shortcuts' (1995:10). Police, he argues, make use of stereotypes often and these stereotypes inform their use of discretion in police work with the public. For example, an officer's decision as to whether to report someone for prosecution is often determined by classifying that person into a particular social grouping with assumed characteristics. Some categories of people, such as black youth, may immediately be identified as 'trouble-makers' and as a result, police tend to respond more harshly toward black youths than toward white middle-aged persons. Stereotypes, however, also operate within police organisations themselves, particularly with regard to identifiable groupings such those based on race.

Within Durban POP, racial (and ethnic) stereotypes were abundant. These stereotypes were used to 'explain' divisions and allegiances within the unit. A white inspector explained to me that white and African police share certain characteristics that are not common among Indian police. As a result, he argued, white and African police are able to work collaboratively:

White and black members work much better together. It is not a political thing. It is not a racial thing. It is just that they link up much better together. The Indians in this unit are totally useless. When there is a shooting, they are not willing to give assistance. They are not even prepared to open the door of an armoured vehicle to pull in an injured man into it. They worry about themselves whereas if you look at the Zulu man, he is a warrior. He is not scared of anything. Similarly, a white policeman will not be indoctrinated. He will do what he thinks is right. If somebody shoots at him, he will take the necessary action without hesitation. So, the African and the white have similar thinking and they work very well together. Even if you interviewed an African member, he would tell you that he prefers to work with whites than with Indians...There is a lot of talk that Indian members are only concerned about themselves. And Indian members easily become involved in drugs and things like that. Indians will not do things on their own. They are cowards. In my platoon I don't have a single Indian member and I like it like that. A policeman is a breed on his own, I think. You have to have balls. Whites and Africans have balls, but not these Indians.²⁹

29. Interview with Inspector Botha, May 1999.

High-ranking officers in the unit also maintained stereotypical views of the various racial groupings in the police. The 1998 acting Unit Commander, for example, informed me that it was extremely difficult to deploy a diverse group of members on a long-term project because they had very different social practices. He informed me:

Say you send the guys out on an operation for a few days, or longer. Say that there are 60 African, 39 Indians and one white. Now who does this white guy speak to? Who does he relate to and so on? We would have to keep this white guy back. This is not because it is a racial issue, but because there is not familiarity. Let me give you an example. We whites bath in a bath and we shower in a shower. Africans don't do this. They wash their bodies and their faces in a washbasin. So, there is friction. The guys do not understand these differences. It is just that different people have different cultures. We have to accept these things, Monique.³⁰

Instead of challenging existing stereotypes and building diversity, leaders in the unit contributed to race thinking by adhering to stereotypical schema and avoiding integrating the platoons. As a result, members maintained their racial self-identities and stereotypes of others. Members justified racial and ethnic separateness in the unit by correlating race/ethnicity with particular 'cultural' practices. As an African trainer in the unit informed me:

There really is no racial interaction in the unit. I think it is because we come from different cultures. Even the food that we eat is different. Africans like to have meat that is cooked with a fire. Indians like to bring their sandwiches with curry inside. And whites like their own food. Africans like soccer. Indians like volleyball. We are different, and there is nothing that can change this. And then there is also the language barrier. African members feel resentful that they are always expected to speak English and there is no effort by other members to speak Zulu.³¹

Differences were viewed as inherent rather than socially determined. Difference, rather than diversity, was stressed by members at all levels in the unit. Existing stereotypes, the racialised structuring of the platoons and the conservative viewpoint of unit leaders all contributed to deep social cleavages within the unit.

Challenging division and discrimination

Despite the fact that members from all racial groupings at all levels of the organisation subscribed to racial stereotyping, African (and some Indian members) were concerned about racial discrimination and inequality in the unit. Van Kessel argues that members of the SAPS tended to understand 'transformation

30. Interview with Senior Superintendent Meiring, August 1999.

31. Interview with Inspector Gumede, November 2001.

only as affirmative action' (2001:1). This was true of members in Durban POP. There was a concern, particularly amongst African members, that affirmative action was taking place too gradually. Van Kessel notes that this was true of the entire SAPS by 2001. She argues that:

Thus far progress has been slow. As with other aspects of transformation, the implementation of affirmative action policies is left to the police organisation itself. This means that the white management is supposed to phase itself out, while at the same time grooming black successors. Although there is a substantial exodus from the SAPS, including management echelons, black staff complains that the vacancies are filled with mostly white appointees...Plans to inject new blood and new ideas into the SAPS by substantial programmes for lateral entry at various levels have never materialized...On paper, everything is there: fast track promotions, accelerated management training programmes, shadow posting and succession. The targets are set, and there is even an implementation plan. But...the implementation plan is not put to work (van Kessel, 2001:8).

Affirmative action and fast-track promotion processes did in fact take place in Durban POP. In January 2000 an African Unit Commander was appointed. This was made possible by the resignation of the (white) unit commander the previous year. The new African Unit Commander was an outsider – he had come from another unit where he was a Superintendent. He was fast-tracked to level of Director, allowing him to take up the appointment of Unit Commander. Some white and Indian members in the unit viewed this appointment as problematic. One white female inspector told me that:

Members generally are very negative about the black management at the moment. They feel that they haven't been through the proper ranking processes. They feel that the new managers are not here because of ability but because of affirmative action.³²

An Indian Superintendent predicted that the new Unit Commander would face a lot of difficulties given his ethnic status:

I don't think that the new Unit Commander is going to have an easy time. You see, he is a Sotho and most members in this unit are Zulus. Sothos are the softest people around and they don't know how to deal with Zulus. A Zulu will never be happy to take orders from a Sotho.

Despite these views and 'predictions', the new Unit Commander did not confront much antagonism or insubordination on entering the unit. African members welcomed his appointment arguing that an African commander would understand their circumstances better than the previous white Unit Commanders had. They also believed that he would better understand the African communities that were the primary clients of the unit. In addition, the military-like nature of the organisation proved once again to be extremely functional. Most members, across the racial divide, informed me that they would respect the authority of

32. Interview with Inspector Vosloo, November 2001.

the new Unit Commander as they would any other commander (unless he proved himself to be incompetent). Those who did feel animosity toward him did not display this openly and did not challenge his authority. The new Unit Commander was optimistic about his reception into the unit and asserted that he intended to make significant changes within the unit:

I have not had many problems coming into this unit. Most members have welcomed me into this unit. They know that now I am in charge and they have to get used to this. But there are many problems in this unit and there are things that I am going to change which is going to make some members unhappy. Things must change and eventually members will accept this. We cannot continue to have platoons that are made up of certain racial groupings. We cannot have Indian members in all the management positions. Once I am more familiar with the unit, I am going to shake things up a bit.

In March 2001, the Unit Commander presented a restructuring plan to members of the unit in which he proposed reshuffling the platoons to ensure the proportional representation of all racial groupings in all platoons and the disbanding of some of the specialised platoons. His restructuring plan was set in motion in mid-2001. While members at all levels indicated to me that they felt unsettled by this restructuring, they did not directly oppose it. However, most members of the RDP and Reaction Platoons applied for transfers out of the unit into an even more paramilitary and centralised unit, the Provincial Intervention Unit.³³ The number of white members in the unit was thus further depleted.

Following the entry of the new Unit Commander into the unit, two senior African officers joined Durban POP. In January 2001, an African Senior Superintendent (Zungu) was appointed as the new Operational Commander – a key function in a public order police unit. In November 2001 a female African Superintendent (Anne Letsholo) was appointed as a Company Commander. Both Senior Superintendent Zungu and Superintendent Letsholo came from Pretoria and were new to Durban POP. While these two new appointments had to be approved by the national and regional SAPS management, both Zungu and Letsholo told me that they were encouraged to take up these appointments by the new Unit Commander. Furthermore, they commented that they felt comfortable about entering the unit because there was an African Unit Commander. As a result of these new entries into the unit, the top management echelon of the unit changed dramatically in the past two years. This had a remarkable effect on the way in which members of the unit viewed affirmative action processes in the unit. African members began to feel that affirmative action processes were being speeded up and that this was an indication that transformation was finally taking place:

33. This unit was established in late 2001. Its members are specially trained to intervene in high-risk situations such as hostage situations and bomb incidents. Most of the white members of Durban POP applied to enter the Intervention Unit.

I feel now that changes are really happening in the unit. African people are now in positions of power and I hope this means that things will get better for the rest of us in the unit. But we will just have to see how things work out. It is still too early to say, but I would say that African members are feeling more positive now.³⁴

White and Indian members, however, did not necessarily share this viewpoint. Doubts were expressed about the abilities of the new management:

A lot of members feel very negative about the black management at the moment. They feel that they have not been through the proper ranking processes. They feel that new managers are not there because of ability but because of affirmative action.³⁵

This type of response to affirmative action strategies is not uncommon. Taylor (1995) has argued that non-beneficiaries may attribute the success of minority groups or women to affirmative action rather than to merit. Affirmative action is understood by these groupings to mean a lowering of standards and this, in turn, may in fact reinforce prejudicial beliefs.

There were also concerns that giving advantage to members of particular racial groupings promoted reverse discrimination and was an indication that the career prospects of members from non-targeted groupings would be minimized:

We Indians may as well just leave the unit now. We will never be promoted again. It seems that if you are not African, you have no career prospects in the unit. I am busy looking for other options in the police at the moment. I don't want to stay in this same position forever. I can't grow old doing the same thing and never being promoted. Don't you agree?³⁶

Taylor (1995), Holdaway (1991) and Crosby and Clayton (1990) have all noted that affirmative action may lead to backlashes on the part of non-beneficiaries who may feel frustrated and unfairly treated by preferential treatment processes. Consequently, the unintended consequence of affirmative action processes is that they may lead to further disunity and animosity within organisations. This may in turn lead to the retarding of other processes of transformation as members become disheartened and demoralised. This is despite the fact that affirmative action seeks to advance equality and the enjoyment of human rights within societies where there has been systematic discrimination in the past.

34. Interview with Captain Mbali, November 2001.

35. Interview with Inspector Marike Vosloo, November 2001.

36. Interview with Captain Moonsamy, September 2001.

Structural adjustments and affirmative action processes tend to be top-down mechanisms of change. Change within the unit with regard to representation and equity, however, did not just come from the top down. There were initiatives 'from below' as well. In April 2000, black (African and a few Indian) members formed a grouping that they called the POP Empowerment Committee. The stated aims of the POP Empowerment Committee were to advance equity in the unit and to devise ways of improving productivity. Initially, they were concerned with the lack of representation of African commissioned officers in middle and top management positions in the unit. The minutes of their first meeting which were given to the commanders of the unit stated that 'racism is still rife in the unit and African members are still being discriminated against. We feel that in order for the unit to be truly representative, 70 per cent of the commissioned officers and management should be African'. Nineteen members of the unit attended this first meeting. Most of them were of Sergeant and Inspector rank. There were three Indian members present.

I was invited to attend the second meeting of the Empowerment Committee. There were twenty members at the meeting. Most were African and male. There were two African women present, both of whom were administrative staff. There were also five Indian members present. The main topic under discussion at the meeting was the need for managers in the unit to undergo management training since, according to the committee, they lacked skills in dealing with members and had no proper communication skills. According to members present, Platoon Commanders were not aware of the Public Order Police Policy Document and as a result were not giving 'appropriate commands and instructions to platoon members'. The second goal of the meeting was to plan a meeting with the new Unit Commander where they would raise their grievances and their suggestions for change. In so doing, they could make the Unit Commander aware of their problems and begin a process of consultation with him. They believed that the new Unit Commander would take their issues seriously and that he was well placed to speed up transformation and equity in the unit.

The formation of the Empowerment Committee indicated a real need on the part of members in the unit to come together to discuss their concerns and dilemmas. A forum was needed to represent the collective voice of (black) members in the unit and to allow members the opportunity to contribute to and shape the change process in the unit. The committee was, perhaps, a localised version of the Black Officers, Forum (discussed above). Such groupings are likely to continue to come into being so long as there is inequity or perceived inequity within the police. While it is difficult to comment on how effective and influential the Empowerment Committee was, it did provide concerned members with a forum for discussion and operated as a pressure grouping within the unit.

Conclusion

Significant changes with regard to race representation have taken place in the unit. For the first time in the history of the unit, there are African members in top management positions. These managers have the authority to make important structural changes in the unit which previous leaders who had a real stake in the old order would most likely not have done. These new managers also have the capacity to bring about changes in the cultural knowledge of the members of the unit. Should they prove to have good leadership qualities (and it seems that this is the case), they will be able to rupture existing schemas that black members are best placed as subordinates with no access to power and decision making. Furthermore, if they do in fact demonstrate an understanding of and empathy with the black communities that are served by the unit, this could effect real changes in the way in which the unit polices these communities. This in turn could lead to new practices and codes of acceptable custom within the unit in the future. In the year 2000 real structural changes did begin to take place in the unit, and no doubt the increased numbers of African members and women in leadership positions will serve to undermine the negative values associated with these social groupings within the unit. However, while the unit may meet the targets outlined in the SAPS Credo for Affirmative Action with regard to race, this is unlikely to eventuate with regard to gender. This is in part due to the masculinist and paramilitary nature of units such as Durban POP.

Despite affirmative action and equity legislation and programmes, Durban POP was still plagued by deep racial and gender divisions by the year 2001. These divisions were reinforced by the structural make-up of the unit and the inability of middle management to challenge them and to provide alternative ways of organising and interacting within the unit. Racial, ethnic and gender stereotypes were also abundant in the unit and served to legitimate and justify existing cleavages. Deep-seated assumptions, schemas and values associated with race, ethnicity and gender (informed both by experiences in the workplace and in the broader environment) informed these stereotypes and produced a dictionary knowledge that proved resistant to change. This dictionary knowledge affected the way in which members related to one another across racial, ethnic and gender divides and also impacted on their policing of diverse groups within the community, as was clearly demonstrated in Chapter 7. The existing schemas and values which inform the habitus are only likely to diminish with greater integration within the platoons and via joint working experiences in the field.

Backlashes associated with affirmative action were evident in the unit and are likely to continue for sometime as non-targeted groupings feel marginalised and discriminated against. Despite this possible outcome, affirmative action processes will continue to take place within the unit and within the SAPS more generally. In order to facilitate affirmative action processes and diversity programmes within the unit,

managers and supervisors within the unit will have to be empowered to facilitate diversity and ensure that performance indicators are in place that reinforce this diversity and that help to denounce racist practices both within the police organisation and toward the public. Police leaders also need to demonstrate that they have made the important break with stereotyping and race thinking. This will involve having diverse teams in the police and prohibiting racist practices even in the informal interactions between police members. Members of the unit also need to be convinced that racist and sexist occupational culture and practices conflict with successful outcomes of organisational change. Unless the organisational field is changed in a way that reinforces a new habitus, the habitus itself may revert to its old dispositions.

Finally, social change is unlikely to result from top-down initiatives alone. Rank-and-file members within the unit are also agents of change. This is evident from the existence of groupings such as the POP Empowerment Committee and the existence of the police unions. These groupings pose a challenge to institutionalised racist practices both within the unit and (hopefully) with regard to the treatment of minority groupings in the course of their work. The very existence of these groupings, and the challenges they pose, directly confront the hierarchical nature of police organisations as well as the unspoken expectation of police members' quiescent conduct. Groupings like the Empowerment Committee could potentially provide a watchful eye over police management should they depart from the organisation's transformation process, in particular the goals of representativity, affirmative action and a human rights orientation. Their influence, however, is dependent on their capacity not only to mobilise, but also their competence in presenting themselves as reputable and representative groupings.

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSION: THE CONTRADICTIONS OF CHANGE

South Africa's transition to democracy has been described by many as a miracle. However, eight years after state democratisation and a period of euphoric nationalism, questions are being asked as to whether institutional change has taken place in any meaningful and lasting way and whether the new democratic state has been able to deliver on its many promises of transformation (Freund, 1999; Marais, 1998; Glaser, 2001). While questions are asked about the extent of change in all South Africa's major institutions, the change process in the police has arguably received the largest amount of public attention. Given the public nature of the state police, their key role in creating a secure and safe environment and their ultimately repressive capacity, those interested in South Africa's transformation often ask whether the police in South Africa have *really* changed.

Whether or not police transformation has taken place in South Africa is a difficult question to answer. In the first instance, as is the case with any organisational study, change has to be evaluated at three different levels – structure, behaviour and value systems. Structural change is easiest to achieve but changes in values and behaviour cannot be read off from structural change. Second, the South African Police Service is a diverse organisation with many different units and departments all having their own peculiar histories, functional requirements and compositions. Changes are likely to take place at different paces and with different emphases in each of these units and departments.

In order to avoid desultory and sweeping assessments of police organisational change in South Africa, it is necessary to conduct in-depth case study research over an extended period of time. Such an approach allows the researcher to observe whether change is consistent and whether there are paradoxical outcomes of the change process. A case study approach employing ethnographic methods 'demands a basic level of empathy' (Keith, 1993:123), which in turn makes it possible to discover variations in attitudes, values and behaviour. While it is possible to assess structural change and even make comments on behavioural change from 'the outside', it is extremely difficult to interrogate the more hidden values, assumptions and beliefs without entering the daily life spaces of those we hope to understand.

I participated in the daily life of the Durban Public Order unit with the aim of getting a deeper understanding of its structural make-up and a determined grasp of the behaviour and values of the individual members of the unit. This participation, and the rich data which was yielded as a result, allowed

me to develop a considered view as to whether or not the changes stipulated in policy and legislation had become a reality.

Did Durban POP really change?

There can be little doubt that change did occur at all three levels in Durban Public Order Police (POP). Even at a cursory glance it is clear that dramatic changes took place in this unit. Durban POP, by the year 2001, was by many accounts hardly recognisable from its predecessor units (the Riot Unit and the Internal Stability Division) that were responsible for the policing of public order in Durban. First, the unit was representative of the communities that it served. The majority of its rank-and-file members were African and there was a proportional representation of Indian and white members. By the year 2001, even within the top management echelons, there was a predominance of African membership. Second, the unit no longer responded indiscriminately with brute force toward crowds who were engaged in protest and demonstration. Most public order incidents were recorded in Durban POP incident reports as 'crowd management peaceful' – there were very few incidents where injury to person or property resulted from police intervention. Members also displayed a newly acquired tolerance toward disorderly crowds. Third, there was some evidence that the unit had 'demilitarised'. Members of the unit no longer donned camouflage uniforms and rank divisions were less rigidly enforced. Members were not expected to salute their superiors and relations between rank-and-file and management were more relaxed.

These significant shifts in large part resulted from changes in what Chan (1997), following the work of Bourdieu, refers to as the 'field', or the structural conditions of policing. The transition toward a democratic government provided a clear indication that new forms of governance at all levels of society was expected. State institutions were instructed to reflect in their practices and philosophies a concern with equitable, participatory and professional service delivery. These expectations were legislated in a range of new Acts and White Papers, most of which targeted the public service. Public institutions were expected to demonstrate both internal democratisation (sound and participatory labour relations and representativity) and external democratisation (non-partisan, participatory and accountable service delivery). Following this new legislation, revised training programmes were instituted and oversight bodies were created aimed at facilitating and reinforcing desired change. New legislation, training and oversight bodies provided the external pressure needed for police organisational change to take place. Legislation, in particular, is important in this regard. While legislation does not determine police action, laws play an important role in structuring police practice (Herbert, 1997). Change in legislation, retraining and the transformation of the political environment were indeed very important starting points for police organisational change.

However, training, new policy and even dramatic changes in governance do not automatically lead to the actualisation of the stated goals of transformation. While structural changes may be implemented as a

result of these external influences, the informal values and practice norms of the police which are embodied in police culture (Chan, 1997) are more difficult to change. These normative practices and values have been created through historical daily experiences on the streets and are reinforced in the stories the police tell and the memories that they hold dear. Police officers are also agents in their own right. They interpret their environment in different ways and while welcoming some changes, may resist or challenge others.

Change in Durban POP (as with any other organisation undergoing transformation processes) has been uneven. There are a variety of sub-groupings within the organisation (usually based on deep cleavages of race and gender) that have developed their own sets of police 'subculture' and have responded to the challenge of transformation differently. Some, especially white members, resisted change by rebuffing attempts on the part of top management to restructure the platoons. Others felt that transformation (particularly with regard to affirmative action) was taking place too slowly and formed their own representative body, the POP Empowerment Committee, which campaigned for speedier change. As a result, the outcomes of transformation in Durban POP were disparate and even contradictory. This became clear to me when I tried to evaluate the shifts that had taken place in the cultural knowledge (assumptions, values, and beliefs) of Durban POP. Focussing on the cultural knowledge of the police is important since 'police knowledge is the real foundation of policing, is fundamental to the collective identity of the police and acts as a filter for the types of practices the police employ' (della Porta and Reiter, 1998:16).

A clear shift had taken place in the axiomatic knowledge of the unit. Members of the unit seemed to have accepted that the basic rationale and mandate of the unit had changed. The need to manage crowds rather than to control them was uniformly recognised as was the requirement for more community oriented styles of policing. Members of the unit were aware that state change demanded change in the way in which the police carried out their function and this was reinforced via new policy and legislation. The law is important to police members. As Herbert rightly argues, 'it is important not to lose sight of the importance of law to the practice of the police. No matter how regularly police officers may escape the control of the formal strictures of the law, their basic mission, responsibilities, and powers are principally defined by legal stipulations' (1997:37).

While the changes that took place in the axiomatic knowledge of the unit clearly impacted on other levels of cultural knowledge, change at these other levels was more precarious. The shift toward crowd management and community oriented policing presupposes shifts in dictionary knowledge (the categories police hold about their environment). However, members retained many of their past assumptions about crowds and about status groupings in South African society. The majority of members continued to view those who participated in crowd events as irrational and provocative. Consequently they always prepared

themselves for the worst possible outcome of a crowd event and were always heavily armed. African townships were viewed (particularly by white members) as locations of barbarism and members of the unit thus resorted to heavy-handed policing methods when carrying out crime prevention operations in the African townships. Township residents were brutally assaulted and verbally abused in the course of crime prevention operations. The reversion to these policing methods tended to take place when policing activities were not open to public scrutiny and when there was an absence of supervision. Within the unit itself, members retained historically constructed stereotypes pertaining to race and gender. These stereotypes reinforced existing social cleavages within the unit and the persistence of prejudicial practices at all levels of the unit. These prejudicial and stereotypical lenses were used in characterising societal groupings as well.

The extent to which directory knowledge (informing strategies and tactics) had been transformed was also perfunctory. Members had received substantial retraining focussing on new procedures and tactics in line with the new mission of public order policing. For the most part members did apply the new skills learned in their public order operations. The principle of minimum force was generally adhered to, negotiation with relevant stakeholders did take place, and internationally accepted methods of public order policing were applied. However, there were times, such as in the case of the death of a student at the University of Durban Westville, when excessive and undue force was used. There were times, particularly when the unit was conducting crime prevention operations, when members of the unit regressed to past practices such as severely beating those suspected of having criminal intent, destroying private property and verbally abusing members of the public.

Such regressive behaviour indicated that recipe knowledge of members of the unit (conceptions of normative behaviour and basic values) had not changed substantially amongst rank-and-file members. While members understood and even accepted the political imperatives for developing a human rights culture within the police, the unconditional valuing of human rights had not become a reality. Members of the unit held on to memories of the past and even glorified past practices and norms. In fact, as Chapter 7 shows, the majority of members claimed that they preferred working in the unit during the apartheid era.

Why did important elements of cultural knowledge and consequently some practice norms remain unchanged?

Before answering this question, there are two general points I would like to make. First, the state police are part of the repressive apparatuses of the state. They are trained and mandated to use force and will do so when they deem this to be necessary and justifiable. Second, there are always a multiplicity of factors that shape police behaviour at any point in time. These are discussed in Chapter 7 and include the political opportunity structure, the historic relationship between the police and geographically based

communities, levels of crime and public disorder, and the legal framework, among others. Durban POP, therefore, is not unique in its resort to the use of force (even when seemingly unjustified) and their curtailment of individual liberties. However, during periods of programmed police organisational transformation, it is important to try to delineate possible specific contributors to past and reprehensible forms of behaviour and value systems. In the case of Durban POP key aspects of the organisational field certainly seemed to contribute to this predicament.

First, supervisors and managers in Durban POP instructed members of the unit to change their behaviour in line with new legislation and training. Such instruction was important and behaviour change did result. But this change was perfunctory and mechanistic. Enduring change in police behaviour requires close and directive supervision. However, supervisors in the unit did not provide ongoing direction to rank-and-file members. Platoon Commanders and Company Commanders were often absent when members were deployed to carry out crowd management and crime prevention operations. While members (including non-commissioned frontline supervisors) were aware of the general framework that was meant to guide their interventions, they felt unconfident and insecure about responding to old problems in new and unfamiliar ways. Changed behaviour requires directive supervision and role modelling from those who have authority. Police tend to learn 'on the streets' (P.A.J. Waddington, 1999) as they carry out their daily work. Changing behaviour that has historically proven to be effective requires directly experiencing the positive results of new responses and strategies. While briefings and debriefings are important forums for learning from mistakes and reinforcing positive results, these did not take place regularly in Durban POP.

Second, supervisors and managers in Durban POP had failed to develop proper performance indicators. The behaviour of individual members and of the unit as a whole could therefore not be systematically measured and appraised. This meant that 'good behaviour' was not positively reinforced and deplorable behaviour was irregularly reprimanded. Furthermore, the unit had not developed mechanisms for evaluating the ways in which the 'clients' (the general public) that the unit served received their interventions. Both direct and indirect performance indicators were lacking.

Third, the leadership style of supervisors and managers in the unit was shaped both by traditional managerial policing ethos and by the historic authoritarian management styles prevalent in the South African public service. As a result, as is argued in Chapter 8, despite the legislative requirement for participatory management practices within the public service legislation, Durban POP managers (particularly middle managers) retained exclusive and rigid management styles. Managers and supervisors within the unit contended that in a paramilitary unit such as POP, 'discipline' is crucial and this requires strict lines of authority and unquestioning compliance with instructions from above. Those few members who showed a willingness to incorporate more participatory styles of management lacked both the knowledge and skills to do so given that they had received no training or guidance in this regard.

As a result, rank-and-file members were excluded from decision-making and problem-solving processes. They were never party to any discussions as to why and how change in the unit would take place in the unit and they did not feel like partners in the change process. The absence of participatory management practices in the unit meant that mutual respect, trust and support was in short supply. This, compounded with the uncertainty generated by change itself, led to low levels of commitment to the unit. Almost half of the members of the unit indicated that they wanted to leave Durban POP.

Fourth, as is demonstrated in Chapter 9, racial and gender based stereotypes and divisions were reinforced and legitimated in three ways. The racial diversity of the unit was not reflected in many of the platoons. Some platoons were made up of mainly African members while in other platoons Indian members were the majority. White members dominated the highly specialised platoons leading to accusations against management of the preferential treatment of white members. Managers and supervisors in the unit developed informal and intimate relationships only with members (including rank-and-file) of their own racial groupings. They were unable (and perhaps unwilling) to provide any leadership with regard to the valuing of diversity. Gender representation, particularly with regard to operational functions, was extremely low. By February 2002 there were only nine policewomen working operationally in the unit. This low representativity of women in the unit reinforced assumptions that men are best suited for paramilitary police work. Very little attempt was made by the unit to recruit more policewomen despite the fact that there were two (African) women Company Commanders. Affirmative action with regard to gender had taken place, but the fact that a few women occupied high-ranking positions in the unit did not translate into gender equity or a change in the gendered social base of the unit.

Finally, the broad socio-economic environment in which Durban POP operated has to be taken into account. While significant changes had taken place at the political and legislative levels of South African society since the mid-1990s, the social and economic conditions of the majority of people's daily lives had not changed substantially. Township residents, in particular, continued to live in impoverished environments. While processes, legislation and institutions have been created in South Africa to promote and safeguard a vast array of political and human rights, access to these has been uneven. Poor and marginalized (generally black) people often lack the confidence, knowledge and necessary access to networks of power to secure the basic rights that they have been awarded. The police, aware of this limited access, act in ways that defy a human rights culture when policing marginalised groupings. They act differentially toward different social groupings, secure in the knowledge that those with limited access to important processes and institutions will not challenge the abuse and maltreatment that the police mete out. Added to this, the police themselves carry with them the distinctions of apartheid and the legacies of special separation and are trapped in the same web of unequal access and influence.

While the study of Durban POP cannot be generalised to the entire South African Police Service, it does highlight some of the impediments to police organisational change. Drawing on this case study I would like to reflect on a few ways in which police organisational change could be bolstered.

What can be done by the police to facilitate police organisational change?

As was noted above, there are three dimensions to police transformation – structural, behavioural and attitudinal. Each of these dimensions has to be addressed for change to be enduring. Police are pragmatists and are ‘concerned to get from here to tomorrow (or the next hour) with the least amount of fuss and paperwork’ (Reiner, 1992:128). They generally focus on observable and tangible outcomes. Police managers and supervisors tend to concern themselves with changing structures and behaviour. Very little attention is given to the need to transform existing values and assumptions. While structural and behavioural change does lead to an altering of belief systems, a fundamental shift in values and assumptions necessitates a dramatic reconceptualisation of the role and self-image of the police organisation and of individual police members. While this dissertation is not policy oriented, based on my study I would like to suggest five possible means to achieving such a reconceptualisation. These suggestions pertain to courses of action that could be implemented within the police organization itself, given that this work is essentially an organisational study. I have not included suggestions regarding how to bring the police closer to the community or how to bring the community closer to the police, both of which are crucial for democratising the state police.

In the first instance, police supervisors and managers play a crucial role in facilitating police organisational change. Not only do they have a role-modelling function, they are also primarily responsible for determining how work is structured and the types of relationships that exist between social groupings within the organisation. Police leaders tend to fear change and they try to effect change within existing frameworks. However, organisational change demands ‘qualitative shifts and discontinuous breaks with past methods, mindsets, and strategies’ (Kiel, 1994:45). While police managers feel most comfortable with the ‘tried and tested’, they need to be more open to the uncomfortable aspects of organisational change. This requires them to view themselves as change agents and this involves welcoming uncertainty and viewing change positively as an opportunity to grow and learn.

One way of breaking with past practices and belief systems is to develop a new work structure that is more participatory and that is flatter than the traditional hierarchical structuring of police organisations. This restructuring would allow for an improved flow of information and communication. More participatory workplace structuring and ethos also make it possible for all members, regardless of rank and function, to have a say in how the organisation really works and how change will be actualised. This is crucial if members of the organisation are to feel motivated and committed to the change process. At the same time, mutual respect and support is built through partnerships, shared visions and joint problem solving.

The incorporation of participatory processes within the police organisation also has the potential to change the way in which the police act within the communities they serve. Their direct experiences of the benefits of creating partnerships and joint problem solving processes may help them to appreciate the need for community oriented and participatory forms of policing. Internal organisational democracy spurs on external democratisation.

Police leaders are likely to fear that a flattened management structure neutralises the ranking system within the police which can be extremely functional, especially when the police engage in public order work. This is not the case. The practice of participatory management styles does not entail an undermining of the authority of police managers and supervisors. While participatory management practices are crucial for long-lasting police organisational change, directive leadership is also required. This directive leadership involves close and careful supervision and the provision of clear and understandable directives during policing operations. The development of appropriate and agreed upon performance indicators is also critical in the quest to develop new responses during policing interventions. Rank-and-file members should also be encouraged to participate in formulating (group and individual) performance indicators. In so doing, a sense of ownership and responsibility is cultivated.

Second, directive and responsible police leadership, particularly in the early stages of change processes, demands that supervisors accompany members as often as possible when they are deployed. This is important for three reasons: supervisors can provide continuous 'in the field' guidance and feedback; it allows for the close observation and monitoring of police conduct required for fair and informed performance evaluation; and supervisors can directly demonstrate what is meant by 'good' performance - they play an important role-modelling function particularly when members feel uncertain as to what changed behaviour is required of them. New on-the- street experiences are key to shifting assumptions about creditable performance and positive outcomes.

Police managers, however, are not the only agents of change within police organisations. Rank- and-file members are also active agents of change and they shape the outcomes of change processes both formally and informally. Participatory management practices are one way of encouraging members to actively engage in change processes. However, there are other important ways in which police members can make an impact. This leads me to my third suggestion. Collective bodies of representation, such as the POP Empowerment Committee, provide members with alternative forums to discuss, debate and strategise. In so doing, they actively produce new cultural knowledge and transform the organisational ethos. These collective bodies are not the same as unions and associations which play an important role with regard to collective bargaining. Rather, they are more loosely structured forums that can operate as pressure groupings.

The very existence of such collective representative bodies, and the challenges they pose, directly confront the traditional hierarchical nature of police organisations as well as the unspoken expectation of members' quiescent conduct. They may also provide a watchful eye over police managers should they digress from the goals of the organisation's transformation process, in particular the goals of representativity and affirmative action. Such organisations are generally viewed as threatening by police managers. However, if constructively engaged with, such bodies have the potential to spur on and legitimise organisational change.

It is also important for the police to change the way in which they present and represent themselves in their daily discourse and in the stories that they tell. For police transformation to take place, new memories and stories have to be created that will transform the 'sensibilities' of the police (Shearing, 1995). Selective memories of the 'good old days' and of past triumphs can block organisational change. As Shearing and Ericson (1991) argue, stories inform how the police view the world and how they choose to act in it. These stories present the police with 'ready-made schemas and scripts' (Chan, 1997:70) which present individual police officers with ways of seeing the world and with ways in which to act. Stories and treasured memories allow police officers to make sense of their experience. They provide justifications for past actions and legitimations for future action. Given the centrality of stories to the assumptions, values and practices of the police, changing police culture requires changing the stories that the police recall and tell.

The stories that police tell and the memories they hold dear are often based on a defensive collective identity. This is particularly the case when the legitimacy and integrity of the police are questioned, as was the case with the police in South African. The police tend to hold onto the past particularly when past epochs represent periods of apparent social control and police effectiveness. As McLaughlin and Murji argue with particular reference to the British police:

Police 'storylines' frequently contain a strong element of nostalgia, expressing a sense of loss for a 'golden age' when things were less complicated and the world was a more law abiding place where the police were trusted and respected (1998:374).

New stories need to be created that allow the police to let go of their defensive identities through producing new mirrors through which they can reflect on themselves and on their roles. Such mirrors need to reinforce what is functional, what really works, and what is valued in the work that they do. By so doing, they will be able to think of themselves as different from the past. At the same time, they need to feel valued as they reconstruct themselves and feel supported in the organisational and individual change endeavour, as the psychoanalytic organisational change theorists suggest (Strapley, 1996).

How exactly is it possible for the police to create new stories and foster new memories that provide them with a sense of pride, accomplishment and collective identity? As simple as it may sound, I would like to suggest that one way of changing existing stories and replacing old memories is for policing organisations to collectively and actively celebrate successes and positive outcomes. For example, as was noted in Chapter 7, in September 2001, international observers commended Durban POP for their exemplary policing of the World Conference Against Racism which was attended by 14 000 delegates. These commendations and praises were never publicly acknowledged in the unit. A key moment was lost where creative and conscious leaders could have brought members of the unit together to pay tribute to themselves and to celebrate work well done and the positive outcomes of their performance. Such occasions would also present the opportunity for police rank-and-file and managers to come together on a more equal footing as peers with a shared vision.

These types of collective celebrations also present learning opportunities for the police as they reflect on how positive results were achieved and what was done differently. In so doing, the directory and menu knowledge of the police is transformed as they incorporate new ideas about what is valuable and what behaviour is most acceptable. These positively reinforcing and celebratory moments are likely to be remembered fondly and will be recalled time and again when the police speak about the 'good times'.

Finally, the stories that are told within police organisations can never change fundamentally if the social base of the organisation remains unchanged and if the police are not exposed to very different schemas. Consequently, Brogden and Shearing (1993) suggest (with particular reference to the South African case) that ideally middle and upper echelons of the police should be replaced in order to fundamentally transform the stories that the police tell. However, they argue, this is unlikely to occur. Alternatively, they suggest, the state police need to realise that policing is not the 'sole preserve of the police' (1993:59), but can be done by other societal groupings and institutions. In particular, they argue, the state police need to learn from more popular policing traditions and initiatives. This would mean that communities have greater control over social ordering; communities should, for the most part, police themselves with the state police intervening as 'problem solvers'.

The implementation of Brogden and Shearing's suggestions would no doubt lead to dramatic changes in the sensibilities of the state police. However, there are two fundamental problems with the suggestions. First, when states democratise, communities expect and demand (rightfully) improved and increased delivery on the part of state institutions. Non-state policing activities will continue and maybe increase following state democratisation, given the incapacities of the state police, but these responses will be viewed as a last resort. Second, as Brogden and Shearing acknowledge, it is extremely difficult to regulate popular policing initiatives and excesses involving human rights abuses are likely to occur.

Despite the questions and concerns raised by Brogden and Shearing's propositions, they present a means for fundamentally challenging both narrow conceptions of policing and entrenched state police occupational cultures. Popular (non-state) policing traditions impart radically different schema for social ordering. Such challenges to policing in general, as suggested by Brogden and Shearing, would be a great stimulus to police organisations struggling with projects of internal transformation. However, I would like to suggest another departure point for changing police organisations whose social bases remain essentially unchanged from the past.

It is extremely difficult (and some may argue impractical) to overhaul the entire social base of police organisations. New entry recruitment programmes which tend to accompany police reform processes will slowly lead to shifts in the composition of police organisations at the lower levels. Incremental change in the social base will eventually take place through such processes. It is, however, possible to alter the management echelons of these organisations at a far speedier pace than it would take to replace the more mass based rank-and-file. My fifth suggestion, then, is to encourage lateral entry programmes whereby civilian professionals who have experience in managing, strategising and working collaboratively with community groupings are systematically introduced into key management positions within police organisations. These positions should be functional rather than exclusively policy oriented since it is in the actual daily policing that the practices and norms of policing will be challenged and ultimately altered. Such lateral entry programmes, hopefully, would provide police organisations with alternative practices of workplace structuring and of engaging with the public. Those targeted to participate in lateral entry programmes will also bring with them completely different scripts and schemas resulting from work experience dissimilar to the enterprise of policing.

Police officers at all ranks are likely to resist lateral entry programmes given that they view themselves as having 'special qualities' (McLaughlin and Murji, 1998) and a unique role. Two cautions would therefore need to be applied. On the one hand, lateral entry programmes should not curtail police officers who perform well and are evidently committed to the stated goals of the organisation from advancing through the ranks. On the other hand, those entering the police laterally would have to undergo intensive training (both nationally and internationally) to equip them with the knowledge and skills required for their new occupation. They would also need to be sensitive to the histories and defensive mechanisms of the police.

While it may appear that police organisations are built to resist change (and I have argued that there is substance to this perception), police organisational change is possible. In fact, as has been demonstrated in this case study, the very hierarchical and rule-bound character of police organisations (paradoxically perhaps) renders behavioural change relatively easy to achieve. However, such behavioural change is perfunctory unless it is accompanied by adequate structural change and change in basic assumptions

and values (deep level occupational culture). This requires police organisations to transform the way in which work is organised, to create new and alternative schema, and to celebrate positive outcomes. Hopefully through such experiences, police members will feel excited by future challenges and come to see themselves as worthy members of police organisations and not as mere Robocops whose mechanical responses need to be continually defended.

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