

CHAPTER SIX

METHODOLOGY

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This first chapter of volume two, the empirical study, is significant as it highlights the methodological framework within which the research was conducted. As mentioned in chapter one of the study, the primary goal of this research is to examine police criminality from a criminological point of view. This is achieved by means of recognised theory and methodology within the context of criminology. Police criminality is therefore analysed from a scientific point of view by making use of scientific methods and by applying recognised theoretical explanations.

The term methodology literally means the science of methods and it “contains the standards and principles employed to guide the choice, structure, process and use of methods, as directed by the underlying paradigm (Sarantakos 1998: 34).” Interviews, which are the primary tools used for empirical data collection in this study, can be used effectively in any methodology type and they accommodate any chosen research purpose. Interviews employed in qualitative studies will differ from those used in quantitative studies. The former, which is applicable to this study, will be more unstructured (semi-structured in this case), open and in-depth.

Volume two of this study constitutes the empirical study. The findings from numerous interviews conducted with specialists in the field of police crime, including members of the South African Police Service are highlighted vividly in chapter seven and eight. The findings from eight interviews done with incarcerated police offenders will be illuminated in chapter nine. The latter findings are particularly pertinent as they contain humanistic and emotive elements as opposed to the more theme-specific interviews held with specialists. The focus of the specialist interviews was primarily on the specific expert information they provided whereas the focus of the offender interviews was more personal.

The second last chapter of the study focuses on the interpretation of the significant findings of the literature and the empirical study, as well as interpreting the researchers own findings. These findings are then explained by means of elements of relevant criminological theories. The final chapter revisits the secondary and primary goals of the study. It looks at how the aims and objectives of the study were achieved. The researcher’s interventionist model is presented and recommendations are made pertaining to further research topics.

The methodology chapter, which is qualitative in orientation, is explained below. The unit of analysis employed in the empirical study is the individual (specialist and offender). The time dimension refers to the dates of literature publications and the time period in which interviews were conducted. The research goal pertains to gathering as much information on the topic as possible. This is assisted by exploratory, explanatory and descriptive techniques. Data is collected by means of literature and interviews (empirical study). Finally, the data is analysed and interpreted to form a coherent, logical whole.

6.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

6.2.1 QUALITATIVE APPROACH

The methodological approach to this study is qualitative. For the purposes of answering the research question pertaining to the **what**, **how** and **why** of police criminality, the application of multi-faceted qualitative elements is more appropriate. A qualitative approach is employed to enable the researcher to obtain first-hand information from offenders and from members of the South African Police Service and other knowledgeable individuals in this field by means of interviews. This specific methodological approach also allows the researcher the freedom to ask broader probing questions in a less formal environment in the quest for obtaining the maximum relevant information on the research subject.

According to Neuman (1997: 328) “qualitative data are empirical. They involve documenting real events, recording what people say (with words, gestures and tone), observing specific behaviours, studying written documents, or examining visual images.” This study consists of two primary components, the literature and the empirical studies.

Some pertinent characteristics of qualitative methodology applicable to this study are highlighted by Sarantakos (1998: 46). These include approaching reality sans preconceived ideas and rigid patterns. The researcher and the focus of the research are both important features of the study, the researcher to collect information and the researched to provide information. The author adds: that “respondents are not reduced to variables, units or hypotheses, but are seen as parts of the whole. Reducing people to numerical symbols and statistical figures results in loss of a perception of the subjective nature of human behaviour.”

Other characteristics of qualitative research methodology include the interpretation of meaningful human actions and efforts to identify the meaning of social actions and how the individual interprets his own actions and those of others. Appropriate research procedures are used in order to provide descriptive data, highlighting in the interviewees' own words their views and experiences. The qualitative approach engages empathetic neutrality where the researcher seeks to understand the world rather than emphasising short-lived objectivity or subjectivity that weakens credibility.

A key concept of a qualitative paradigm includes **flexibility** (Sarantakos 1998: 51). Flexibility is essential in a study of this nature as an adherence to guidelines rather than strict rules, is more productive in gaining information on police criminality. The application of strict rules would not permit the researcher to divert from an interview guide with follow-up questions to add to incomplete information, defeating the research purpose.

Some essential features of qualitative research as proposed by Sarantakos (1998: 55) and pertinent to this study include the fact that:

- it is idiographic – it describes reality as it is,
- it is interpretative – interested in *how*,
- it is historical – interested in real cases,
- it is open and flexible in all aspects,
- it employs a flexible process,
- it places priority on studying similarities, and
- it employs an explicative data analysis.

6.2.2 UNIT OF ANALYSIS

The unit of analysis in this study is the **individual**. The individuals interviewed for the empirical section of this study include members of the South African Police Service, ex police–members, specialists in related fields (including three international interviewees) and the third type of individual interviewed were police offenders.

Neuman (1997: 113) identifies the unit of analysis as referring to the “type of unit a researcher uses when measuring variables.” The individual tends to be the most widely used unit of analysis in social research. The author adds that units of analysis correspond with the levels of analysis in an explanation. **Micro-levels** of analysis usually include the *individual* as

a unit of analysis and **macro-levels** of analysis generally refer to the *institution* as a unit. In this study, for the purposes of explanation, the micro-level includes the individual offender and the macro-level encompasses the deficiencies in the Police Service as an institution.

6.2.3 TIME DIMENSION

Material used in the **literature study** dates from approximately 1997 to the present. The **empirical study**, which consists of interviews conducted with **specialists** in the field of police criminality (serving South African Police Service members, ex-members, researchers, members of police unions, members of the Prosecuting Authority and other specialists) and **offenders**, were conducted over a three-year period.

The pilot interview occurred in April 2003 and the final interview for the study was conducted in October 2005. International interviews commenced with the pilot interview held with the commander of the Employee Management Branch of the New South Wales Police Service in Sydney, Australia during April 2003. A second international interview took place in London during July 2005 with an ex-assistant police commissioner in the Metropolitan Police, presently the Director of Investigations at the Independent Police Complaints Commission. The researcher participated in a Digital Video Conference (DVC) on police corruption with the Chief (and a colleague) of the New York Police Department's Internal Affairs Bureau. The DVC was facilitated by the United States Consulate in Pretoria and Cape Town, South Africa during August 2003.

6.2.4 RESEARCH GOAL

In order to achieve the research goal by accessing as much information on police criminality as possible, **exploratory**, **explanatory** and **descriptive** techniques are employed.

6.2.4.1 Exploration

Existing research on police criminality in South Africa is minimal. The researcher is unaware of any extensive research done on the subject of police criminality in the criminology discipline in South Africa. It is therefore essential to explore the topic of police criminality by means of gathering documentary information on the subject and conducting interviews with knowledgeable individuals on different sides of the policing divide.

According to Babbie (2001: 91) most social research is undertaken to explore a topic, or it is done to enable a researcher to become more familiar with the subject being researched. In this study, the exploratory technique is utilised in order to gather useful information, and create a better understanding of the under-researched topic of police criminality. The main focus of this particular study is **what** constitutes police criminality and **why** some police members reject their primary function of upholding the law in favour of breaking it.

Another pertinent element of exploration applicable to this study is the ability (as a researcher) to commence an interview with a prepared interview guide, prepared questions and having the freedom to modify and add to them depending of the quality of information received, in order to garner additional information. Exploration also allows for the identification of variables and definite themes as the study progresses, after starting with not much more than a title for the field of interest.

Dooley (2001: 253) adds that the aim of exploratory research is to construct theory rather than test it. The construction of a theoretical model signals the end of a particular study.

6.2.4.2 Description

The primary purpose of many social scientific studies is to describe situations and events (Babbie 2001: 93). In this study, descriptive techniques are employed in order to describe the nature of police criminality and the particulars of the individual and his role in the commission of a crime. The researcher collects the relevant information from the individual by means of an interview, and proceeds to describe it in detail in the empirical section of the study.

6.2.4.3 Explanation

According to Babbie (2001: 93) the third general purpose of conducting social scientific research is to elucidate the different phenomena uncovered during the course of the research. In order to gain maximum knowledge on a subject it is logical to firstly explore the topic, describe it and ultimately explain it. The author adds that “descriptive studies answer questions of what, where, when and how; explanatory questions, of why.” The concepts of what, how and why are central to answering the research question on police criminality.

In this study, relating the incidence of police criminality is a descriptive technique, but explaining why some police members indulge in crime and others do not, is explanatory.

6.3 DATA COLLECTION

Data for this study was collected by two distinct means: through documents (literature) and through interviews (empirical).

6.3.1 LITERATURE STUDY

The literature study is an essential part of the research as it provides adequate background information on the research question. The literature study was compiled by extracting relevant information from a selection of books, commission reports, annual reports and journals, newspaper and internet articles. Certain sources used in the literature study proved to be invaluable in illustrating police criminality as well as in highlighting the aetiology of this phenomenon, providing personal case studies and consequences of these actions and offering relevant interventions. These sources include reports drawn up after the tenure of the *Royal Commission* of inquiry into police corruption in New South Wales, Australia, and the *Mollen Commission* of inquiry into police corruption in the New York Police Department. A book by *McLagan* provided invaluable insight into the corruption scandal at Scotland Yard (London Metropolitan Police) and the subsequent action that was taken by management to rectify the situation.

International contributions to the literature study include authors such as Punch, Arnold, Trautman, Griffith, Swope, Skolnick, Regoli, Hewitt, Miller and Wilson.

Figures were provided by the *South African Police Service Annual Report* and the *Independent Complaints Directorate's Annual Report (2004/2005)* to ascertain the **extent** of police deviance in South Africa. Literature by Newham and Syed was referred to, to identify risk factors relating to police criminality in the SAPS. Examples of crimes committed by SAPS members were presented in various South African newspapers such as the *Mail & Guardian*, the *Cape Argus*, *Cape Times*, the *Star*, the *Herald*, the *Citizen* and the *Sunday Times*. Articles of relevance from the internet were also used.

6.3.2 EMPIRICAL STUDY

The empirical study was conducted by means of interviews with South African Police Service members, ex-members and other specialists in the field of police crime, and police offenders. These interviews included two international interviews conducted in Sydney and London and the researcher participated in a Digital Video Conference (from Cape Town) with members of

the NYPD's Internal Affairs Bureau.

6.3.2.1 Sampling

- Purposive Sampling

This type of sampling is also known as **judgemental sampling** and it involves selecting specific elements of a target population. "Because some or more elements will be included in the sample deliberately and others will be excluded deliberately, purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling form." (Champion 2000: 196). Samples of subjects are purposely selected for a study. Strydom and Delport (in De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport 2002: 334) mention that the researcher using purposive sampling must think critically about the characteristics of the target group (for example, the police) and choose the samples accordingly. "Clear identification and formulation of criteria for the selection of respondents are, therefore, of cardinal importance."

Erlandson (in De Vos et al 2002: 334) adds that: "the search for data must be guided by processes that will provide rich detail to maximise the range of specific information that can be obtained from and about that context." In purposive sampling, a researcher looks for both **typical and divergent data**. In this study, purposive sampling refers to the selection of police members and specialists specifically because they are knowledgeable about police crime and they can relate to SAPS policy. Sarantakos (1998: 152) adds that the process of sampling in certain instances, involves the identification and selection of respondents and arranging suitable times to meet them. This observation is relevant to this particular study and applies to the interviews conducted.

Purposive sampling, according to Neuman (1997: 206) is used mainly in field research and in exploratory research and researchers use it to select unique and informative samples.

- Snowball Sampling

"In snowball sampling, you first find a few subjects who are characterised by the qualities you seek, interview them, and then ask them for names of other people whom they know who have the same qualities or other qualities that interest you. In this manner, you accumulate more and more respondents by using each respondent you get as a source of new names for

your sample. A snowball sample is built from the subjects suggested by previous subjects.” (Baker 1999: 141).

Sarantakos (1998: 153) further elucidates the process of snowball sampling. This type of sampling sees researchers commencing their research with only a small number of respondents. The latter are requested by the researcher to recommend anyone else who would be a suitable participant in the research project. If the respondents make a recommendation, the researcher approaches the individual, collects the relevant information and asks them to recommend other informative samples until a **saturation** point of the data is attained.

De Vos et al (2002: 336) mention that: “snowball sampling has particular application value in qualitative research since it is directed at the identification of hard-to-reach individuals.” In this study, police offenders were particularly difficult to identify and locate. Snowball sampling in this study pertains to these offenders. The researcher requested to interview one or two individuals at specific prisons and these individuals located fellow inmates who were police offenders and who agreed to be interviewed for the study.

6.3.2.2 Interviews

- Qualitative Interviewing

Qualitative interviews are characterised by the following:

- they use open-ended questions,
- they are mainly single interviews where one person is questioned at a time,
- questions are not structured in a fixed, rigid manner, allowing questions to be asked in a different order and allowing the addition of new questions, and
- interviewers have greater freedom when presenting questions, altering wording and adjusting the interview to meet the goals of the study (Sarantakos 1998: 255).

Champion (2000: 269) mentions that the two main functions of interviews are **description** and **exploration**.

Description refers to information gained from interviews that is pertinent in describing various elements of social reality. “No other type of research tool performs this descriptive function as well” (Champion 2000: 269). Interviews enable the researcher to obtain a “gut-level” understanding of how individuals think and behave as well as their social reality, more so than a survey questionnaire could.

Interviews allow the researcher to **explore** the previously unexplored aspects of a specific topic. “Interviews invite more in-depth probing and detailed descriptions of people’s feelings and attitudes.” (Champion 2000: 270).

Baker (1999: 247) explains that in qualitative interviewing, the interview takes the form of a discussion rather than a question and answer format, but within a framework the researcher has drawn up. The interview is not totally controlled by the interviewer’s questions, with input welcomed from both the interviewer and the respondent.

Kvale (in Baker 1999: 247) mentions the “life-world interview, which aims to obtain descriptions of the life world of the interviewee.” The interviewer determines and controls the interview and by probing, receives many responses, some of which may be contradictory. For the author, this is not a problem because the aim of a qualitative interview is to “capture the multitude of subjects’ views of a theme,” to understand the respondents complex social world. The author mentions **12 points**, which constitute the “mode of understanding” of the qualitative interview:

- the interview topic pertains to the important themes in the *life world* of the interviewee. The analysis of the interview can focus on themes or on the meaning of the life world of the individual,
- the aim of the interview is to understand the *meaning* of these themes and of the individual’s life world. Qualitative interviewing does not constitute only factual information but also looks at the subjective and emotional meaning offered by respondents. Therefore, body language, facial expressions as well as spoken words must be observed,
- the interviewer looks for *qualitative* meanings in descriptions. These should be precise, but not as precise as quantitative research demands,
- the qualitative interview is *descriptive* – it should not be limited to fixed categories. A diagnosis is reached by employing less focused questions,
- the qualitative interview develops *specificity* about certain situations and

- actions that have happened in the respondent's life world,
- the interviewer must maintain a certain *naivety*, to encourage the respondent to explain and describe more of his/her life world,
 - the interview must *focus* on the themes of the research topic,
 - *ambiguities* that arise during interviews must be determined by the researcher to be either objective contradictions in situations being described or communication problems during the interview,
 - real *change* in the ideas of interviewees may occur during the interview. This is indicative of either a re-evaluation or a better understanding of a situation,
 - an interviewer must be *sensitive* to the comments of the interviewee,
 - the qualitative interview is an interpersonal situation because it constitutes a genuine *social interaction* between two individuals and it may have emotional and anxious qualities, as well as cognitive ones,
 - a qualitative interview must be a *positive experience*.

The material offered by all these authors is extremely pertinent to this particular study.

The interviews conducted for this study were of a ***semi-structured*** nature. Semi-structured interviews include elements of structured interviews, which are more akin to quantitative research and aspects of unstructured interviews, which are associated with qualitative research. The research topic and goal, resources, methodological choices and the type of information required will determine the degree of structure in an interview (Sarantakos 1998: 247).

Other aspects of unstructured interviews employed in the semi-structured interviews in this study include the degree of flexibility and minimal restrictions permitted in an interview pertaining to the wording of questions, the sequence in which questions are asked, and the interview guide. Neutral **probing** methods are also used by the researcher to gain additional information from the interviewee or the subject. Neuman (1997: 257) describes a probe as "a neutral request to clarify an ambiguous answer, to complete an incomplete answer, or to obtain a relevant response."

Researchers choose to use semi-structured interviews in order to acquire detailed information about an interviewee's beliefs concerning the research topic and their perceptions or accounts of the topic. This method allows the researcher to follow up interesting information that emerges during the interview. "With semi-structured interviews the

researcher will have a set of predetermined questions on an interview schedule, but the interview will be guided by the schedule rather than dictated by it.” (De Vos et al 2002: 302). Questions are almost always open-ended and interviewees can introduce issues the researcher may not have thought of. *The interviewee should be perceived as the expert on the research topic and should be permitted the opportunity to provide as much information as possible.*

Guided interviews were used in this study. These are also a form of semi-structured interview whereby the interviewer has plenty of freedom to formulate questions and change their order even though an **interview guide** is used (Sarantakos 1998: 251).

“A written or memorised interview guide provides a checklist of topics that the interviewer wants to cover. These checklists include reminders about the categories of interest to the researcher in an order that seems likely to promote rapport” (Dooley 2001: 258). In this study on police criminality, interviews were recorded by means of a cassette recorder or note-taking during the interview.

De Vos et al (2002: 302) adds that an interview guide “provides the researcher with a set of predetermined questions that might be used as an appropriate instrument to engage the participant and designate the negative terrain.” The researcher must think about the most pertinent themes to be covered in an interview and these must be arranged in a logical sequence. Sensitive questions should be left until later in an interview. Interview guides used in this study consisted of pertinent themes relating to all aspects of police criminality.

Focus interviews, which are relevant to this study, pertain to interviews that focus on a specific topic, in this case, police criminality. Respondents are requested by the interviewer to discuss the topic, thereby offering their views and opinions on the research question. The discussion is free and open and the interviewer guides the respondent rather than leading or restricting him/her. Focused interviews are aimed at “maximising the potential of the study, in at least two ways, namely by allowing the discussion to go beyond the originally planned themes and topics, and by encouraging the respondents to discuss as many issues of the themes as possible.” (Sarantakos 1998: 253). Focused interviews also allow for the gathering of increased information and for more specific information. This is made possible because the respondent is permitted more freedom when sharing information.

Unique and personal interviews were also used in this study. Unique interviews occur once only. The interviewer approaches the respondent, gathers the pertinent information and concludes the interview. Allowance is made for a follow-up interview if the original one was not completed. Personal interviews are conducted in a face – to - face situation, with the interviewer asking questions and the respondent replying (Sarantakos 1998: 249).

In-depth interviews are an important element of qualitative research. These pertain to the use of intensive and personalised questions put to respondents in order to discover intimate knowledge of the research topic and the respondent. In-depth interviews are essential for understanding social phenomena (Champion 2000: 263).

6.3.2.3 Interview Process

Interviews were conducted for the research with **specialists** in the field of police criminality. These specialists were from the South African Police Service and from various professions where their work would be relevant to the research topic. The latter group also includes ex-police members as well as overseas specialists. Police **offenders** constitute the second group of individuals interviewed for the research.

- Specialist Interviews

The interviewees from the **South African Police Service** were chosen for their relevant fields of expertise. All the police members interviewed are based in the Western Cape. They include:

- *Deputy Provincial Commissioner Mfazi* – Head: Crime Detection and Intelligence.
- *Deputy Provincial Commissioner Ogle* – Head: Support Services.
- *Director van Dyk* – Provincial Commander: Organised Crime.
- *Director du Toit* – Provincial Head: Detective Service.
- *Director Veary* – Director: Gugulethu Crime Zone.
- *Senior Superintendent Cloete* – Legal Services.
- *Senior Superintendent Goolam* – Provincial Commander: Counter Intelligence.
- *Senior Superintendent Jacobs* – Psychological Services.
- *Superintendent Barkhuizen* – Detective Branch Commander.

- *Superintendent Mohamed* – Head: Disciplinary Management.
- *Superintendent de la Cruz* – Social Services.
- *Captain Kotze* – Counter Intelligence.
- *Captain Westraat* – Psychological Services.

The **remaining specialist group** of interviewees include individuals from a variety of professions. These include:

- *Gareth Newham* – Project Manager for the policing projects of the criminal justice programme at the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation.
- *Advocate Karen McKenzie* – Executive Director: Independent Complaints Directorate.
- *Irvin Kinnes* – Independent Criminologist.
- *Norman Joseph* - Newspaper Journalist.
- *Advocate Niehaus* – National Prosecuting Authority.
- *Andy Miller* – South African Police Union.
- *Advocate Andre Gerber* – South African Police Union
- *Advocate Lennit Max* – Member of Provincial Parliament (Western Cape) and ex-SAPS Provincial Commissioner.
- *Advocate Grant Smith* – Paralegal Services and ex-SAPS Commander of the Murder and Robbery Unit.
- *Stef Grobler* – Special Investigations Unit and ex-SAPS National Commander of the Anti-corruption Unit.
- *Professor Anthony Minnaar* – University of South Africa. Previously with the Institute for Human Rights and Criminal Justice Studies, Technikon South Africa.

International Interviewees:

- *Superintendent Peter Gallagher* – Commander: Employee Management Branch, New South Wales Police Service. Sydney, Australia.
- *Roy Clark* – Director of Investigations: Independent Police Complaints Commission. London, United Kingdom.
- Digital Video Conference held with *Chief Charles Campisi* – Head: NYPD Internal Affairs Bureau, and
- *Patrick Gallagher* - Commanding Officer of the IAB's Corruption Prevention Division.

To enable the researcher to interview these members of the South African Police Service, written requests were sent to the Western Cape Provincial Commissioner. Permission was duly granted (see attachment A). The interviewees or their personal assistants were contacted telephonically by the researcher to arrange an appropriate time to conduct the interviews. All the interviews took place at the officers' place of work.

Ex-police members were referred to the researcher by an existing police member, as were interviewees from the National Prosecuting Authority and the South African Police Union. The remaining interviewees were identified and selected by the researcher also because of their field of expertise. For example, Gareth Newham is involved in policing and police corruption research and presents courses to various police stations on integrity. Professor Minnaar has also done extensive research on various policing topics. Roy Clark, who was interviewed in London, was chosen after the researcher identified him in a book about a major corruption scandal in London's Metropolitan Police, which acknowledged his pivotal role in exposing and dealing with this problem.

Superintendent Gallagher was identified by the researcher as the commander of the New South Wales Police Service's Employee Management Branch. This police division is responsible for managing good and poor performance and conduct, discipline and workplace dispute management as well as complaints against members. They are also responsible for maintaining high levels of ethics, integrity and professionalism in the NSW Police Service. These interviewees were contacted either telephonically or electronically via e-mail. Three interviews were conducted telephonically because the interviewees lived in a different province from the researcher. Most of the face – to – face interviews took place at the specialist's place of work, including the interviews done in London and Sydney. Two interviews were conducted at restaurants and one at an airport. The interviews were conducted over a period of more than two years from April 2003 to August 2005. The Digital Video Conference took place during August 2003.

The South African specialist findings and the International specialist findings will be presented in two separate chapters.

SPECIALIST INTERVIEW GUIDE

The major pertinent themes (as illustrated in attachment B) covered in the interviews of all the specialists are as follows:

General themes include the perceived extent of police criminality in the SAPS, examples of the types of crimes committed by members and ranks and units that are the most vulnerable to deviance.

Risk factors that encourage police crime including issues such as police culture, the blue code of silence, management issues, salaries, low morale and, is police crime an organisational problem or is it a case of a “few bad apples?”

Recruitment includes the quality of individuals recruited into the SAPS, the efficacy of the vetting process and standard of professionalism in the Service.

The quality of police *training* and do members receive ethics and integrity training?

Consequences of police crime, both for colleagues and the public.

Interventions include suggestions from the interviewees on how to manage police criminality, including introducing random drug tests, integrity tests and ethics training. The efficacy of the Code of Conduct is also questioned.

The efficacy of SAPS’s *policies and procedures* are questioned, particularly the promotions, disciplinary and grievance policies.

Oversight/Complaints/Investigative bodies include asking why the Anti-corruption Unit was closed, where does the public go if it has a complaint against an errant police member, who investigates these complaints and how effective is the ICD?

Interview guides for specialists varied slightly from one individual to another depending on the interviewee’s area of expertise. For example, one interviewee’s general questions focused primarily on gangs, as this was his area of expertise. Two interviewees’ guides focused on the issue of SAPS policies and procedures and police remuneration, and another two interviewee’s questions focused predominantly on discipline, as these were issues they dealt

with on a daily basis. The New South Wales police commander's interview guide had similar questions to the ones mentioned above but these were adapted to reflect the Australian policing environment. Similarly, the interview guide for the London interviewee was modified to include questions on his experience at Scotland Yard and his current position as director of investigations at the Independent Police Complaints Commission in London.

OBSERVATIONS

The length of the interviews with **SAPS members** ranged from one hour to three hours, the latter taking place on a Sunday morning. The one-hour interviews were inadequate in answering all the questions although good information was collected pertaining to certain questions. A follow-up interview was declined by one of the members concerned. A second follow-up interview with a different member could not take place, as the member was constantly unavailable. The rest of the interviews were highly successful and informative. One or two interviewees were reticent and "cagey" in their responses and another interviewee initially took a defensive position but this dissipated as the interview progressed. In two interviews, the original member to be interviewed invited a colleague or colleagues to participate in the interview, which was advantageous to the researcher, as a variety of facts and opinions' were offered.

Senior managers interviewed tended to emphasise what needed to be done and what systems had been put in place to effect changes in policing generally, rather than responding to the negative aspects of certain questions. Generally, the researcher was satisfied with the quality of information collected and the openness of many police interviewees.

The length of the interviews conducted with the remaining group of specialists also varied from one hour to three hours depending on the availability of the interviewee. Most specialists were extremely willing to assist the interviewer with the research. Responses were generally knowledgeable and informative. There were occasions where busy professionals awarded the interviewer one hour of their schedule, which eventually extended to two hours. All the interviewees appeared confident of their knowledge of the research topic and most relayed this knowledge accordingly.

- Offender Interviews

Eight male police offenders were interviewed for this research. All the subjects were incarcerated at the time of their interview. The researcher felt that this was an adequate number of interviews as the **saturation** level of information was reached - no new information was forthcoming.

The offenders interviewed include:

- *Subject A* – 42 years of age, in the SAPS for 21 years, four-year prison sentence for theft. Time served: two years.
- *Subject B* – 39-years of age, in the SAPS for 17 years, four-year prison sentence for theft. Time served: two years.
- *Subject C* - 36 years of age, in the SAPS for five years, 25-year prison sentence for murder. Time served: 10 years.
- *Subject D* – 38 years of age, in the SAPS for eight years, 18-year prison sentence for murder. Time served: five years.
- *Subject E* – 31 years of age, in the SAPS for four years, 15-year prison sentence for murder. Time served: seven years.
- *Subject F* – 40 years of age, in the SAPS for 17 years, 18-month prison sentence for fraud and a R10 000 fine for corruption. Time served: three months.
- *Subject G* – 34 years of age, in the SAPS for 12 years, 10-month prison sentence and five years correctional supervision/community service for robbery, theft of and illegal possession of abalone. Time served: five months.
- *Subject H* – 42 years of age, in the SAPS for 14 years, 19-year prison sentence for murder. Time served: 11 years.

To identify and locate police offenders was indeed a challenging process. Half the subjects were identified by the researcher through media articles and the other half were identified by these offenders in the same institutions. The researcher received excellent co-operation from officials in the Western Cape Department of Correctional Services who located the offenders and provided the researcher with contact details of prison managers. The latter obtained permission from the offenders to be interviewed and agreed to appropriate times for conducting the interviews. Administration offices were provided for this purpose. The interviews were held in four prisons in various areas of the Western Cape. Interviews with

offenders were conducted over a period of seven months. Two offenders, who were approached, declined to take part in the study.

OFFENDER INTERVIEW GUIDE

The offender interview guides (attachment C) were divided into three distinctive sections:

- PART ONE: *Biographical details* of the subject include his age, where he grew up, when he joined the SAPS, length of service, units served in, family members in the police, quality of training and any ethics or integrity training?
- PART TWO: *Literature questions* pertain to the extent of police crime in the SAPS, the most common types of crimes committed by members, ranks and units most affected, vulnerable shifts, the quality of supervision on these shifts and individual or group corruption? Further questions relate to the concept of police culture, SAPS policies and procedures, quality of psychological and social support for members and why members get involved in criminality? Interventions are also discussed.
- PART THREE: *Personal questions* relate to the subject's own circumstances and include questions such as the crime itself, how did he feel after the commission of the crime, is the sentence too harsh, would he recommend a career in the police today, how did his colleagues react to the crime, why did you do it, consequences of his actions and would he do it again?

OBSERVATIONS

The offender interviews lasted approximately one and a half to two hours, depending on how much information the subject offered or time allotted to the researcher. These were incredibly valuable interviews in terms of the information provided. The subjects had nothing to lose, their crimes had been exposed and the researcher felt that they were largely open and honest with the information provided. All the subjects were co-operative. Some subjects attempted to downplay their crime, perhaps attempting to convince themselves that what they had done was "not so bad," and some were definitely prone to embellishment, particularly concerning their policing prowess.

The majority of subjects accepted full responsibility for what they had done. One subject refused to take the blame for what he had done and in the case of some other subjects, there was a definite causal pattern throughout their careers as policemen, culminating in the commission of a serious offence. Some subjects got involved in criminality very soon after joining the police, they were basically career criminals in the guise of police officials and they were ultimately convicted on relatively minor offences compared to the crimes they got involved in throughout their careers and for which they were never arrested. The majority of subjects joined the police before 1994, during the apartheid era. Some subjects did not experience working for a police organisation that moved from a police force to a police service because they were incarcerated in 1994. Others served in the police for a number of years post-1994.

6.4 DATA ANALYSIS

According to Sarantakos (1998: 313) preparation for the initial stages of research materialises during the data collection stage, which produces worthy and relevant information. The researcher then studies the data and identifies trends, patterns and relationships relevant to the research question. The author adds that the aim of data analysis is to “make sense out of information gathered through the previous stages of the research and to identify the meaning the data contain.” *The task of data processing and the conversion of raw data into coherent, meaningful statements is called **analysis and interpretation of data.***

The author reiterates that the three important steps of analysis include:

- *Data reduction:* in qualitative research this involves the careful reading of recorded information, identifying the most important themes and categorising the material for analysis. Data reduction varies according to the objective of the study as well as theoretical assumptions. INFORMATION IS COLLECTED, PROCESSED AND ANALYSED and this process is perpetuated until the research is complete.
- *Data organisation:* this entails arranging information according to pertinent themes, categorising information more specifically.
- *Interpretation:* making decisions and reaching conclusions relating to the research question are part of interpretation, as are identifying significant

patterns and trends and *explanations* (Sarantakos 1998: 315).

Baker (1999: 335) adds that *condensing data* entails keeping necessary information and discarding unnecessary information and how to condense this without losing the meaning and significance of the research. Information must be *presented* in a way that is vivid and energetic to the reader. Data must be *interpreted* in such a manner that enables the researcher to draw valid and convincing conclusions.

“Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data. It is a messy, ambiguous, time-consuming, creative and fascinating process. It presents a formidable task for qualitative researchers. The mere amount of data generated by qualitative research, in the form of hundreds of pages of field notes or mountains of dictation on tape, is even more awe-inspiring to the inexperienced qualitative researcher than the quantitative researcher” (De Vos et al 2002: 339).

The authors add that interpretation means making sense of the data, the “lessons learned.” Interpretation takes several forms, it might be the interpreting of hunches, insight or intuition, or it might be interpreting within a social science form or idea. Researchers must show how and why a particular explanation offered for the research is the most plausible of all possibilities (De Vos et al 2002: 344).

In summation of this phenomenon, Neuman (1997: 46) adds that data **analysis** means “a search for patterns in data – recurrent behaviours, objects, or a body of knowledge. Once a pattern is identified, it is **interpreted** in terms of social theory or the setting in which it occurred.”

In this study, pertinent **themes** were initially identified during the literature study. Empirical data was collected according to these themes, which were stipulated in the interview guides. Data is analysed in the form of pertinent empirical findings as per the existing themes. Significant aspects of the findings will be interpreted as well as elements that have not been obviously included in the information. The findings from both the literature and the empirical study will be linked and interpreted, as will the researchers own findings. This process will culminate in the theoretical explanation of police criminality.

6.5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

To summarise, the research design of this study is **qualitative**. The latter enables the what, how and why of police criminality to be explained more extensively and thoroughly than it would be if a quantitative research design was employed. A qualitative research framework allows the researcher more flexibility to gain the maximum amount of information about the research topic. It is less rigid, and permits the use of guidelines as opposed to strict rules.

The **unit of analysis** in this study is the individual. Individuals interviewed for the empirical research include members of the South African Police Service, specialists in the field of police criminality such as ex-police members, members of the National Prosecuting Authority, a criminologist, police union members, a journalist and researchers. The commander of the Employee Management Branch of the New South Wales Police Service was interviewed in Sydney, and an ex-Assistant Commissioner from London's Metropolitan Police was interviewed in London. The researcher took part in a Digital Video Conference with the Chief of the New York Police Department's Internal Affairs Bureau and a colleague.

The **time dimension** pertains to the literature material used in the study, which is rarely older than 1997 – to the present. Interviews were conducted from April 2003 until October 2005. In order to achieve the research goal of acquiring as much information as possible on police criminality, exploratory, explanatory and descriptive techniques were employed.

Data was collected by two specific means: a literature study and an empirical study. The **literature study** focuses on illustrating the variety of crimes police members get involved in as well as why they get involved in criminality, individual case studies, consequences and interventions. Useful information was collected from various sources especially Commission of Inquiry reports – the Royal Commission that investigated corruption in the New South Wales Police Service and the Mollen Commission that did likewise with the New York Police Department.

The **empirical study** consists of interviews done with police members and other specialists in the field of police crime and police offenders. Purposive sampling techniques were employed to identify specialists and snowball sampling was instrumental in identifying offenders. The interviews were qualitative in nature, chosen because they permit the use of open-ended, probing questions and interview guides where questions can be altered to apply more pertinently to the specific interviewee, were also used. The interviews were semi-

structured. In-depth interviews pertain to the offender interviews, as these were not as expert-topic-specific as the specialist interviews.

This chapter also highlighted the interview process – how interviewees were contacted, where the interviews took place and who the interviewees are. Interview guides with pertinent themes, were used by the researcher during the interviews. Observations of the interviews were also recorded. Finally, all the data collected will be sorted out and analysed. After the information has been processed it will be interpreted in order to make sense of the subject being researched. The interpreted information will be explained by means of criminological theories.

The following chapter records the findings of the interviews conducted with specialists in the field of police criminality.