

**AN ANALYSIS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FIREARMS CONTROL ACT
60 OF 2000 IN EKURHULENI**

BY

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the

MAGISTER IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE

In the subject

POLICING

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT POLICE PRACTICE

SCHOOL OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

COLLEGE OF LAW

SUPERVISOR: PROF H F SNYMAN

2021


DECLARATION

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AN ANALYSIS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FIREARMS CONTROL ACT 60 OF 2000 IN EKURHULENI

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, I thank God for giving me life, wisdom, strength, and blessings to complete this study. I would like to also express my deepest and sincere appreciation to my supervisor Professor HF Snyman for providing me with an unwavering guidance throughout the academic journey. You have been an exceptional mentor and I am sincerely grateful for that. It would not have been possible to complete this project without your support and nurturing. Thank you very much for your dedication and friendly supervision on all my efforts and struggles. Working under your supervision has been delightful and I have learned a lot and grown from all the experience.

I would also like to extend my deepest and sincere gratitude to the South African Police Service management for granting me permission to conduct a research study in the organization. I am extremely grateful to the participants who contributed immensely to the completion of this dissertation, without them it would not have been possible to complete this project.

I cannot begin to express my thanks to my beloved wife Jowie Dumeleni Rakgalakane and three lovely daughters Lethabo, Palesa and Lebogang for their unwavering support, encouragement, motivation, and inspiration to complete this study. Thank you for understanding and being patient with me when I could not spend quality family time with you due to commitments on this study. I would also like to convey my sincere and profound gratitude to my siblings and extended families for their support. It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge a true friend Matome for the invaluable support, encouragement, motivation, and inspiration and always being there for me.

“You will never reach your destination if you stop and throw stones at every dog that barks”.

Winston Churchill

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my dearest parents Mampi Bettie Rakgalakane and the late Maphatse Jackson Rakgalakane for raising me and given me education. They valued education despite them being illiterate. The dedication is also extended to my beloved late elder brother Selumi William Rakgalakane who sacrificed his future by putting his dreams on hold and assumed the father figure and took full financial responsibility for the entire family during difficult times after our father's untimely passing away in 1986. I will always be indebted to him for appreciating family values and will forever be cherished. His contribution in my life is incalculable.

SUMMARY

This study analyses the implementation of Firearms Control Act (FCA) 60 of 2000 in Ekurhuleni. The FCA 60 of 2000 regulates and manages the application for ownership, sale, possession, and usage of firearms in the Republic of South Africa of which the South Africa Police Service (SAPS) is responsible for its implementation to curb the proliferation of both legal and illegal firearms and its associated crimes. Ironically, firearms related crimes continued to increase despite its implementation. Therefore, this study addresses the question, are SAPS members implementing and enforcing the FCA 60 of 2000 effectively? To answer this question, this study endeavoured to find out whether there were challenges in the application of the FCA 60 of 2000. Qualitative research approach and design were employed. Purposive sampling was used to select participants. Literature review and 17 semi-structured interviews were used for data collection. Thematic analysis was used to identify the following emerged themes: understanding of the FCA 60 of 2000; understanding of the purpose of the FCA 60 of 2000; FCA 60 of 2000 effectiveness on the control of firearms in South Africa; perceptions on violent crimes involving firearms; exposure to training; accessibility of information; and compliance with the provisions of the Act. The general findings demonstrate that the FCA 60 of 2000 is not adequately enforced by the SAPS members due to poor knowledge and understanding of the Act. The main issue raised was lack of training on the FCA 60 of 2000. Recommendations were made to bring about improvement in the application and enforcement of the FCA 60 of 2000.

KAKARETŠO

Dinyakišišo tše di sekasekile go phethagatšwa ga Molao wa Taolo ya Dithunya (FCA) wa 60 wa 2000 ka Ekurhuleni. FCA e sepediša le go laola dikgopelo tša go ba beng ba dithunya, go di rekiša, go di swara le go di šomiša ka Repabliking ya Afrika Borwa. Tirelo ya Maphodisa ya Afrika Borwa (SAPS) e rwele maikarabelo a go phethagatša FCA le go lwantšha go phatlalatšwa ga bobedi dithunya tše di lego molaong le tše o di sego molaong le bosenyi bjo bo amanago le go di phatlalatša. Bosenyi bja go amana le dithunya bo tšwetše pele go oketšega le ge go tsentšwe tirišong molao wa FCA. Ka fao, dinyakišišo tše di arabile potšišo ye e latelago: Naa SAPS e tsenya tirišong le go phethagatša FCA gabotse? Go araba potšišo ye, dinyakišišo tše di lekodišitše ge eba go itemogelwa ditlhohlo ge go phethagatšwa FCA gomme ge go le bjale, ke ditlhohlo dife tše go itemogelwago tšona. Mokgwa wa dinyakišišo tša boleng le tlhamo ya dinyakišišo tša boleng e dirišitšwe. Go dira sampole ka maikemišetšo go dirišitšwe go kgetha bakgathatema. Tekodišišo ya dingwalwa le dipoledišano tše 17 tše o dipotšišo tša tšona di bego di nyaka gore batho ba fe maikutlo a bona di dirišitšwe bjalo ka ditlabelo tša go kgoboketša tshedimošo. Tshekatsheko ya merero e dirišitšwe ka nepo ya go utolla merero ye e latelago: kwešišo ya maphodisa a SAPS ya FCA; kwešišo ya maikemišetšo a FCA ka maphodisa a SAPS; go šoma gabotse ga FCA mabapi le go laola dithunya ka Afrika Borwa; maikutlo ka ga bosenyi bja dikgaruru bjo bo amanago le go šomišwa ga dithunya; go hlahlwa ga maphodisa a SAPS; go fihlelelwa ga tshedimošo; le go obamela ditlhagišo tša FCA. Dikutollo ka kakaretšo di laetša gore FCA ga e phethagatšwe ka maleba ke SAPS, kudukudu ka lebaka la ge maphodisa a SAPS a hloka tsebo ya maleba le kwešišo ka ga Molao wo. Tlhohlo ye kgolo ye e bonwego e bile tlhokego ya tlhahlo mabapi le FCA. Ditšhišinyo di dirilwe mabapi le ka fao go ka tsenywago tirišong le go phethagatša FCA.

ISIFINYEZO

Lolu cwaningo luhlaziya ukusetshenziswa komthetho wolawulo lwezibhamu i-Firearms Control Act (FCA) 60 ka 2000 endaweni ye-Ekurhuleni. Umthetho we-FCA ulawula kanye nokuphatha ukwenziwa kwezicelo zobunikazi, ukuthengiswa, ukuba nazo kanye nokusetshenziswa kwezibhamu eRiphabliki yeNingizimu Afrika. Abamaphoyisa aseNingizimu Afrika abe-South African Police Service (SAPS) babhekana nokusetshenziswa komthetho we-FCA ukuvimbela ukwanda nokusabalala kakhulu kwezibhamu ezisemthethweni nezingekho emthethweni kanye nobugebengu obuhambisana nokusabalala kakhulu kwezibhamu. Ubugebengu obuhambisana nezibhamu buqhubekile nokwanda ngisho noma kunokusetshenziswa komthetho we-FCA. Ngakho-ke, lolu cwaningo lubhekane nombuzo olandelayo: Ngabe abe-SAPS basebenzisa kanye nokuqikelela ukulandelwa komthetho we-FCA ngokusebenza kahle nokunempumelelo? Ukuphendula lo mbuzo, lolu cwaningo luhlalele ukuthi ngabe kukhona izinselele okuhlangatshezwana nazo ekusebenziseni umthetho we-FCA, uma kunjalo, yini lezi zinselele okuhlangatshezwana nazo. Kwasetshenziswa inqubo yocwaningo lwe-qualitative kanye nedizayini ye-qualitative kulolu cwaningo. Kwasetshenziswa isampuli ye-purposive ukukhetha ababambiqhaza kucwaningo. Kwabuyekezwa imibhalo kanye nokwenziwa ama-interview angahlelekile kakhulu (semi-structured) angu 17 njengezindlela zokuqoqa ulwazi. Ukuhlaziyiwa kwezihloko kwasetshenziswa kulezi zihloko ezilandelayo: Ukuqondisisa kwamalunga abe-SAPS umthetho we-FCA; ukuqondisisa kwamalunga abe-SAPS inhloso yomthetho we-FCA; ukusebenza kahle ngokuyimpumelelo komthetho we-FCA mayelana nolawulo lwezibhamu eNingizimu Afrika; imibono yabantu ngobugebengu bodlame oluhambisana nezibhamu; uqeqesho lwamalunga abe-SAPS; ukutholakala kalula kolwazi; kanye nokulandelwa kokubekwe kumthetho we-FCA. Okutholakele ngokunabile kukhombisa ukuthi umthetho we-FCA awulandelwa ngokwanele ngabe-SAPS, ikakhulukazi ngenxa yokuthi amalunga abe-SAPS anolwazi oluncane kanye nokuqondisisa okuncane ngoMthetho. Inselele enkulu eboniwe ukusweleka koqeqesho ngomthetho we-FCA. Kwenziwe izincomo ngokuthi kungathuthukiswa kanjani ukusetshenziswa nokulandelwa komthetho we-FCA.

LIST OF KEY TERMS

- Ammunition
- At-risk individuals
- Deceased estate
- Declaration of unfitness
- Designated Firearm Officer
- Firearms
- Firearms Control Act 60 of 2000
- Firearm legislation
- Firearm ownership
- South African Police Service.

ACRONYMS

AAA	- Arms and Ammunition Act, 1969 (Act No. 75 of 1969)
AEA	- Administration of Estates Act, 1965 (Act No. 66 of 1965)
AGU	- Anti-Gang Unit
APMC	- Australian Police Ministers' Council
APP	- Annual Performance Plan
BAC	- Business Against Crime
BGOA	- Black Gun Owners Association
CFCR	- Central Firearms Control Register
CFR	- Central Firearms Register
CoE	- City of Ekurhuleni
CPS	- Community Policing Strategy
CSC	- Client Service Centre
DFO	- Designated Firearms Officer
DHA	- Department of Home Affairs
DVA	- Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998
EF	- Estate Firearms: Firearms of Deceased Persons
EFRS	- Enhanced Firearms Registration System
EPS	- Enabled Police Stations
FAA	- Firearms Amendment Act of 1997
FCA	- Firearms Control Act 60 of 2000
FCR	- Firearms Control Regulations of 2004
FFL	- Federal Firearms License
FRC	- Firearms Registration Centre
FRS	- Firearms Register System
GCA	- Gun Control Act of 1968
GFSA	- Gun-Free South Africa
GOSA	- Gun Owners South Africa
IJS	- Integrated Justice System
MSSA	- Military-Style Semi-Automatics
MTSF	- Medium Term Strategic Framework
NamPol	- Namibian Police
NCPS	- National Crime Prevention Strategy

NDP	- National Development Plan
NGO	- Non-Governmental Organisations
NHSA	- National Hunting and Shooting Association
NPA	- National Prosecuting Authority
NRA	- National Rifle Association
ORS	- Operational Response Services
PPCP	- Parliamentary Portfolio Committee for Police
PPCSS	- Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Safety and Security
RSA	- Republic of South Africa
SADC	- Southern African Development Community
SAGA	- South African Gun Owners Association
SAHGCA	- South African Hunters & Game Conservation Association
SANDF	- South African National Defence Force
SAPS	- South African Police Service
SONA	- State of the Nation Address
USA	- United States of America
VISPOL	- Visible Policing
YCPS	- Youth Crime Prevention Strategy

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The background to the study provides a comprehensive explanation of the history of the problem which forms the basis of the research subject being studied. Such information gives the reader an essential context of the study to have a better understanding of the background of the problem being researched and the significance of the study.

The chapter provides contextual details of the study and outline the direction of the process to be followed. It starts by presenting the problem statement which outlines the existing issue to be investigated. It further sets forth the aims which specify the desired outcomes, including the objectives describing activities to guide the research. Finally, it will present the value of the research and outline the envisaged benefits of the study.

1.2 Background to the research problem

The SAPS is the guardian of the Firearms Control Act (FCA) 60 of 2000 and responsible for its implementation to curb the proliferation of firearms and its associated crimes. The importance of the FCA 60 of 2000 cannot be overemphasized, since this Act is so important that, if properly implemented, it can positively contribute to improving the control of firearms (Bopape & Snyman, 2015). The FCA 60 of 2000 regulates and manages the application of firearm competency certificates, licences, permits and the renewals. The purpose of the FCA 60 of 2000 is primarily to safeguard the basic rights to life and unlawful harm of the physical body of all citizens in the Republic and the rule of law. It aims to limit the widespread availability and possession of illicit firearms through putting measures in place to eradicate such firearms from circulation and enhance management and control over licensed firearms. It enables

the government to establish a comprehensive and effective system to regulate the supply, ownership, safekeeping properly, and to detect negligent and criminal usage of firearms. The right to own a firearm in South Africa is not an entitlement which is Constitutionally protected, which is different from the United States of America (USA) (Davis, 2014). The issuance of firearm competency is dependent on meeting certain requirements. The firearm competency serves as a prerequisite to obtain a firearm licence, which in turn, is subjected to certain conditions such as periodic renewal process. The FCA 60 of 2000 has introduced several important measures to ensure that incompetent applicants should not own firearms. This means that only individuals who acquired legal and valid competency certificates can possess and lawfully use firearms. In addition, adequate reasons must be furnished for the desire to acquire a firearm with the objective of hunting, sport, collecting, self-defence and security services. Application for firearms collection, sport and hunting, is required to be substantiated by documentary proof attachments from respective associations the applicants are affiliated with (Bopape, 2014).

The general management of firearms under the Arms and Ammunition Act 75 of 1969 (AAA) was inadequate (Bopape, 2008); and contributed to the public's sense of fear of violent crime, which was increasing; hence the firearm policy transformation to neutralise the threats (Lamb, 2017). According to Lamb (2017), since the introduction of the FCA 60 of 2000 in the year 2000, the levels of firearm-related death rates were reduced in proportion until 2010. It was therefore evident that a stringent firearm regulation is effective and can save lives (Menoe & Taylor, 2018). However, after 2010 the effectiveness of the Act began to decline steadily, and the availability of firearms increased, as well as violent crimes. The widespread availability of legal firearms can render the stringent firearm control policy ineffective, due to enforcement which becomes difficult to achieve (Azrael, Hepburn, Hemenway & Miller, 2017). This suggests that firearm ownerships were fewer during the period that showed a decrease in crime levels, but steadily increased as more people acquired firearms under the new Act. Despite the introduction of the FCA 60 of 2000, firearms continued to be the main drivers of the increased violent crime levels in the Republic of South Africa (RSA); much to the consternation of the public (Mabule, 2013; Lamb, 2017).

The widespread availability of firearms in RSA points out to ineffectiveness of the system somewhere. According to Watson (2019), RSA had a total of 2, 582,656 licensed firearms which adds up to a proportion of 4.39 guns per 100 individuals.

South Africa's national firearms legislative framework was reformed and introduced to enhance the seizure of illicit firearms to limit diversion of legal firearms into the illegal pool. However, the indication is that illegal firearms in RSA had increased (Chitambo, 2019). According to Yates (2018), the continuous flow of legal firearms into criminals' hands could suggest that there is a weakness in the regulatory system. It is generally believed that most illegal firearms were legally manufactured and procured (Lamb, 2018). The high number of such illegal firearms create a safety risk to the community. Parker (2011) points out that strong legislation, without enough law enforcement capacity to ensure compliance, has a very insignificant impact on reducing violent crime. No matter how strong the policy might be, it becomes ineffective, if there is a lack of adequate resourcing for its execution. Seemingly, the introduction of the FCA 60 of 2000 did not offer permanent solutions to the prevailing firearm-related crime rates in South Africa, including in Ekurhuleni district; given the high number of reported violent crimes.

The SAPS are the administrators of the FCA 60 of 2000 and are obliged to enforce all laws and policies of the country effectively to minimise the safety risk posed by firearms. The Act was supposed to strengthen the government's focus on eradicating illegal firearms from circulation. The issues of compliance and enforcement have bearing on the effectiveness of any policy, which is what the researcher seeks to investigate by analysing the implementation of the FCA 60 of 2000 by the SAPS in Ekurhuleni. The study endeavoured to find out whether there were weaknesses in the application of the FCA 60 of 2000. The researcher would like to analyse the implementation of FCA 60 of 2000 in Ekurhuleni by investigating whether the FCA 60 of 2000 implementation challenges have to do with the following issues: inadequate interpretation of the statute; poor management and leadership; poor training of SAPS staff; poor vetting of applicants and improper administration of the processes. One must highlight that the application of the law alone is not enough to solve problem. The

policy application efforts must be compared with its original intended objectives to ascertain its effectiveness. McPhedran (2019) postulates that the effectiveness of firearm policy is gauged with the successes of indicators such as firearm crime statistics. Value must be derived from an effective policy. Menoe and Taylor (2018), stated that the outcome of any law relies on the level of its enforcement. Effective implementation of the law is two-folded and involves enforcement by the state to ensure compliance by citizens. The failure to enforce compliance is enabled by lack of application of the existing law by the authorities.

The Minister of Police Bheki Cele released the annual national crime statistics covering the period between 1 April 2018 and 30 March 2019 (See chart 1.1) in Parliament on Thursday 2019-09-12 (Sicetsha, 2019). The report indicated that nationally the police recorded an increase of 0,7% on 17-community reported offences which comprise crimes against human beings; property-related crimes; other serious crimes; as well as contact-related crime categories. The report also showed an increase of 2.6% in the category of crimes against human beings as compared to the 2017/2018 financial year. The category of crimes against human beings comprises assault, attempted murder, murder, sexual offences and robbery which are mostly perpetrated by means of threats and violence. Murder recorded an increase of 3.4%; and robbery with aggravating circumstances, which are subcategories of contact crimes also increased by 1.2% as compared to the previous financial year 2017/2018. In both crime subcategories firearms are mainly employed. Two of the trio-crimes categories which are carjacking and robbery at business premises recorded a decrease, with exception of robbery at residential premises which registered an increase of 0.8 percent.

Gauteng Province contributed massively to the increase to the National crime statistics. Ekurhuleni, as part of Gauteng also contributed to the increase in crime. This suggests that the recent increase in firearm-related crimes was not slowing down and Ekurhuleni may be part of this trend for several more years to come. This increase in firearm-related crimes suggests that there may be many illegal firearms in circulation in the community. Therefore, research is urgently needed to determine why these

increases in crime are perpetuated. The persistent increase in firearm-related crimes impacts adversely on community wellbeing, as citizens increasingly feel unsafe and threatened. The ineffective regulation of the firearms might cause severe damage to the image of the SAPS as the protector of victims of crime and violence. It also brings to question the commitment of the SAPS in the fight against violent crimes.

In 2001 South Africa adopted and introduced a new firearms regulatory law in the form of the FCA 60 of 2000 and its supporting Firearms Control Regulations (FCR) which were brought into effect in 2004. The FCA 60 of 2000 has commendable features to promote and ensure safer firearm use. However, the inability to apply it fully might be the major obstacle in reducing firearm-related crimes in RSA. The problem that informed this research was that the SAPS in Ekurhuleni seems to have failed to implement the FCA 60 of 2000 to reduce the growing availability of firearms used to commit the escalating violent crimes effectively. Seemingly the police fail to implement the existing firearm regulations effectively to disarm undesirable firearm users. The increase in violent crimes involving firearms could indicate that there is widespread availability of firearms which were obtained outside the legal processes, circulating within the community. Others may argue that a single firearm could be responsible for committing numerous violent crimes if it is not yet confiscated. Hemenway and Miller (2013) postulate that firearm violence is a danger to public safety and health. According to Bopape (2014), firearm-related crimes do not occur exclusively in South Africa, but universally. Persistent improper implementation of the FCA 60 of 2000 in Ekurhuleni District may lead to the continuous widespread presence of illicit firearms in the wrong hands and defeat the intended purpose of the Act which is to address the same. To address such a challenge this implementation process needs to be analysed to verify if it is up to standard. Cook and Pollack (2017) state that if regulations governing firearms aimed at eradicating illegal firearms are properly enforced, it could assist in limiting the transfer of legal firearms to lawbreakers. This would mean that the effectiveness of the Act could be accurately measured if it is properly implemented. Ineffective implementation could impact negatively on the intended purpose of the Act which is to reduce the high concentration of illegal firearms in circulation.

It is not certain what caused the increase in violent crimes in Ekurhuleni (See section 1.3). However, the researcher argues that if the FCA 60 of 2000 was appropriately implemented, it could prevent legal firearms from being stolen and transferred to criminals. The achievement of that goal will possibly reduce violent crime. Improved implementation of the FCA 60 of 2000 may impact positively on the high levels of violent crimes. Getting rid of illegal firearms from circulation might lessen the number of firearm-related crimes, such as house robbery, business robbery and carjacking.

Figure 1.1 Map of the Republic South Africa's provinces



Source: South African High Commission: South Africa's Nine Provinces.

South Africa is situated on the southern tip of Africa and is officially named the Republic of South Africa (RSA). It extends from Durban in the east to Port Nolloth in the west and from Cape Agulhas in the south to Limpopo River in the north. The country covers an extensive area size of 1 219 090 square km with 57,73 million inhabitants (Stats SA, 2018). It is surrounded by the borderlines of Mozambique, Botswana, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Swaziland. Lesotho is an independent kingdom

which is entirely located within the South African region. It is bordered by the Atlantic and Indian Oceans on the western and eastern coasts respectively. The country is ethnically diverse and has eleven constitutionally recognised languages which include English; Afrikaans; Zulu; Ndebele; Pedi; Swazi; Tswana; South Sotho; Tsonga; Venda and Xhosa. The republic has three capital cities in which governmental powers are divided: Cape Town for legislation, Pretoria for executive administration and Bloemfontein for the judiciary. RSA is administratively sectioned into the following nine provinces which differ significantly in magnitude: Limpopo; Mpumalanga; KwaZulu-Natal; Gauteng; North West; Free State; Eastern Cape; Western and Northern Cape. Gauteng province is the smallest of them all and has three metropolitans: City of Tshwane (CoT); City of Ekurhuleni (CoE) and City of Johannesburg (CoJ). The province is largely urbanised and overly populous with an estimated total of 14.69 million inhabitants (Evans, 2018a). This study focuses on the CoE.

Figure 1.2 Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality Map



Source: Municipalities of South Africa: City of Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality – Map.

CoE is the first and lower sphere of government in the East Rand region of Gauteng. It was founded on 5 December 2000 after the consolidation of two former sovereign district administrative entities which are the Eastern Gauteng Services Council and Kyalami Metropolitan Council. The CoE is highly urbanised and is made up of the following nine towns which are comparatively small and disjointed: Benoni; Boksburg; Alberton; Edenvale; Brakpan; Germiston; Kempton Park; Springs and Nigel (Machaka & Roberts, 2004). The CoE encompasses the area size of 1 975km² accommodating the population size of 3 178 470 million. The CoE has an unemployment rate of 29.72% (Stats SA, 2011). The area suffers from acute poverty; unemployment, inequality and is densely populous. Migration into the area in search of employment opportunities is exceptionally high and impacts negatively on socio-economic conditions. The mushrooming of squatter camps and informal traders in the area bear evidence to uncontrolled urbanization.

There is a disproportionate availability of firearms, liquor and narcotics in the area. Crime and violence are prevalent in Ekurhuleni. According to Dlamini (2017), robbery incidents are high in Ekurhuleni. Nicolson (2017), states that Ekurhuleni is leading with aggravated robberies and rated second to Johannesburg metropolitan municipality. The study will focus on the Ekurhuleni North Cluster which comprises the following nine police stations with an allocated total of 1 374 operational police members: Ivory Park; Norkem Park; Kempton Park; Olifantsfontein; Edenvale; Sebenza; Rabie Ridge; Tembisa and Tembisa South. These areas were selected because of the proximity of where the researcher resides and works.

Firearms regulations differ greatly from country to country and so are the arguments for laws restricting firearm ownerships (Carlsen & Chinoy, 2018). According to Winkler (2016), the debate over firearm control is a global and emotive issue because of public safety on the one hand and liberty on the other hand. This is because of the different views held by opposing groups about the role and use of firearms. Debates around firearm control frequently revolve around the question whether firearms provide protection or endanger lives (see section 3.4). Some people equate firearm regulations with limiting legal firearm ownerships (Brown, 2009). Some people believe that the

antidote to firearm crimes is stricter firearm control while others believe that the converse is true. Some countries have a restrictive firearm control policy, while others adopt more permissive legislation.

1.3 The nature, scope and extent of the problem

Firearms form an integral part of South Africa's history and culture. Some individuals regard firearms as inherently good for providing protection and security, while others consider them as evil and promoting violence and crime. Legal firearms are ubiquitous these days, but unfortunately so are illicit ones. Universally firearms invoke intense arguments concerning their ownership and usage.

The FCA's checks and balances are widely considered as effective. It is a paradox that in South Africa where the firearms regulation is considered highly stringent, there are so many illegal firearms and a high number of firearm-related crimes. It is commonly believed that the source of illegal firearms circulating amongst criminals is the legal ownership market (Chetty, 2000). Some people argue that responsible firearm ownerships could be the solution to the flow of licensed firearms to the illicit market controlled by criminals. Firearms that are not properly safeguarded may be stolen and land up in the criminal sector. Other people hold the view that more stringent and non-permitting firearm regulations could be the answer (Phoebe, 2015; Kennedy, 2016) to limit the chances of legal firearms falling into criminal hands. The researcher seeks to analyse the implementation of the FCA 60 of 2000 which is perceived as the strictest firearms regulation in South Africa.

In 1994 the increased involvement of guns in perpetrating acts of violence increased and it galvanized the public into action. Vigorous campaigns were initiated by civil society organisations for stringent firearms regulations. The argument for stringent firearms control was based upon the view that firearms were extensively involved in committing crimes. According to Cook and Pollack (2017), the use of firearms in crime is a serious challenge, as opposed to the general problem of criminal violence. The notion was that strengthening firearm control and restriction of firearm ownership

would be a mechanism to reduce violent crime. Evidence-based studies support this argument. Various studies conducted confirmed the association between widespread accessibility of firearms and the high number of criminal acts of violence (Siegel, Ross & King III, 2013; Moore & Bergner, 2016; Monuteaux, Lee, Hemenway, Mannix & Fleegler, 2015; Stroebe, 2016; Moore, 2017) while others' findings contradicted this result (Van Kesteren, 2014; Volokh, 2015; Cook & Pollack, 2017). In response to the prevailing crime situation a clarion call was made by concerned lobby groups for South Africa to be declared a 'gun-free' country. There are two groups with diametrically opposing views regarding the availability of guns in the society. Surprisingly, both groups are advocating for safety, though from different angles. Safety is at the core of their debates on firearms. The debate on the issue of the availability of firearms in society could be likened to a double-edged sword with no easy solution. The opponent lobby group was led by the civilian community organisation named Gun Free South Africa (GFSA, 2011) which perceived the gun as a symbol of crime and violence, while the proponent lobby group is called South African Gunowners Association (SAGA) (Dyosop, 2012). The objective of GFSA was to help creating a protected South Africa where people live without any fear of crime. This was to be achieved by limiting the source and demand of firearms in the community. The SAGA champions the effort to advocate the rights of civilians to own and possess firearms for self-protection, sporting, hunting and recreational use. The GFSA is campaigning as part of the Gun Control Alliance (GCA) organisation which is made up of churches, youth groups, women's groups, and others that support the call for stringent gun control and the handing in of firearms (Minnaar, 2006). The GCA's specific ambition is to decrease the widespread availability of firearms circulating within the society. The anti-gun movement is of the view that firearm density raises the levels of crime while the pro-gun lobby group holds a contrasting view.

There is no existing principal hypothetical perception that explains the connection between the widespread availability of firearms and criminality. Cook and Pollack (2017) have since made such claim, submitting that firearms are the embodiment of power which perpetrators use to scare and immobilize victims who would otherwise offer resistance. Such power compels victims to succumb to perpetrators' demands.

Zannoni (2008) states that perpetrators carrying guns are more likely to accomplish their mission without victims offering any resistance. Clearly, pointing of a firearm at a victim could assist the criminal in achieving the intended goals, even without discharging a single shot. Burnett (2016) presumes that being in possession of a firearm provides an advantage in attack. It could be stated that firearms give advantage to both the victim and the criminal, depending on who is armed, and first to act. Studies by Lott (2010) and Ausman and Faria (2019) hold the perspective that the density of firearms could in fact lessen crime levels. Conversely, Donohue and Ayres (2003) and Kovandzic and Marvell (2003) found no evidence which suggests that widespread accessibility of firearms reduces crimes involving firearms.

Hemenway (2004) and Cook and Goss (2014) suggest that easy accessibility of firearms could empower the would-be victims to counter criminal attacks directed at them. According to Cook and Ludwig (2006), widespread availability of firearms could assist in many ways to interrupt criminal violence. Firstly, an armed victim could prevent the successful accomplishment of criminal acts by offsetting the power balance of an armed perpetrator in favour of the victim (Tark & Kleck, 2004; Burnett, 2016). Furthermore, victims carrying firearms can use them for their own protection against the aggressor and avoid being hurt (Ward, 2015; Kleck, 2018). Widespread firearm ownerships can deter crime which will in turn reduce the levels of crime (Cook & Ludwig, 2006). However, firearm density carries some health risks (Donohue, 2015) which outweighs the benefits (Hemenway, 2011). Aggressors may also be discouraged from engaging in criminal activities for fear of retaliation by their victims. Others could contend that legal possession of firearm is not always a guarantee for safety, as criminal attacks always have an element of surprise.

The source of most illicit guns lies directly down-stream from legal market firearms. Braga and Cook (2016) assert that a large proportion of firearms in the hands of criminals were acquired through illegal means. Many illegal guns in South Africa originally started as legal products before diversion to illicit markets. They enter the illicit market in several ways. For example, legally held firearms are stolen or otherwise diverted to illegal users, or directly imported (European Commission, 2014). The

researcher believes that the improper application of the gun control law would not only undermine the approach to firearms control and management but may also endanger the lives of innocent people.

When the FCA 60 of 2000 was promulgated (see section 2.3) it was not without controversy, as it was not unanimously welcomed by licensed firearm holders, dealers and manufacturers alike. Pro-gun and anti-gun movements, like, the South African Firearm Forum, together with various hunting societies and firearm dealers and GFSA, were openly opposed to this Act, although opposing it from two different points. During the public deliberations on the FCA 60 of 2000, the proponents of firearms regarded the new Act as the ANC-led governments' strategy to deny access to prospective licence applicants, while on the other hand disarming licensed firearm holders to create a firearm-free South Africa (Bopape & Snyman, 2015). They refer to the cumbersome and time-consuming process of moving the Bill to become an Act as flawed and labelled the process as 'a history of deceit' (SA Firearm Forum, 2006). GFSA opposed the Bill to move into an Act, based on not going far enough and praises it for saving numerous lives (GFSA, 2014). Churr (2015) questions the research conducted by Matzopoulos (GFSA, 2014), in which he claims that the FCA 60 of 2000 has saved 4 500 lives between 2001 and 2005 and claimed to expose the research as invalid for numerous reasons; thus, effectively questioning the credibility of the organisation, since they endorsed the research results.

Not a single person acquired wisdom by any other mode other than to listen to the views of those who know about specific subject matter. Similarly, the debate on firearm control is still on-going, as was evident during the National Firearms Summit, held on 24-25 March 2015 by the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Policing, where the amendments to the FCA 60 of 2000 were argued (Davis, 2015). This debate was marked by emotions and often there was no evidence to back up the arguments by both opposing lobby groups. For example, the study by Lott (2010) based on the defensive use of firearms was discussed; but the findings were contested as the data used could not be confirmed. For instance, Lott (2010) submitted that 98 percent of people use guns to ward off attacks by wielding their guns. Lott's findings were refuted

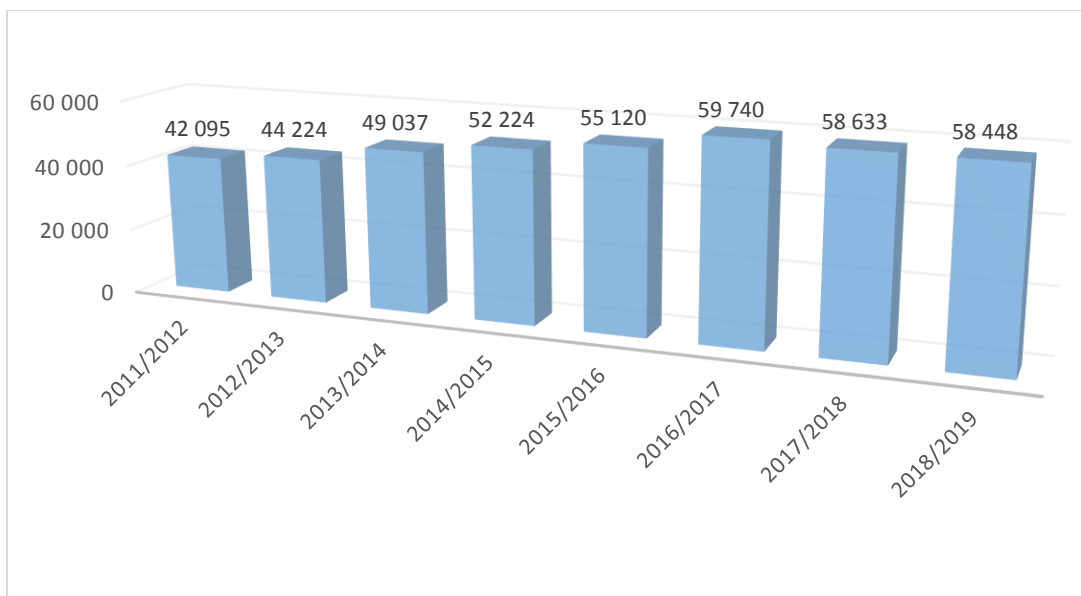
by Donohue and Ayres (2003), who claimed that the study was seriously flawed and fundamentally untrustworthy, as there was no credible evidence to back up the findings and therefore could not be used reliably to formulate policy. Afterwards the study by Hahn, Bilukha, Crosby, Mindy, Liberman, Moscicki, Snyder, Tuma, and Briss (2005) also failed to establish any significant connection between the shall-issue concealed-carry laws and acts of violence which were contrary to Lott's (2010) findings. However, Moody, Marvell, Zimmerman and Alemante (2014) partially confirmed Lott's (2010) findings that shall-issue laws have a positive effect on the levels of certain crimes involving firearms. What was clear during this debate was that there was no reliable data to support the points of view of either of the groups and that figures from foreign countries, particularly the USA, were used to present diverse points of view. For example, the study done by Altbeker (1999) has no relevance to be applied to the RSA, because what works in one country might not work in another. The method applied to the research affects the inference that armed victims are presumably more likely to be disarmed than to successfully defend themselves (Davis, 2015). The debate on the defensive use of firearms requires a comprehensive study to be conducted in South Africa.

The debate summit tended to veer off into issues of crime control and people control, without focusing on firearm control per se (Bopape & Snyman, 2015). Soty (2015), in her opening speech to the Summit, called for all the groups to work jointly and not against each other, to control firearms so that lives can be saved. Gould and Kirsten (2015) claim that, although firearms are not the cause of a criminal career, possessing a gun have an impact on human behaviour and may escalate crime. They support the position of reforming firearm control legislation, which enables easy access to firearms, with the aim of reducing violent crime levels in South Africa. This perspective is held by Bangalore and Messerli (2013), who established, from their study of 27 countries, that when a comparison is made between the number of available firearms and the levels of violence in a country, fewer firearms proved to lower the levels of crime and lead to a greater sense of security amongst the citizens. They did, however, also found a strong nexus between mental illness and violent crime, rather than only access to firearms.

The intention of the FCA 60 of 2000 was to solve firearm-enabled crimes through reducing the illegal density of firearms from circulation and improving management and regulation of legally owned firearms (Bopape & Snyman, 2015). The Act also provides for the use, transfer, possession and safe storage of legal firearms. Its ultimate objective is to develop a comprehensive and highly effective firearms management system which will provide appropriate control and enforcement of the firearm legislation. Seemingly the task of preventing the proliferation of illegal firearms in RSA is performed very poorly.

The firearm-related crime problem is prevalent, nationally and in Gauteng Province with specific reference to the Ekurhuleni North Cluster stations. Violent crimes that are prevalent in the cluster are trio-crimes namely business robbery, hijacking and house robbery which are perpetrated with firearms. These crimes continue to increase in the Ekurhuleni North Cluster’s policing precinct.

Graph 1.1: Trends for Trio-Crime Recorded by the Police 2011/2012 - 2018/2019



Source: South African Police Service 2019

The above graph depicts how the reported trio-crimes fluctuated in the course of eight years. Data illustrate that crime trends between 2010/2011 and 2011/2012 for trio-crimes declined to its lowest point of -1.3%. The decrease can probably be ascribed

to the firearm amnesty that was declared in 2010 wherein a total of 11 712 firearms and 129 101 ammunitions were collected (SAPS, 2015a). Another contributing factor could be a much higher police visibility during 2010/2011 because of the 2010 Soccer World Cup tournament. The other factor could be the reduction of firearms reported as stolen or lost to 9 105 in 2011/2012 compared to 9 427 in 2010/2011. Between 2011/2012 and 2012/2013 trio-crimes increased by 5.1%. The increase could be because of a rise in the number of firearms stolen or lost from 9 105 in 2011/2012 to 12 373 in 2012/2013. From 2012/2013 to 2013/2014 trio-crimes increased by 7.7%. Though the firearms stolen or lost were reduced from 9 942 in 2012/2013 to 7 589 in 2013/2014, the figure was still relatively high. For that reason, the increase in reported trio-crimes could be attributed to the increase of firearms stolen or lost in the same year. The crime figures have subsequently increased steadily to the highest level of 38.0% in 2014/2015. The firearms stolen or lost have slightly decreased to 7 305 in 2014/2015 relative to 7 589 in 2013/2014. The crime escalation between 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 was 11.8%. The firearms stolen or lost decreased from 7 305 in 2014/2015 to 7 289 in 2015/2016; hence the significant drop to 11.8%. With regards to trio-crimes, the percentage increase as compared to 38.0% in 2014/2015. It is not certain what caused the growing trend in crime, but there is a strong possibility that the high number of stolen or lost firearms since 2012/2013 had an influence on the increase of trio-crimes. Between the financial year 2015/2016 and 2016/2017 trio-crimes had escalated with 7.73%. This increase could be connected to the rise of reported stolen firearms from 7 289 during 2015/2016 to 9 853 in 2016/2017. Crime levels went down from 7.73% in 2016/2017 to -1.08% in 2017/2018. The decrease recorded could be ascribed to an increase in recovered stolen firearms from 3 833 in 2016/2017 to 4 323 in 2017/2018. A further 0.28% of crime reduction was attained between 2017/2018 and 2018/2019. The crime decline could be the result of focused police crime prevention operations. Though there was an increase of 9 336 firearms reported stolen and fewer firearm recoveries of 2 584 in 2018/2019, the police still managed to bring the crime levels down (See Table 1. 2, below).

Table 1.1: Stolen/lost and Recovered Firearms belonging to individuals and institutions between 2011/2012 and 2018/2019. This table reflects all firearms including SAPS's losses. Only SAPS losses (See table 3.1).

Financial Year	Stolen/ Lost	Recovered
2011/2012	9 105	8 744
2012/2013	12 373	12 982
2013/2014	7 589	10 113
2014/2015	7 305	5 341
2015/2016	7 289	8 465
2016/2017	9 853	3 833
2017/2018	9 336	4 323
2018/2019	9 609	2 584
Total	81 564	56 385

Source: South African Police Service 2019

The table above depicts the trends of stolen or lost and recovered firearms over a period of eight years. In South Africa, the legal firearm ownerships market is perceived as one of the prominent sources feeding the illicit market. Data show that the firearms reported as stolen increased from 9 105 to 12 373 between 2011/2012 and 2012/2013. The increase could be ascribed to the fact that in 2011/2012 a total number of 8 744 firearms were recovered which were fewer than the number of lost firearms reported in the same period. From 2013/2014 to 2015/2016 there was a continuous decline of firearms reported as stolen. The steady decline could be attributed to the increased focus of SAPS on the recovery of firearms relative to those reported as stolen. In 2016/2017 the number of reported stolen firearms increased to 9 853 from 7 289 in 2015/2016. This increase could be an indication that the police were less focused on recovering stolen firearms, as a total number of 3 833 firearms were recovered, fewer than 9 853 which was reported stolen in 2016/2017. During 2017/2018 a reduced number of 9 336 stolen firearms were reported which were less than 9 853 stolen firearms reported in 2016/2017. The decrease could be credited to the police's focused operations directed at retrieving stolen firearms. A total of 4 323

stolen firearms were recovered in 2017/2018 which was more than 3 833 reported stolen in 2016/2017. In 2018/2019 an increase of 9 609 stolen firearms were reported compared to 9 336 reported in 2017/2018. The cause of the increase could be as a result of poor enforcement of the FCA 60 of 2000 which also affected the recovery of stolen firearms that dropped to 2 584 in 2018/2019 from 4 323 in 2017/2018.

1.4 Research aim and objectives

The research seeks to analyse the implementation of the FCA 60 of 2000 by the SAPS. According to Hofstee (2006), to provide an answer to a research question the person who carries out the research needs to develop the primary aim and determine realistic and feasible objectives that would result in achieving the goal. The study seeks to propose appropriate answers to overcome the challenges experienced by SAPS members in enforcing the FCA 60 of 2000 to enhance the effective administration and control of firearms in the country.

1.4.1 Aim

Locke, Spirduso and Silverman (2013) postulate that the research aim should specify the reason for undertaking the study and its intended purpose. A research study with a general and ambiguous definition of objectives makes interpretation invalid (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015). Bak (2004) explains that a research project is like a journey and must have a starting point and an endpoint. According to Mouton and Marais (1996), the researcher should specify the aims of the project to be embarked upon by asserting whether the plan is exploratory, descriptive, explanatory, analytical or predictive. Engel and Schutt (2013) add an evaluative purpose to the list above. The objectives of any study outline the stages the research will follow to accomplish its result, similarly to description, evaluation and exploration (Fouché & De Vos, 2011).

The researcher undertakes to analyse the implementation of the FCA 60 of 2000, the procedural and technological systems related to firearm registration and tracing with a view to identify ambiguities and gaps that facilitated and may continue to facilitate

the diversion of firearms and ammunition into the illegal market. Fouché (2011) points out that analysis research concentrates on the efficient distribution of limited sources, on liability and on refining the existing programme. Strydom (2013) agrees by adding that evaluation research can be used to evaluate the purpose, the strategy, opportunities for funding, as well as application of social support to establish their effect in achieving the desired outcome. The fundamental aim of this study is to analyse the implementation of the FCA 60 of 2000 by the SAPS.

1.4.2 Objectives

Welman and Kruger (2002) assert that research can be conducted for the following purposes: to describe, clarify and subsequently predict and even transform or control human behaviour. Denscombe (2014) shares the same sentiments by saying the rationale behind embarking on an inquiry-based process is the desire to unravel the complexities of a situation or to develop a specific procedure. Denscombe (2014) further states that each research purpose should be able to bring solutions to what the research was trying to attain. Following Denscombe's (2014) guidelines, the purpose of this research will be fulfilled when the following formulated research objectives are accomplished:

Objective 1: To explain the firearms legislative framework and procedures in which the FCA 60 of 2000 is implemented.

Objective 2: To determine the implementation of the FCA 60 of 2000 by the SAPS towards management and control of firearms.

Objective 3: To identify challenges in the implementation of the FCA 60 of 2000 in Ekurhuleni North Cluster.

Objective 4: To make recommendations on the improvements that can be made to implement the FCA 60 of 2000 more effectively.

The goals and purposes of a study are inseparable. The aim is what the researcher intends to accomplish by the research study, while the objective is the means which the researcher uses to attain the desired goals, which should encompass a clearly defined means of responding to the research question, including detailed key issues involved.

1.5 Value of the Research

Research is described as a systematic procedure through which scientific knowledge of a phenomenon is gained by means of different objective approaches and techniques (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005). Brynard and Hanekom (2006) concur by stating that research is a systematic investigative approach used to find answers to the research questions, supported by confirmable facts. The goal of any research is to search for knowledge and insights that will reveal the truth, which is hidden, and which has not been discovered yet (McMillan, 2000); including confirmation of what is already in the public domain. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2015), research undertakes to discover appropriate answers through effective fact-finding means and their explanation.

This research will serve to improve the understanding, expertise and attitude of all role-players partaking in regulating firearms in the country. The SAPS organisation will benefit by understanding the dynamics of implementing the FCA 60 of 2000 and becoming more effective professionals. The central thrust of this study is to unearth and find the answers to possible difficulties faced by the SAPS in implementing the FCA 60 of 2000. The new information discovered will probably assist the SAPS management to become aware of the existing gaps and then to institute corrective measures that may ameliorate the high crime situation. The research will also provide information of academic value to future researchers.

1.6 Summary

The chapter presented the problem statement of the research by outlining the

background to the problem. The research's aim and objectives were also outlined in this chapter. Furthermore, the value of the study was discussed.

CHAPTER 2

OVERVIEW OF FIREARM LEGISLATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

2.1 Introduction

Firearms are perceived as the primary driver of violent crimes. A restrictive legal framework is necessary when the number of violent crimes are rising. Firearm ownership, sale, possession, and usage are regulated by law. It is significant to note that though the inhabitants may be comparable, firearm laws vary greatly between countries, given their diverse dynamics. Each country has a different firearm regulatory framework for the production, transfer, possession, and carrying of firearms to address their proliferation. Hence, the absence of an all-purpose system to apply to the regulation of firearms. Firearms regulations cannot follow a copy and paste approach, but each country should design its own regulations, suitable for their specific conditions. Regulations are designed differently considering the changing conditions in each country. The continuous widespread availability of firearms in the RSA has a deleterious effect on the number of violent crimes, which are extremely negative to development. The system of managing and controlling of firearms in this country seems to be deficient, considering the widespread availability of firearms used in violent crimes.

This chapter explains the history of firearms legislation in the RSA and the framework of legislation which underpins the regulating of firearms. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 will also be discussed. It further outlines the relevant Acts, regulations and strategies established in response to unsafe conditions, such as the SAPS Act (Act No 68 of 1995), the 2016 White Paper on Safety and Security, the 1996 National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS) and the FCA 60 of 2000.

2.2 History of firearms legislation in South Africa

Firearms have a significant history in the RSA (See section 3.5). Gun ownership

existed since 1652 after the arrival of Jan Van Riebeeck and his compatriots in South Africa. The colonizers introduced Roman-Dutch law in the country after they had landed. According to Pretorius (2008), these laws were to protect the settlers and game. As a result, the first nature conservation laws were introduced in the country. In 1677 Johann Bax introduced the firearm statute which prohibited the supply of guns and gunpowder (Pretorius, 2008). In 1688 Simon van der Stel introduced the first firearm safe-keeping legislation.

The Arms and Ammunition Act 28 of 1937 was the first national law to regulate possession and ownership of firearms in South Africa. Pretorius (2008) states that, after the proclamation of the following four provinces: Transvaal; Natal; Orange Free State and Cape Province, gun legislation laws were introduced in all of them. Each province had their own unique Acts regulating ownership and supply of arms and ammunitions. In Transvaal, Natal and the Orange Free State, the laws were more stringent regarding the possession of firearms by persons of colour, except in Cape Province. The law of Orange Free State required inhabitants to seek approval from the court to purchase rifles and ammunition (Pretorius, 2008). This provision was aimed at preventing the establishment of a militia in the Boer Republics. It was significant that this condition differs from the Second Amendment to the USA's Constitution, which by then was just a century young. Since then, gun regulation laws were continuously amended to accommodate the changes in civilisation.

The Arms and Ammunition Act (AAA) 75 of 1969 came into operation on 1 February 1972 as an attempt to formalise firearms control in the country through a licencing system. According to Bopape and Snyman (2015), the Act was difficult to implement due to its broad provisions for obtaining licences. Masanzu (2006) mentions two problematic aspects in the Act, namely: determining the competence of the firearm owner by the police; and the provisions for automatic and discretionary disqualifications to have a firearm by court. Both aspects weakened the implementation of the Act substantively and were even confusing to those who should apply them due to poor drafting or misunderstanding. Its implementation was a

challenge to magistrates and prosecutors alike, due to insufficient knowledge of declarations of unfitness (Bopape & Snyman, 2015).

In 1994 the South African democratic government took over the perceived permissible firearm regulations from the Apartheid rule. Firearms are the foremost instruments used in cases of injury and death in South Africa (Staff Writer, 2015; Lamb, 2017). This issue provoked the most intense debate for government to seek a new law of regulating legal acquisition of firearms and keeping tight control on possession and usage. The process was initiated in 1994 by a civil society organization called GFSA, urging the public to surrender their firearms to authorities. The previous Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi proclaimed a one-day firearm amnesty on 16 December 1994 in response to the campaign initiated during the same year in which 900 firearms were collected (Kirsten, 2007). According to Duncan (2002) and Kirsten (2004), the campaign provided a platform for the issue of gun control to be extensively debated in South Africa. The South African firearm control legislation was found to be outdated and required reform and redrafting.

The current South African firearms controlling framework consisting of the FCA 60 of 2000 and its supplementary Firearms Control Regulations (FCR) was the response to the growing public pressure to law reform. The Act was introduced in 2000 and fully enacted by 2004, replacing the AAA 75 of 1969 (Minnaar, 2008; Matzopoulos, Simonetti, Prinsloo, Neethling, Groenewald, Dempers, Martin, Rowhani-Rahbar, Myers & Thompson, 2018). Its main goal was to curb the widespread use of unlicensed firearms in preparation for a gun-free society (Minnaar, 2006; Matzopoulos, Groenewald, Abrahams & Bradshaw, 2016). Apparently, the FCA 60 of 2000's predecessor, the AAA 75 of 1969 did not have enough control over the ownership and licencing of firearms (Bopape, 2014), and once issued it was for life or until is revoked. The validity period of the firearm licence under the AAA 75 of 1969 was unlimited. Under the FCA 60 of 2000, firearm licences are required to be periodically renewed before their expiry date in terms of Section 24. The idea behind the renewal process of the firearm licence and permit is to establish if the holder is still a suitable person to continue possessing a firearm in the context of the FCA 60 of 2000. The renewal

process is used to ascertain whether the firearm licence and permit holders are not in any form incapacitated to continue possessing firearms. This FCA 60 of 2000 also introduced stringent requirements for attaining a proficiency certificate necessary to possess a firearm, including trading in firearms (Bopape, 2014). The FCA 60 of 2000 moved away from the former AAA 75 of 1969 practice in that it introduced stringent measures for applicants to acquire firearm competencies (s 6(2)), which include but are not limited to, intense criminal history screening; increased minimum age required to be 21. Measures also limited the total number of licensed firearms an individual is permitted to own. The FCA 60 of 2000 further required firearm licences to be renewed upon expiry (Watson, 2019) of a specific period which is between two and ten years. The major challenge in relation to the renewal of firearm licences which one could identify is that it is only done administratively, without any re-evaluation whether the holder is still a suitable person to continue owning a firearm. The need for firearm licence renewals should be based on the knowledge that an individual's circumstances could change over time which necessitate regular re-evaluations. The firearm renewal process should not be a paper exercise but should be used to confirm whether the firearm licence holder is not in any form incapacitated to continue possessing and using the firearm. The FCA 60 of 2000 was designed to control firearms from cradle to grave, in other words, from the manufacturing stage until it is destroyed or lost.

2.3 Legislative framework regulating firearms in South Africa

The legal framework regulating the possession of firearms in South Africa is FCA 60 of 2000, and the FCR of 2004, including any amendments. The legislature amended the law regulating firearms to promote accountable firearm possession in order to curb the increasing use of firearms in crimes (Lamb, 2008). This reform of firearm control laws was the culmination of community discussions for government to strengthen control of firearms. This consultation process gave rise to the formation of the FCA 60 of 2000 which substituted the perceived ineffective AAA 75 of 1969. Under the AAA 75 of 1969, a firearm licence was issued indefinitely. Firearm holders are required to register their firearms in accordance with this FCA 60 of 2000. The FCA 60 of 2000 requires a firearm licence holder to apply for the licence which needs to be renewed

upon expiry of its validity period. The applicant shall demonstrate that there is still a need for the licence, that the person is still a fit and suitable individual, and to ensure that the person is still accountable for the firearm. Firearm licences must be periodically renewed, ranging from two to ten years depending on the type of licence the holder possesses.

The ever-increasing firearm-related crime levels in South Africa stimulated government to initiate and develop crime combating initiatives. The following initiatives were developed: The NCPS of 1996 and 1998; White Paper on Safety and Security of 1998-2003; National Crime Combating Strategy of 1996 (NCCS); Integrated Justice System (IJS), the adoption of the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) Act 32 of 1998; and the National Prosecuting Authority Amendment Act 61 of 2000. All countries have the responsibility to protect their citizens against criminality. It is incumbent upon the government to exercise due diligence to regulate all aspects involving ownership and usage of firearms to curb crimes involving firearms.

The law of South Africa stems from common law, statutory law and case law with the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, reigning supreme. The Acts of Parliament are statutes known as legislations and regulations. Parliament has the determinant authority to alter laws considered defective quickly and efficiently and craft new ones. In South Africa several legislations which are Acts of Parliament have been passed, just like the FCA 60 of 2000 regulating possession and use of firearms (English & Card, 2007). Each Act is titled in connection with the issue it is designed to address and eventually numbered according to the year it was declared. A classic example is the FCA 60 of 2000 which is regulating firearms in South Africa.

The universal purpose of the firearm legislation is to successfully regulate firearm ownerships in the country. The FCA 60 of 2000 was introduced to increase public safety through regulating possession and usage of firearms through prohibitions and punishments (Bopape, 2014). Effective firearm prohibitions for non-qualifying individuals may decrease violence and rescue lives.

The discussion below outlines a law-making process of regulatory framework which led to development and introduction of the FCA 60 of 2000. Policies enacted need to be translated into actions. Though human behaviour and conduct should be backed by law, public interest should take precedence and overwrites everything.

2.3.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996

The right to ownership of firearms in South Africa is not absolutely assured in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996; unlike in the USA, Mexico and Guatemala where civilian ownership of firearms is an inalienable right (Weiss & Pasley, 2019) which is jealously guarded. In South Africa firearm ownership is not an entitlement, but a special privilege, directed and controlled by law. Though the right to firearm ownership is not guaranteed in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, the right to life is. The negotiators should be commended for excluding the right to possess the firearm in the final document. Sections 11 and 21(a), as contained in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, protect people's entitlement to live in harmless surroundings; however, this security is not completely enjoyed, because of the violent crimes perpetrated against them. Citizens are permitted to acquire firearms, provided they qualify for those types of firearms. Notwithstanding the fundamental human rights to safety which is protected by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996; many people's safety is still in danger. The involvement of firearms in crime is a serious concern in the RSA. Cook and Pollack (2017) state that the use of firearms by criminals during violent crimes signifies malicious intention to cause injury or death to the victim. Firearm attacks are more likely to cause fatal injuries. Its lethality reduces the victims' capacity for resistance to fight off their attackers. Jaynes and Meek (2010) state that violence and firearm related crimes are manageable and avoidable if specific measures are put in place.

Chapter 2 of the Bill of Rights contains fundamental human rights from sections 7 to 39, which are Constitutionally protected in RSA. The basic and fundamental protected rights include societal, political, financial, civil and traditional rights. The Bill of Rights entrenched fundamental human rights which apply to every person living in the RSA.

It confirms the democratic principles of decent life, equal rights and self-determination (s 7(1)). The basic human rights set out in the Bill of Rights are inalienable, but not entirely as they can be limited by invoking section 36 which specifies that such limitation must be reasonable and justifiable in accordance with the law. Sections 11 and 12 (c) protect the right to life and not to be exposed to any type of violence. This clearly shows that the Constitution protects everyone, and no one must be capriciously deprived of life. The Bill of Rights are for everyone and binds all arms of State, namely judiciary, executive and legislature and all other state structures. The State bears a legal duty to respect, defend and fulfil the protection of human rights. According to Spitzer (2012), the State is duty bound to control all parts that may compromise citizens' safety and the maintenance of public order.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, mandates the police in terms of Section 205(3) to curb, fight and probe all forms of crimes; keep law and order, safeguard all citizens in the RSA, including their possessions, and respect and apply the law indiscriminately to the latter. Firearms are often the weapons of choice when criminals perpetrate violent crimes. The scale at which legally possessed firearms are involved in violent crimes is not clear, mainly due to lack of records in the public domain. It is not easy to form an accurate evaluation, given the scarcity of available data. One of the sources of illegally held firearms is diversion of legally owned firearms (Kleck & Wang, 2009) through theft. The conclusion that could be drawn is that the demand for weapons used in violent crimes, is satisfied overwhelmingly by the illegal market. Since no record is maintained regarding crimes committed by licenced firearms holders, such firearms are not perceived to be used in most criminal violence cases. Legal firearms are mostly associated with murders and injuries in domestic violence incidents. The removed serial numbers on recovered firearms indicate that they are illegal (Braga, Wintemute, Pierce, Cook & Ridgeway, 2012). In view of this, seizure of illegally held firearms provides some insight into illicit users. Moreover, by obliterating the serial number the user attempts to avoid detection and linkage to the origin of the firearm. Above all, legal firearms are seldom used in serious and organised crimes, which are normally committed with illicit firearms and simulated weapons.

Improper handling of firearms is a complex challenge which is deep rooted and presents significant safety risks in society. According to Cook and Ludwig (2000), the increased use of firearms in violent crimes erodes the quality of life in communities. Jekada (2005) stresses that firearms are not an ordinary weapon for violence, but they intensify any violence. Axiomatically it is believed that a higher percentage of crimes where firearms are used are undertaken with illegally held firearms; but an inductive argument is that limiting access to legal firearms would prevent criminals from obtaining firearms. In an interview on C-SPAN on Gun Control and School Safety, John Faso, the representative for New York 19 district, asserted that most violent crimes are carried out by means of illegally possessed firearms (Clark, 2018). According to Greenberg (2015), the host of the Morning Joe show on MSNBC, Mr Joe Scarborough, concurred with John Faso's views with the assertion that legally acquired guns are involved in an insignificant 3 percent of murders and violent crimes. Both John Faso and Joe Scarborough acknowledge that illegal firearms are generally used in violent crimes. A reasonable conclusion could be that the proliferation of illegal firearms is a principal consequence of legally owned transfers which pose a risk in the community. One could argue that criminals predominantly acquire firearms outside official channels; as a result, firearm regulations cannot eradicate the widespread availability of firearms to criminals. Illegal firearms are acquired from diverse sources. Anyasah (2015) states that efforts to curb the proliferation is directed more on manufacturers and supply of new weapons while ignoring the stockpiles shipped into the country. Braga and Cook (2016) emphasize that a high percentage of the transactions used by criminals to acquire firearms is illegal. On the other hand, the absence of firearms is highly unlikely to markedly eradicate violent crime, as criminals might resort to other instruments available apart from firearms. The control of formal firearms markets could have an adverse effect on informal markets, mainly when coupled with purposeful efforts to police illegal firearms transfers. Cook and Pollack (2017) state that most illegal guns used in crimes were lawfully manufactured and retailed at a licensed dealer. Conversely, Collins, Parker, Scott and Wellford (2017) state that the firearms used in committing criminal acts were largely procured legally and are probably used by the legal owners. However, Braga et al. (2012) assert that a negligible number of criminals obtain firearms legally. Braga and Cook (2016)

dissent that many firearms in criminals' hands were acquired outside legal processes. The areas with high density of legally owned firearms are inclined to have more active illegal markets. One could assume that more firearms in circulation mean more opportunities for criminals to acquire them. According to Cook and Pollack (2017), the abundance of firearms in a community promotes the probabilities of firearms being transferred to illegal users to commit assaults and robberies. Campbell, Webster, Koziol-McLain, Block, Campbell, Curry, Gary, Glass, McFarlane, Sachs, Sharps, Ulrich, Wilt, Manganello, Xu, Schollenberger, Frye and Laughon (2003) similarly submit that the presence of a firearm in a household enhances the possibility of violence in the family turning deadly. Increasingly, many countries introduced restrictions to stop widespread ownership of firearms by making it compulsory for an individual to acquire a licence prior to owning a firearm.

Section 2 of the FCA 60 of 2000 stipulates that the Act aims to promote and strengthen the constitutionally protected human right to life and safety. The legislation further aims to assist the government in eradicating the high concentration of criminally controlled firearms and facilitate their removal from circulation through improved control, which will culminate in preventing firearm-related crimes. It also allows government to get rid of illicit firearms circulating within the community, to regulate trading, acquisition, ownership, possession, storing, delivering and usage of legally owned firearms. It further aims to identify and prosecute irresponsible and unlawful human acts involving firearms. The FCA 60 of 2000 aims to create an integrated system to manage firearms effectively; and ensure compliance through effective control and implementation of the Act to minimize the risk of legally owned firearms flowing into the illegal market.

2.3.2 The South African Police Service Act 68 of 1995

SAPS is the national law enforcement agency which was constituted within the context of section 199(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. According to section 198(c) of the Constitution, National Security had to be administered in line with domestic and universal law. The SAPS Act 68 of 1995 is one of the legislated

regulatory frameworks regulating the formation, structuring and managing of the SAPS. Its mandates originate from section 205(3) of the Constitution.

Occasionally the Minister of Police declares national firearm amnesties as provided for by section 139 of the FCA 60 of 2000, to regulate firearms and reduce the number of illicit and superfluous firearms circulating within communities. Amnesty inherently suggests that a person's identity will not be disclosed and as such will be indemnified against prosecution (Kirsten, 2005). Firearm amnesties are common practices in the RSA, as they had been conducted since 1990. For the first time the declaration for national amnesty ran for a period of three days during the negotiation process under the AAA 75 of 1969. That amnesty provided a platform for placing the concern regarding firearm control on the national party-political agenda. Another amnesty was declared in 1994 during the dawn of democracy after the newly formed GFSA organisation made a clarion call for a national hand-in of both legal and illegal firearms. A total of 900 firearms were collected over 24-hour period (Kirsten, 2007).

Section 139(1) of the FCA 60 of 2000 empowers the Minister of Police to pronounce an amnesty by notifying the public through a legal notice in the Government Gazette after authorization by Parliament. Section 138 of the FCA 60 of 2000 defines amnesty as immunity from any ramification of wrongdoing in respect of a person possessing illicit firearms or ammunition. The Minister is empowered by the Act to determine conditions to be followed when receiving surrendered firearms during an amnesty. Regulation 94(4) of the FCR of 2004 prescribes that every surrendered firearm or ammunition must be tested ballistically to establish its possible involvement in the commission of crime. Subsequently, the police must destroy such firearm or ammunition in accordance with regulation 104 of the Act, considering the rights of its lawful owner. The ballistic tests results might adversely affect people who surrendered firearms which were found to have been used in crime. Even though the phrase 'amnesty' suggests facelessness and immunity against legal action, the contrary is happening in South Africa, as amnesties impose conditions of subjecting surrendered firearms to ballistic testing, with potential prosecution if results are positively linked to a crime (Kirsten, 2005). This means that immunity is not absolute, but only applies to

possession of firearms not linked to any crimes. The inclusion of ballistic testing in this case seems to render the term amnesty a misnomer. However, in Brazil a blanket amnesty approach has been declared, in which personal details are not disclosed and there is no ballistic testing performed on surrendered firearms (Kirsten, 2007). No barriers which could discourage people who want to surrender firearms and ammunitions should be stipulated.

Since the inception of the FCA 60 of 2000, firearm amnesties were announced in 2005 and 2010. The two amnesties collectively produced approximately 44 958 firearms and 737 895 rounds of live ammunition (SAPS, 2015a). Mr Jeff Radebe, the former Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development, had publicized government's intention to have a six-month firearm amnesty for illegal firearms, commencing on 1 April 2017 and concluding on 30 September 2017. Speaking in a cabinet briefing, then Minister Radebe indicated that the planned amnesty could minimise the availability of illegally possessed firearms which contributed to crime (Staff Writer, 2017). He further said that the amnesty could decrease the illicitly held firearms and ultimately reduce the high levels of firearms related crimes. During amnesty illegal firearm holders are expected to surrender those firearms without being prosecuted for having no licence for that firearm. He further noted that the grace period of suspending legal prosecution would focus both on people having illegal firearms and ammunitions as well as those used for criminal purposes, and estate firearms and ammunitions which did not conform to the provisions of the FCA 60 of 2000 (Staff Writer, 2017). The idea behind the firearms amnesty is to enhance the creation of a safe environment by removing unwanted and illegal firearms from circulation within the community. Firearm amnesty is perceived to bring about the reduction of violent crimes. However, it is not a permanent solution to the violent crimes problem. One may argue that the offering of too many amnesties may encourage potential firearm applicants to acquire firearms through illegal means and wait for the declaration of firearm amnesty. Apparently, the decision to grant amnesty to illegal firearm owners was prompted by the SAPS crime statistics report released on Friday 3 March 2017, which revealed the highest increase in the contact crime category, especially trio-crimes which comprise of robbery at residential premises, carjacking and robbery at business premises.

On Wednesday 15 March 2017 the former National Minister of Police, Nathi Nhleko, announced a planned six-month National firearms amnesty period during a Portfolio Committee meeting in Parliament (Gubula, 2017). The envisaged firearm amnesty period for surrendering illicit firearms and ammunitions was anticipated to be implemented from 1 April 2017 until 30 September 2017; but it did not come to fruition despite its good intentions and approval by Cabinet. The amnesty proposal date was apparently opposed by the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee for Police (PPCP), because proper procedure for obtaining the required parliamentary endorsement was not followed. The former Committee Chairperson Francois Beukman stated that for the proposed amnesty to comply with the law, it necessitates the approval of Parliament (Davis, 2017). Section 139(2)(a) of the FCA 60 of 2000 dictates that the notice of an amnesty should be approved by Parliament before it is declared. Such amnesty application must contain the objective, period, and conditions which include the rationale, structure and process of the amnesty. This suggests that the SAPS' public announcement of the firearm amnesty was premature. Given the announcement date, it was unlikely for the amnesty to commence on 1 April 2017, as the Committee's report on the matter was probably to be debated in the National Assembly in May 2017 when Parliament returned to work from a two-week recess. The proposal was subsequently suspended while awaiting the decision of the parliamentary process.

Police Minister Bheki Cele submitted a written request to the former National Assembly Speaker Baleka Mbete to intervene and ensure the speedy consideration of the application for a six-month firearm amnesty by the PPCP (Jordaan, 2018; Saba, 2018). According to Jordaan (2018), the PPCP eventually agreed to consider the Police Minister's request for the firearms amnesty project to commence in September 2018. Subsequently, that attempt by SAPS to secure PPCP's endorsement of the six-month firearm amnesty which was planned to take place from 1 September 2018 to 28 February 2019 was declined (Maqhina, 2018). The decision for Parliament to withdraw the request was to allow the litigation process instituted by Gun Owners South Africa (GOSA) regarding the Constitutional court ruling that it is a prosecutable offence to possess a firearm after the effluxion of its licence to be concluded (see section 2.3.5).

The Police Ministry's persistent request for permission to conduct a firearms amnesty was rejected again on 11 September 2019 by Parliament wherein the Committee Chairperson Tina Joemat-Pettersson required a new amnesty plan to be submitted which included evidence of public participation in the firearms summit (Watson, 2019). There were issues of concerns raised by some members of the PPCP and firearm advocates who had requested to be addressed prior to the amnesty's approval. Concerns raised among others were as follows: no evidence of any arrest effected as a result of handing in a firearm believed to have been used in criminal activities; SAPS' logistical preparedness to expeditiously undertake the project; shortcomings experienced in the previous firearm amnesties regarding the safekeeping of surrendered firearms (Van der Merwe, 2019); inability of firearm amnesty to reduce violent crime rates, because only law-abiding citizens would surrender their licenced firearms, not criminals; gaps in the FCA 60 of 2000 and unresolved issues on how to deal with expired firearm licences.

The PPCP eventually endorsed the national firearm amnesty application on 23 October 2019 after an improved firearm amnesty plan was submitted with start date of 1 December 2019 and termination date of 31 May 2020 (ANA Reporter, 2019). According to Retief (2020), the Police Ministry's relentless efforts to obtain parliamentary endorsement to conduct the amnesty was influenced more by the 2018/2019 crime statistics which indicated an increase in crimes involving firearms like attempted murder and murder. The Minister of Police Bheki Cele announced a firearm amnesty period through the publication of a declaration notice in the Government Gazette on 27 November 2019 (Van der Merwe, 2019). According to Naidoo (2020), the firearm amnesty is focusing on retrieving firearms and their parts obtained outside the legal process, unregistered firearms and undesirable firearms by lawful holders to curb violent crimes and to enhance the creation of a safe environment through the reduction of firearms in circulation (Molyneaux, 2020; Williams, 2020). The approved firearm amnesty will also afford expired licence holders an opportunity to apply again for firearm licences (Maqhina, 2019). In terms of the amnesty all people who surrender their illegal, unlawful, unwanted firearms and ammunitions to the police are obliged to disclose their identity through filling in their full personal details and appending their

signatures on the SAPS 548 document which is an amnesty form (Bartl, 2019). The details of the surrendered firearms must also be included on the amnesty form (Levitz, 2020). This will enable the police to trace and arrest whoever surrendered a firearm which could be linked with a crime through a mandatory ballistic test for prosecution. According to Naidoo (2020), amnesty is only limited to the illegal possession and excludes crimes committed with the surrendered firearm. Individuals can apply for firearm licences in relation to the firearms they handed in, provided they can produce evidentiary proof confirming the previous licence holder (Joubert, 2019a; Levitz, 2020).

Despite the good intentions of the firearm amnesty, there were many who opposed it. Proponents of firearms objected to the implementation of the amnesty on the basis that its declaration process was flawed (Maqhina, 2019). Those issues prompted the National Hunting and Shooting Association (NHSA) to approach the court urgently for an application to prohibit the SAPS from implementing the firearm amnesty based on its illegality (Ngqakamba, 2020). Apparently, the announcement notice published on 27 November in the Government Gazette was signed much earlier by Police Minister Bheki Cele on 28 August 2019 before Parliament could endorse it in November 2019 (Maqhina, 2019; Retief, 2020). The initial declaration notice contained only three police stations which were deemed not meeting the criteria for accepting amnesty firearms, whereas there were 46 in total; therefore, the published declaration was subsequently amended (Maqhina, 2019). The NHSA later withdrew its court application of challenging the authenticity of the firearm amnesty declaration after being convinced by the SAPS' answering affidavit filed in court (Ngqakamba, 2020). The NHSA realized that the prospects of winning the challenge were very slim, hence the withdrawal.

Similarly, the South African Policing Union (SAPU) also objected to the implementation of the 2019/2020 firearm amnesty but from a different perspective (Qodashe, 2020). Their argument was that the firearm amnesty was promoting lawlessness in that it allows criminals to avoid accountability for their unlawful conduct. This assertion could be true, because in some incidence criminals do not discharge their firearms when committing crimes which make it impossible to be linked to crimes through ballistic testing.

The effectiveness of firearm amnesty is also questionable. The National Council of Provinces (NCOP) Security and Justice (2019) does not believe that crime reduction could be achieved through the amnesty project, as criminals will never surrender their illegal firearms. This implies that criminals will rather dispose of their illegal firearms by other unlawful means rather than surrendering them to authorities for fear of prosecution, since amnesty does not protect crimes committed with that firearm (Sishuba, 2019). A classic example is the firearm trader who surrendered a total of 300 legally possessed firearms and 3000 ammunitions to the police because they were obsolete (Qodashe, 2020; Themba, 2020). It is believed that the 2019/2020 firearm amnesty is not targeting the removal of illegal firearms but is more directed at disarming firearm owners with expired licences (Sishuba, 2019). According to Molyneaux (2020), Citizen Reporter (2020) and Sishuba (2019), a consolidated total of 120 000 firearms and 1.8 million ammunitions were collected in the three previous firearm amnesties since its inception in 1994. This could be true as there is no shred of evidence proving any prosecution resulting from ballistically-tested firearms surrendered during any amnesty period (Sishuba, 2019). The absence of such evidence suggests that no illegal firearm is handed in during amnesty periods. It could be argued that firearm amnesty is contributing to the reduction of crime since some of the firearms that are surrendered could have ended up being stolen and used in committing violent crimes. However, police should not rely on the amnesty and they should intensify the operations targeting the recovery of illegal firearms. The removal of those firearms from circulation assists in reducing the available number which mitigates the risk of them landing into criminals' hands. Some do not trust the capability of the police to safeguard the surrendered firearms (Mabuza, 2019), as in some instances many of those firearms find their way to criminals through corrupt dealings, theft and robbery (Joubert, 2019b). It could be true because in some instances firearms and ammunitions get lost from police custody (Dlamini, 2019). It could be argued that criminal elements in the SAPS are few and that action is taken against them when identified such as in the case involving a former policeman Mr Christiaan Prinsloo (Petersen, 2016). In some instances, police stations are robbed of firearms due to poor security (Nkosi, 2018; Timeslive, 2018).

2.3.3 The 2016 White Paper on Safety and Security

Recommendations of the NDP towards attaining Vision 2030 prompted the 1998 White Paper on Safety and Security to be reviewed. Its review process occurred in 2010 in order to be aligned with the key national policies and programmes to have a single vision. It was recommended that a policy should be developed that will precisely talk to the policing situation within a democratic dispensation. That policy review process gave rise to two dissimilar policy frameworks in the form of the 2016 White Paper on Safety and Security and the 2016 White Paper on Policing which were aimed at adapting to the changes in the nature of crime. The former seeks to promote the spirit of working together between different government agencies mandated to enforce the law and develop an approach to safety and violence prevention. The latter concentrates primarily on the policing environment and core policing responsibilities. Both White Papers complemented each other and are drivers of crime prevention programmes. Both policy frameworks are interrelated and share the responsibility of preventing crime and violence, which will ultimately create a safe environment for all. These policies were adopted because government realised that crime was no longer a law enforcement issue, but a social problem which could be addressed through social means. The approach was to have an integrated departmental collaboration in tackling crime. The crime problem was at the level where it required an interdepartmental intervention as it was beyond the traditional police responsibility. The focus should be on ascertaining that there is adequate monitoring and management of firearms which are primary contributors to the prevalence of violent crime. According to Keegan (2004), an allowing firearm control regulation promotes widespread availability of firearms which increases opportunities for violent crimes.

The 2016 White Paper on Safety and Security is based on six themes, which are as follows: to improve the Criminal Justice System's (CJC) working culture to be more effective in order to inspire public confidence; early childhood nurturing care to avert the inclination to crime and foster a culture of tolerance to create a sense of feeling safe; victim empowerment services; alignment of several public organizations to establish an effective integrated service delivery model designed to improve safety,

security and violence and crime preventions; develop the concept of environmental design to reduce crime and the sense of anxiety; and encourage active public and community participation to exchange views that could influence decision making. A comprehensive approach is necessary to root out the proliferation of illicit firearms while recognising the potential of legal firearms to become a source of illegal firearms. The White Papers were designed to give expression to the NDP (Dugmore, 2017), and the human rights and values contained in the Constitution. People's constitutional rights are consistently violated because of the violent crimes committed against them. The aim of the 2016 White Paper on Safety and Security is to encourage interdepartmental working partnerships to create a safe and secure country through protecting, defending, and securing citizens. It also strives to give importance and guidance aimed at realizing the mission of "*Building Safer Communities*" (Faull, 2017) contained in Chapter 12 on the NDP 2030. The emphasis is on curbing crime and violence as a prerequisite of allaying people's anxiety. Therefore, the appropriate regulation of firearms as a key driver of violent crime is necessary for the creation of a safe environment.

2.3.4 The 1996 National Crime Prevention Strategy

The process of developing the NCPS of 1996 commenced in 1995 in response to former President Mandela's speech during the beginning session of Parliament wherein crime was identified as a major concern (Mandela, 1995). He said the escalating crime situation in our country could not be tolerated anymore as criminals are inclined to terrorise the community (Mandela, 1995). In 1996 a long-term interdepartmental strategy called the NCPS of 1996 was adopted and launched subsequent to extensive consultation to tackle the root causes of crime. The NCPS of 1996 approach to crime was to adopt a preventative action strategy which is considered cost-efficient rather than being responsive (Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2008). Silva (2018) postulates that there is a common belief that the prevention of crime is an exclusive competence of the police who are often blamed for being reactive as opposed to being proactive. Booysen (2009) states that the NCPS of 1996 intended to dispel the notion that hiring of more law enforcers would improve the crime situation.

The NCPS of 1996 acknowledged the need for developmental, situational and community involvement in crime prevention initiatives to tackle the generators of crime. The strategy also advocated the need to involve an inter-departmental and multi-agency approach to crime prevention (Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2008; Lamb, 2019). The NCPS of 1996 encouraged National Government to change its working methods from a responsive crime control and law enforcement approach to a preventative approach to deliver a safe society (Omar, 2010). It could be argued that Government's intentions contained in the NCPS of 1996 were vague, as there were no clear details on how the interdepartmental programmes should be established and applied. As Lamb (2019) states, the interdepartmental collaboration was envisioned without a clear plan of translating the NCPS of 1996 into action. To some extent, it was anticipated that a teamwork spirit would rise instinctively amongst the diverse sectors during the process of identifying cross-sectoral national programmes. This was evident when the SAPS National Commissioner General Sithole conceded in Parliament that the NCPS of 1996 had failed because the Police was left to deal with every responsibility contained in it on its own (Merrington, 2018). It was further mentioned that the NCPS of 1996 work demands of the prevailing situation overburdened the police's mandate which could not be fulfilled. This suggests that the other NCPS of 1996 stakeholders did not participate in the strategy which resulted in the scope of the SAPS being widened and being turned into a jack of all trades. The work demands of the NCPS of 1996 exceeded the police capacity and capability. The complexities and adversities of the NCPS of 1996 therefore affected its success.

The NCPS of 1996 involves four pillars which organize and incorporate actions related to the prevention of crime (Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2008). The pillars are: a criminal justice process which is devoted to criminal justice efficiency and effectiveness to serve as deterrent to criminal behaviour and discourage reoffending; reducing crime through rendering the environmental factors contributing to crime unfavourable; awareness-raising campaigns with the public aimed to improve police-community relations to encourage a meaningful interaction in ways that promote crime prevention; improve controls and dismantle international criminal groupings operating across borders in South Africa. Both Community Based Organizations (CBO) and Business

Against Crime (BAC) significantly contributed to the design of the NCPS of 1996. This strategy is deep-rooted in the true situation of our society and is therefore a truly South African product. The strategy was established on the realisation that the police alone will not win the fight against crime (Omar, 2010; Kruger, Lancaster, Landman, Liebermann, Louw & Robertshaw, 2016). To achieve its desired results, it needs the support of all people who want to live without fear of crime. The community, other government departments and NGOs and municipalities must collaborate for this initiative to be successful (Kruger et al., 2016). The approach is founded on the opinion that change was necessary to bring a solution to the crime situation. Its success required commitment, clear vision and quality leadership from all spheres of government, including civil society.

Omar (2010) and Lamb (2015) state that the NCPS of 1996 had been an integral part of Government's initiative until some shortfalls began to show in 1999 and it was subsequently abandoned in 2000 and substituted with the SAPS's own crafted National Crime Combating Strategy (NCCS). Lamb (2015) states that NCCS of 1996 was mainly focused on high police visibility, and cordon and search operations to fight crime in areas where crime was prevalent. Mafologela (2019) postulates that the leadership squabbles between the police ministry and the Civilian Secretariat for Police Service (CSPS) in terms of which department should be responsible to drive the implementation of the strategy were behind the abandoning of the NCPS of 1996. The NCPS of 1996 responsibilities were assigned to the CSPS and the SAPS felt it was incorrectly allocated. According to Vyas-Doorgapersad (2008), the CSPS was eventually relieved of the NCPS of 1996 responsibilities in 2000 and subsequently entrusted to the SAPS. Lamb (2015) states that the police's approach to the NCPS of 1996 was insincere and perfunctory from its inception. Jansen (2017) argues that the NCPS of 1996 was not effective in controlling and reducing violent crime, hence it was supplanted by the NCCS. Vyas-Doorgapersad (2008) adds that the impact of NCPS of 1996 was insignificant due to its failure to live up to its expectations in terms of an envisaged decrease in crime. It could be argued that the NCPS of 1996 was a multi-year plan and its priorities were not supposed to be implemented simultaneously as it became unworkable. Booysen (2009) postulates that NCPS of 1996 focused more on

policing and criminal justice while failing to implement initiatives from other stakeholders. According to Omar (2010), the NCPS of 1996 was regarded as the best and most suitable strategy to deal with crime effectively. Mafologela (2019) and Lamb (2015) argue that the change of strategies from NCPS of 1996 to NCCS was justified by the escalating crime rates. The NCCS was adopted to reduce and stabilise crime.

Vyas-Doorgapersad (2008) and Bopape (2014) state that firearms are the preferred weapons for many criminal groups and are responsible for countless deaths and injuries in the country. There is a predilection amongst criminals for the acquisition and use of firearms to commit crime. In recognition of this fact, the NCPS of 1996 was developed as a strategic crime prevention framework for a multidimensional approach. The NCPS of 1996 expressed the regime's reaction to the evolving nature of policing style, aimed at creating a crime-free living environment for all people.

Section 3 of the NCPS of 1996 mentioned easy accessibility of firearms as the primary cause of criminal violence in the country. Firearms enhance the commission of violent crimes (South African Government, 1996). Section 5 of the NCPS of 1996 stipulates that different agencies must strengthen their cooperation to address firearm-related crimes through improving the firearms regulations, policing the trafficking paths and gangsters involved, cross-border collaboration, strengthening firearm regulation controls on state-owned weapons and prohibiting firearm importations (South African Government, 1996). Bopape (2014) and Lamb (2018) believe that unlawful use and ownership of firearms were prioritised in both the NCPS of 1996 and the NCCS. The police were firm on crimes involving firearms, including control over firearms and as a result they managed to arrest a significant number of criminals for possession of illegal firearms in crime prone areas (Lamb, 2018). It could be argued that the police's crime prevention intervention strategies are seldom evaluated, hence they keep on changing.

2.3.5 The provisions of the Firearms Control Act 60 of 2000

There is no doubt that a firearm is a lethal weapon which explains the reason why its

ownership and possession must be strictly regulated. Firearms in South Africa are currently regulated through a comprehensive FCA 60 of 2000 and its subordinate FCR of 2004 which were fully implemented on 1 July 2004. The FCA 60 of 2000 was promulgated on 4 April 2001.

The FCA 60 of 2000 sets the basis for an inclusive and efficient firearm controlling and administration system. It aims to assist the State to remove illegal firearms circulating within the community through strengthening the control and management of firearms and penalize irresponsible firearm owners and criminals from using them. Section 3 of the FCA 60 of 2000 prohibits people from possessing firearms without valid and relevant licences or permits. The positive effect of Section 3 of the FCA 60 of 2000 is that it seeks to create a database to ensure proper management and control of firearm ownership. Section 120(a) of the FCA 60 of 2000 states that people who contravene the provisions of the Act by possessing firearms without a licence, will be committing a crime. According to Section 121 of the FCA 60 of 2000, any person who contravenes the provisions of the Act, may be penalised by either paying a fine or incarceration. The issuance of a firearm licence is reliant on the acquisition of a competency certificate, while legal ownership of a firearm only becomes illegal upon expiration of the license in respect of Section 28 of the Act. This could serve as deterrent to those intending to procure firearms outside the legal process. Section 4 of the FCA 60 of 2000 prohibits the issuance of licences and owning of certain kinds of firearms which are considered prohibited, for instance fully automatic firearms and any firearm such as a recoilless gun, mortar, cannon and others designed to fire explosive device, grenade and rocket. Similarly, Section 4 of the FCA 60 of 2000 excludes the recognition of certain devices as firearms such as antique guns, an airgun, a tranquiliser firearm or de-activated firearm. One may assume that some of those excluded devices could be used to commit crime. It could be stated that a licence should be required for purchase of such devices as well, as they pose potential risks of being used in criminal activities.

Applicants qualify to be issued with competency certificates upon meeting certain requirements stipulated in the Act, including demonstrating the necessary knowledge

of the Act (s 9(2)). Competency certificates have the same validity period as the firearm licence, as determined by the Act (s 10 (2)). Firearm competency certificates may be issued to own a firearm, dealing, manufacturing and for operating as gunsmith. To apply for a competency certificate, eligible persons must meet certain criteria. They must demonstrate that they are South African citizens or holders of a permanent South African residence permit, older than 21 years old, have the necessary reliability, personal aptitude, and must be a fit person of sound mind and good temperament. Furthermore, they must not have any substance abuse disorders, or found guilty in terms of the FCA 60 of 2000 or AAA 75 of 1969 with a direct imprisonment sentence. They must have no previous criminal convictions anywhere involving, among others, the criminal use or misuse of a firearm; fraud or supplying incorrect information when applying for a competency licence, or authorization; and sexual offence and been sentenced to direct imprisonment; or having been disqualified to possess a firearm in terms of the FCA 60 of 2000 (s 9(2)). The minimum age requirement of 21 years is acceptable, because it prohibits firearms possession by young people who are not yet responsible enough to be trusted with firearms. Given the different validity period of the competency and the firearm licence, some firearm owners with more than two firearms may avoid renewing their competency certificates by renewing their different firearm licences every time closer to the expiry date. This may suggest that renewal of competency certificates will be routinely ignored once the initial one has been issued.

The FCA 60 of 2000 has a twofold permitting system whereby both the owner and firearm must be licensed. Firstly, the person must go through and pass a competency test in relation to Section 9 of the FCA 60 of 2000 before applying for the actual firearm licence (s 6(2)). Currently the discrepancy that exists is that firearm competency training is offered from an accredited privately-owned training institution which the SAPS has no oversight function over in terms of monitoring compliance. The firearm training standards could be questionable and susceptible to corruption which might lead to fraudulent licensing. The loophole is evident in the absence of oversight of the content of firearm training. It is possible that different training institutions offer vastly different training. Though competency and firearm training could be offered by private

institutions, the actual practical shooting assessments of applicants should be supervised by the SAPS which is the competent authority responsible for the issuing of firearm licences. One must acknowledge that currently there are inadequately trained people to satisfy the existing demand for assessment but is a necessity which is worth to be considered. The law's provision on a 'stable mental condition' is exceptionally porous. The Act forbids gun possession by a person with a mental illness but does not require adjudication of a potential firearm owner as a mental defective person. The difficulty though is to check on a person's state of mind with consideration to that person's suitability to possess firearms. There is no psychological or psychiatric assessment conducted on the applicant, but the police only rely on information provided by the applicant's preferred character references. Nothing qualifies the police to make a judgement or an observation of the applicant's mental condition. Similarly, clinicians' reports are not entirely accurate. Medical screening should be mandatory and be fulfilled for possession and ownership of a firearm. The applicant should be compelled to acquire a mental aptitude clearance certificate from a clinical psychologist. The applicant's background checks should not be conducted from people selected by the applicant, except from the spouse. Background enquiries should be conducted on colleagues and neighbours who are randomly chosen. The other grey area of the Act is that it does not make provision for people who are unable to deal with firearms due to physical infirmity. The other challenge is the viability to present evidence of the applicant's unhealthy relationship with alcohol or drugs to support the decision to disqualify that person from accessing a firearm.

Any person with a legally obtained competency certificate may apply for any of the categories of firearm licences authorised by the Act (s 6(2)) whose validity period is limited. For example: self-defence (s 13) for a validity period of five years; restricted firearm for self-defence (s 14) for a two year term of validity; occasional hunting and sports-shooting (s 15) for a validity period of 10 years; dedicated hunting and dedicated sports-shooting (s 16) and professional hunting (s 16A) for a 10 year term of validity; private collection (s 17) for a 10 year term of validity; ammunition in public collection (s 19) for 10 years; and business purposes (s 20) for a validity period of five years. It is commendable that the FCA 60 of 2000 limits the quantity of firearms and

relative ammunitions a person can own. However, one can state that the number of four firearms per person is still very high. The disadvantage is that it may allow the proliferation of firearms, even if the number of people owning them appears to be low. Moreover, there is a high number of losses and theft of firearms belonging to civilian firearm owners.

Under the FCA 60 of 2000, firearm competency and licences must be periodically renewed (s 24) depending on the nature of the relevant firearms licence (s 27); unless they are cancelled or terminated (s 28). However, the constitutionality of Sections 24 and 28 provisions were questioned in the Gauteng North High Court in a case between the Minister of Safety and Security and the South African Hunters and Game Conservation Association (SAHGCA) wherein both sections were declared unconstitutional. Sections 24 and 28 of the FCA 60 of 2000 deal with the renewal of firearm licences and termination of a firearm licence upon expiry respectively. Section 24 provides that the renewal of a firearm licence must be made 90 days before it lapses, and it will be deemed valid pending the finalization of the application. Section 28 deals with the cancellation of a firearm licence upon its effluxion period. Additionally, Section 28 stipulates that the firearm licence will be terminated upon expiration; voluntary surrender; disqualification in terms of Sections 102 or 103; and withdrawal in compliance with the Act. It also states that upon expiry of the firearm licence in terms of Section 27 and not renewed in terms of Section 24; the firearm holder must dispose of the firearm within 60 days or run the risk of it being lost to the state. The contentious issue was that Section 28 does not afford recourse for the firearm owner to rectify a failure to apply for licence renewal before the 90 days limit specified in Section 24 (Mabena, 2017). It can be stated that such absence of recourse will result in making criminals from legitimate firearm owners. Based on the non-existence of appropriate processes in the Act for licence holders to correct the noncompliance, the court resolved to declare Sections 24 and 28 to be inconsistent with the Constitution on Tuesday 4 July 2017. The Court further directed Parliament to make amendments of the Act within 18 months to ensure constitutional compliance (De Lange, 2017). Furthermore, it was ordered that all expired firearms licences under

the FCA 60 of 2000 remain valid until the High Court's judgement is confirmed by Constitutional Court.

The Minister of Police subsequently appealed against the High Court judgement in the Constitutional Court to be reversed and set aside. Conversely the SA Hunters also applied for confirmation of the constitutional invalidity of Sections 24 and 28 of the FCA 60 of 2000. On Thursday 07 June 2018, the Constitutional Court overruled an earlier decision by the High Court in favour of the Minister of Police. The Constitutional Court dismissed a High Court declaration that Sections 24 and 28 of the FCA 60 of 2000 were constitutionally invalid (Mabuza, 2018). This means that the High Court erred by declaring Sections 24 and 28 unconstitutional. After the Constitutional Court ruling, the police embarked on the process of confiscating firearms whose licences were not renewed, with the possibility of prosecuting owners who were reluctant to voluntarily surrender those unlicensed firearms for disposal (Bornman, 2018). Subsequently the GOSA approached the Gauteng High Court, Pretoria on 24 July 2018 to interdict the police from coercing firearms licence holders who failed to renew their licences (Venter, 2018) to surrender the firearms. A temporary interdict was eventually issued against the SAPS (Evans, 2018b) precluding any action against expired firearm licence holders (Watson, 2019). Watson (2019) states that an estimated total of between 700 000 and a million firearm owners failed to renew their firearm licences in time as required by Section 24 of the FCA 60 of 2000. The researcher is of the view that non-renewal of firearm licences may compromise the accuracy of the national electronic database system of firearm ownership. Furthermore, it could increase the number of firearms not updated on the new regulation, like it happened during the transition from AAA 75 of 1969 when licence holders failed to register in the new FCA 60 of 2000. The researcher believes that firearms need to be inspected physically at the time of renewal of firearm licences to confirm their existence.

2.3.5.1 Declaration by the registrar of persons as unfit to possess firearms

Section 102 of the FCA 60 of 2000 focuses on the disqualification by the Registrar for

an individual to possess or own a firearm. It limits chances for an ineligible person to apply for a firearm in future. Under this section, the change of personal circumstances may negatively affect an individual's qualification to handle or own a firearm. Individuals under the following categories may be interdicted: a person under DVA 116 of 1998 restraining order; persons posing threats to themselves or the public; a person with a feeble or unstable mental health condition, a propensity to violence, evidence of uncontrollable use of any intoxicating or narcotic substance, or one who has negligently handled or lost a firearm or has deliberately given false information required in terms of the FCA 60 of 2000.

A declaration by the Registrar under Section 102(1) of the FCA 60 of 2000 may only be issued if the Registrar complies with the conditions set out in Section 102(2) of the FCA 60 of 2000 which reads as follows: a disqualification in terms of subsection 1 could only be delivered provided the Registrar- (a) hand delivered a written notice to the affected person, had summoned the affected individual to make representation in relation to his fitness to possess a firearm; (b) had afforded the affected person a fair chance to provide explanations in defence of the impending pronouncement; (c) had exercised due diligence in considering the matter; (d) is convinced that the person is unsuitable in terms of subsection (1); and (e) determination was not influenced by a court's decision in terms of section 103 (1) or (2).

2.3.5.2 Declaration by court of persons to be unfit to possess firearms

Section 103 of the FCA 60 of 2000 deals with instances where a person, due to the conviction of an offence, is declared unsuitable to be entrusted with the responsibility of possessing a firearm by the court. It means that this provision only comes into play if the accused is convicted of certain criminal offences. Section 103 (1) of the FCA 60 of 2000 states that, in the absence of a different court pronouncement, a person is automatically declared unsuitable to have a firearm upon conviction of any offence, which is listed in Section 103 (1) (a-o).

Section 103 (2) of the FCA 60 of 2000 applies to cases where a person is not convicted of an offence contemplated in subsection 1, but falls into categories listed as schedule 2 which are: unauthorized entry into a premises with malicious intention of committing a statutory or common law offence; extortion; involuntary manslaughter; high treason; malicious damage to property; and sedition. This subsection gives the court discretion to decide on a person's unfitness or otherwise to have a firearm.

Section 148 of the FCA 60 of 2000 deals with procedures to follow when a person inherits a firearm. In terms of the FCA 60 of 2000, an applicant cannot use inheritance as the only motivation for obtaining a firearm licence. Section 148(1) (a) provides that the person, who intends to inherit the firearm must first acquire an appropriate firearm licence. The applicant can give an incentive in the application that the firearm is a family treasured heirloom. However, an eligible heir of the firearm may only assume ownership upon acquiring a licence for that firearm. Section 148(1)(c) states that, in the event where the beneficiary is not willing to apply for a licence to keep the firearm, he/she may deactivate it or dispose it according to the FCA 60 of 2000.

2.4 Summary

This chapter presented the origin of the South African legal framework regulating ownership and usage of firearms. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, was also discussed. It also outlined the relevant Acts, policies, regulations and strategies developed, aimed at improving policing and safety for instance, the SAPS Act 68 of 1995, FCA 60 of 2000, NCPS of 1996 and 2016 White Paper on Safety and Security.

CHAPTER 3

AN OVERVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

3.1 Introduction

An overview of the literature in a research study entails surveying books, scholarly articles and other relevant sources related to the topic. It is necessary, because it enables the researcher to evaluate the findings of the previous studies conducted in the same area of study critically. Through the literature review, the researcher gathers information to identify relationships, contradictions and gaps in existing studies.

This chapter will focus on exploring global firearms legislations regulating private ownership and use of firearms. This chapter neither seeks to establish the level of skills development offered to SAPS members in relation to the FCA 60 of 2000, nor does it evaluate the effectiveness and appropriateness of the existing firearm control regulations and the level at which they have been applied and enforced. The intention is to take stock of the available studies previously conducted with regards to firearms and crime.

3.2 The nexus between firearms and violence

There is an important assumption, though it is not straightforward, that elegant legislation to regulate and limit the lawful source of firearms can significantly contribute to the reduction of crime involving firearms. For instance, the United Kingdom (UK) has stringent gun laws (Kantchev & Flynn, 2016; Clarke-Billings, 2016) and reasonably low rates of firearm-related crimes (Chapman, 2013). But one should not overstate the association between widespread availability of guns and the levels of violent crimes as there is no direct scientific evidence confirming correlation. On the other hand, it is reasonable to assume partially that this demonstrates the achievement of the licensing regime, firmly in place since 1968, which enables the authorities to screen fit and proper people to own firearms positively.

There are many issues that influence the proportions of firearm-related violence in any country. An example of such determinant aspect is the proportional strength or weakness of the enacted laws and level of law-enforcement practices in the state aimed to curb firearm-related crimes. Firearm control is perceived as the most effective method for reducing violent crimes. Sensibly created, implemented and well-enforced firearm control policies can assist in reducing firearm violence (Stell, 2004). A stringent and stiffer enforcement of firearm control is necessary to address the proliferation of firearms and their usage in violent crimes. Methods of preventing firearm-related crimes are often directed at strengthening the relevant law controlling the trade, buying and usage of those firearms. The purpose of firearm regulation law is to deny easy accessibility of firearms (Webster & Wintemute, 2015) from possibly dangerous or reckless users, to discourage their criminal usage and to encourage legal firearm holders to handle them properly and keep them safe. One may contend that firearm policies are regularly focused on firearm usage in crime. Stringent firearm regulations aim to decrease firearm-related incidents by prohibiting acquisition of firearms by non-deserving individuals without declining access to responsible users. According to Squires (2000) and Lopez (2019a), the proliferation of firearms is mostly part of the problem, not the solution. Gold (2013) asserts that effective prevention to decrease the prevalence of gun violence can be realised through a national discussion which is free from emotions and with a sensible understanding of the devastating effects of firearm violence. Lerner, Li, Valdesolo and Kassam (2015) postulate that emotions can cloud the individuals' rational thinking and judgement which will negatively impact on their decision-making. However, Galea and Abdalla (2019) believe that the imbalance between knowledge and values of firearm ownership is creating a deadlock in the protracted firearms debates. Kalesan, Villarreal, Keyes and Galea (2016) contend that widespread availability of firearms is prevalent in a country which appreciates and encourages gun culture as part of social life. One can postulate that the vigorous and unswerving application of state laws designed to curb gun violence is critical to such laws being effective. A huge responsibility is placed on the police to enforce and apply the Act to achieve the desired reduction of violent crime.

Firearms and violent crimes seem to be inseparable. To most people this idea may seem like obvious common sense which barely needs to be empirically verified. But the question is whether they really are associated. Globally, the roles of firearms in violence are subjects of intense debates due to the huge impact of firearm violence daily. There have been many studies conducted concerning the relationship between firearm availability and crime (Fleegler, Lee, Monuteaux, Hemenway & Mannix, 2013; Hepburn & Hemenway, 2004; Cook & Ludwig, 2006; Sherman, Williams, Ariel, Strang, Wain, Slothower, & Norton, 2014; Moore & Bergner, 2016). According to Moore and Bergner (2016), researches conducted to establish the influence of widespread availability of firearms to the levels of crime produced contradicting findings. Opposing views have been developed that observe firearms as the driving force behind criminal violence, the tool necessary to provide security, or no evidence of relationship established. Moore (2017) adds that researchers are currently unable to reach consensus on the precise role firearms play in criminal violence rates. One could argue that the conflicting research findings could be ascribed to the dissimilar context of firearms in different geographical location types in which the studies were conducted.

Some studies support the notion that increasing the gun ownership rate would necessarily raise the levels of violent crime (Miller, Azrael & Hemenway, 2002; Branas, Richmond, Culhane, Ten Have & Wiebe, 2009; Chauhan, Cerda, Messner, Tracy, Tardiff & Galea, 2011; Parker, Williams, McCaffree, Acensio, Browne, Strom & Barrick, 2011; Siegel, Ross & King, 2014; Monuteaux et al., 2015; Miller, Warren, Hemenway & Azrael, 2015; Moore & Bergner, 2016; Moyer, 2017; Hackenberry, 2019), whereas others (Kates & Mauser, 2007; Kovandzic, Schaffer & Kleck, 2013; Kleck, 2015) found that the widespread availability of guns decreases violent crime rates, while others concluded that the proliferation of firearms has no measurable impact on the levels of crimes involving firearms (Hemenway & Miller, 2000; Hepburn & Hemenway, 2004; National Research Council, 2004; Zeoli & Webster, 2010; Sherman et al., 2014). It could be argued that there is no direct link that could prove that the proliferation of firearms influences the levels of violent crimes. There is also no evidence that stringent firearms restriction contributes to lowering criminal violence. Siegel et al. (2013) confirmed a strong bond between the levels of homicide and the scale of firearm

ownership but failed to determine causation. Cook and Ludwig (2013) hold a similar view in that there is a positive connection between applications of legislated firearm controls, particularly background screening and the decline in firearm violence. The study revealed that countries with a prevalence of gun ownership experience an excessively large number of deaths from firearm-related incidents. Some people may say that effective police patrols are accountable for the meaningful control, reduction and curbing of firearm-related crime.

Cohen and Ludwig (2003) postulate that directed police patrol intervention significantly reduces firearm incidents in the targeted areas. Hauser and Kleck (2013) are of the view that availability of firearms in an area is likely to increase firearm-related violence, however it could also encourage people to acquire more firearms for self-defence. In addition, Miller, Azrael and Hemenway (2000) and De Angelis, Benz and Gillham (2017) state that the prevalence of firearms in an area may increase negative perceptions on safety in the affected communities who will in turn resort to arming themselves. One could deduce that people acquire firearms because they have lost faith in the ability of governments to protect them. This implies that if perceptions of personal insecurity exist, people will be prompted to obtain firearms either legally or illegally, depending on their individual situations. Furthermore, some express the view that if the law enforcement agencies were able to control the widespread availability of firearms and their related crimes effectively, people would be discouraged to acquire firearms for personal protection. One may argue that such desire to possess firearms may render police campaigns to confiscate illegal guns almost futile as confiscated guns will be replaced with relative ease. One may further state that owning a legal firearm has its own set of problems. However, those who developed the desire to acquire firearms dismiss the potential risks associated with owning them.

A study conducted by Altbeker, Adams, Wallenberg, Sokhulu, Richards and Churchill (2000) based on an analysis of police dockets had discovered that gun users are likely to have their guns dispossessed rather than using them in fighting the attack. According to Gamba (2000); and Alpers, Wilson and Rosetti (2013a), countries like Canada, Australia and New-Zealand had their firearm-related crime incidents lowered

after introducing restrictions on handgun ownerships. Countries with a lower number of firearms in public hands experience fewer incidents of violence involving firearms. There is a general belief that the larger the firearms density, the greater the threat for firearm-related incidents becomes. Keegan (2005) found that in Cape Town focus groups found that although persons carry concealed firearms, it seems that criminals could still identify an armed person using clues expressed by their attitudes and body postures. Such people may then be robbed and have their legal firearms transferred to an illegal pool and thereby contribute to future crime. Cook and Ludwig (2006) explain that widespread gun ownership could serve as a deterrent to violent crimes, decreasing the risk of attack to gun owners and non-owners alike. Those who disagree may assert that the proliferation of illegal firearms is associated with criminal activities and therefore must be addressed with the aim of reducing crime. Conversely, they assert that increased firearm possessions could lead to higher risks of misuse by the owners and serve as sources for the illicit market (Cook & Ludwig, 2006). It could be argued that increased firearm ownerships could have been motivated by the increased levels of violent crimes and not necessarily that proliferation of those firearms caused an increase in crime.

Civilians' desire to own more firearms could have been induced by their feeling of vulnerability to become victims. Wallace (2015) and Aisch and Keller (2016) argue that the same threat of crime which is used to advocate for firearm regulation is also encouraging civilians to acquire firearms. According to Wallace (2015) and Wozniak (2017), the call for firearm restriction and the purchasing of more firearms increases whenever there is an incident involving the gross misuse of firearms. Pierre (2019) adds that in the USA the more calls for gun regulation reforms are made the more guns are purchased. It could be said that the fear of crime influences both the calls for firearm restrictions and the desire to acquire firearms.

Densely populated urban areas may be affected by high public firearm ownerships, markedly different from the sparsely populated rural areas. For instance, in the USA most studies on crime are concentrated in urban locations, while neglecting the rural settings (Wells & Weisheit, 2004; Kaylen & Pridemore, 2011). Some researchers

believe that the lack of crime studies conducted in rural settings could be ascribed to inaccurate crime data found in such areas (Wiersema, Loftin & McDowall, 2000; Maltz & Targonski, 2002; Lott & Whitley, 2003). One may argue that different places in urban areas may also demonstrate different findings on crime. Moore (2017) postulates that crime is one social phenomenon which is influenced significantly by the social environment. Moore and Sween (2015) have acknowledged the exclusion of rural areas in crime studies and have started to examine how both locations may have different predictors of crime.

The USA has a plethora of studies which generated much more diverse and comprehensive information which provide proof of the efficiency of firearm regulation (Kerr, 2018). Beauchamp (2017) states that research studies from various countries on firearm control produced results which are broad and occasionally contradictory. These variety of results create obfuscation amongst the society whether firearm regulations are effective or not. In USA, debates over ownership of firearms and their involvement in violence never come to conclusion (Pierre, 2019), and they are much more vigorous than in the RSA; given their longevity and the presence of outspoken campaigners and scholars from opposing sides. The discussion about acquisition of firearms and regulation of firearms is a highly contentious subject in the USA (Gray, 2018). The two sides involved in the debate are lobbying either for or against gun control laws and neither side has a monopoly on the truth, or even convincing facts, because it is difficult to establish the facts. Gun control is extensively debated globally but the real question is whether gun control laws work and whether they are effectively applied? Generally, these firearms arguments are whether the usage of firearms is in accordance with the practice standards of the written statutory provision owing to numerous serious and mournful events linked with the use of firearms. It remains apparent that firearms regulation is a controversial issue and instrumental to either improving or demolishing society. Therefore, government must introduce effective ways to combat illegal gun use. The government is responsible for making laws which will make sure that the basic human rights of its citizens are secured. The main issues to be examined include the nexus between the widespread ownership of firearms and the levels of crimes involving firearms; evidence of crime deterrence in relation to

citizen gun ownerships; the inherent harmfulness of guns and the influence of firearm control on levels of crime.

The undeniable fact is that guns are dangerous and cause destruction, harm and even death. One may dissent that firearms could be used for either good or harm, depending on the intention of the owner. This means that without human action, firearms cannot spontaneously cause harm or good (Shammas, 2017). Firearms can inspire fear and their direct threat can be deeply traumatizing to victims and witnesses alike (Cook & Ludwig, 2002). The experiences of firearm-related violence may cause a variety of damaging psychological effects ranging from intrusive thoughts, insomnia, hypervigilance, withdrawal from relationships and grief symptoms (Garbarino, Bradshaw & Vorrasi, 2002). According to Rubin and Dezhbakshsh (2003), from the perspective of information theory it is unclear whether firearms are criminogenic the facts. One can contend that easy accessibility of firearms does not itself stimulate violent crimes. However, firearms are lethal and help to worsen the aggression and gravity of violent acts. Firearm involvement in violence changes the power balance between the aggressor and the person attacked in favour of the one who is armed and first to act. Some researchers submit that firearms could give power to the user either as an attacker (Cook & Pollack, 2017), or the victim trying to fight off hostility (Kleck, 1997). The removal of the instrument used to commit crime can serve as a preventative measure (Cook & Pollack, 2017).

3.3 International Firearm Regulation

It is worth noting that most studies available were carried out by advocates who hold a specific view, either against or for firearm control (Pierre, 2019; Metzl, 2019). As a result, the apparent intention of many studies is to convince rather than to inform. People often align themselves with the study findings that resonate with their views (Metzl, 2019), including their convictions and beliefs.

Internationally, the focus will be on the following selected countries: UK; USA; Australia; New-Zealand; Botswana; Lesotho and Namibia. These countries were

chosen because of the variations in the strength of their firearm legislations and the aspiration to include a variety of Afrocentric and Eurocentric countries and cultures. It is based on the context that some of the countries are considered to have restrictive firearm regulations while others are characterized as lenient. These countries differ in the number of civilian firearm possessions, gun regulation, legal structure, and views concerning gun regulations. However, the apparent resemblances in all the firearm regulations are that they are designed to control ownership and possession of firearms.

Generally, countries are constantly changing their firearm regulations, making them more stringent (Cukier, Sarkar & Quigley, 2000) in accordance with the prevailing situation. The nature of these changes varies according to the priorities of the governments and the specific problems experienced. Most of the roundtable discussions on firearm policies focus on the incidents of tragic rampage mass shootings, killing of prominent people and political assassinations. Although the approaches differ, the fundamental principles remain the same to control ownership and misuse and transfer to illicit markets. Some countries have an entitlement to own a firearm unless certain disqualifying factors arise, whereas in others firearm ownership is conditional upon meeting certain conditions and requirements. According to Cook and Braga (2001) and Knight (2013), countries with stringent firearm regulations tend to source illicit firearms from those with weak firearm regulation laws. In other words, no country can reduce the proliferation of firearms on its own, they are dependent on other countries to endorse prudent policies to limit the movement of legal firearms into the criminal sector. These seem to suggest that it is difficult to develop tighter firearm control which would prevent leakage of legal firearms to irresponsible users.

Guns are undoubtedly often used to commit a range of human rights violations, ranging from murder, rape, kidnapping and robbery. The State has a primary responsibility to preserve and protect human rights against abuse (De Schutter, Ramasastry, Taylor & Thompson, 2012). In achieving that goal, the State is expected to create effective policies, legislation, regulations and adjudication. In other words,

the State is obliged to implement appropriate steps to avert, probe, penalize and redress human rights abuse. Conversely, some States may be unable to keep up its responsibilities of protecting its citizens against abuse of human rights owing to the absence of proper institutions or the dysfunctionality of the governance structure. The right to life is an inalienable constitutional right for every person in the RSA (South Africa, 1996a); which must always be respected. However, it is frequently put at risk through the misuse of firearms. Illegal use of firearms is a potential threat to public safety and further restrictive measures on legal possession on firearms should be considered.

Firearms have been the subject of global debates for very long because they are arguably a basic consideration with respect to proliferation and misuse. No matter how one feels about the debate, the reality remains that firearms are frequently used in pernicious violent crimes. Firearms are considered inherently harmful and pose considerable risk to the safety of the public. But it must be acknowledged that firearms on their own are not dangerous unless they are in the wrong hands. A firearm becomes dangerous when it is abused. A firearm can either save or take a life, depending on who is using it. In most international countries, firearms are used for mass murders, suicides and military conflicts whereas in South Africa many firearm deaths are interpersonal, and crime related. According to Hoskin (2011) and Vito and Maahs (2012), 67% of deaths in USA in 2008 were reported involving different kinds of firearms, amongst which handguns were responsible for 47% of those deaths.

Indiscriminate mass shootings are generally perpetrated with licensed firearms (Melgar, 2019; Statista Research Department, 2020). A case in point is the horrific random shooting executed by Derrick Bird on 2 June 2010 in West Cumbria before killing himself. Some evidence suggests that many violent crimes are committed with illegal firearms (Cullen Report, 1996). In contrast, both random shooting incidents in Hungerford in 1987 and Dunblane in 1996 were committed with legal guns. The Cullen Report, which followed the Dunblane massacre in 1996, indicates that since 1969 the usage of illicit guns in crime has increased; however, the degree of the rise cannot be measured. Criminal use of licit firearms is rare; nonetheless the point that other crimes

are committed by authorized firearm owners should not be ignored when reforming firearm regulations. The degree to which imitation guns are involved in committing crimes is also not measurable (Cullen Report, 1996).

3.3.1 United Kingdom

Firearms acquisition by the civilians in UK is firmly controlled by the Firearms Act 1968 which is much more restrictive than USA firearm control laws. The firearm certification system in UK brought about good and reliable data of available number and types of legally owned firearms. The UK is regarded as having the tightest firearm regulation worldwide (Kantchev & Flynn, 2016; Clarke-Billings, 2016). The legislation was reformed to restrict guns ownerships further, responding to the Hungerford mass shooting in 1987 and the Dunblane School mass shooting in 1996 that involved lawfully licensed weapons. With an estimated population of 57 million, UK has a far lower number of crimes involving firearms compared to those of Australia and the USA (Chapman, 2013).

The UK outlawed all semi-automatic rifles from private ownership in 1988, following the Hungerford massacre in 1987 when Michael Ryan used two legally owned high-velocity semiautomatic rifles to kill 16 people before committing suicide (McCarthy, 2010). This rigorous law may partially be responsible for decreasing the levels of violent crimes in UK. The new firearms legislation influenced a positive change on the people's attitude towards guns but that did not bring a permanent solution to mass shootings. Masanzu (2006) states that the UK's Firearms Amendment Act of 1997 (FAA) still need to be strengthened further than it is, though it is largely considered stringent. The FAA of 1997 was enacted following the recommendation in the Lord Cullen report on the 1996 Dunblane mass shooting, banning all privately-owned firearms exceeding .22 calibre and all multi-shot .22s (Rogers, 2011). The UK had avoided prolonged debates on guns and crime by expeditiously revoking licences for previously issued handguns and imposing strict requirements in attaining new licences as a way of resolving the existing mass shooting problem. A strict monitoring of guns coming in and out of the UK was enforced. Only one random shooting occurred in UK

since the law was tightened, when Derrick Bird killed 12 people and injured 11 with his licensed rifle in northern England's Whitehaven in 2010.

The long struggle for the UK to pull out from the European Union (EU) membership is over. Sandford (2020) postulates that the UK's decision to leave the EU was not unanimous, as the individual four countries England, Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland were divided in half. The UK had ultimately parted ways with the EU officially on 31 January 2020 (Barnes, 2020; Sandford, 2020), and the prospects of changes in the running of the government are inevitable. According to Dewan (2020), the UK is the first country to pull out from the EU since its inception. The ramifications of some of the changes to be effected might affect the country (Wilson, 2019), and the entire world. According to Gehring (2017) and Sandford (2020), the UK's delay from Brexit was the result of protracted negotiations, characterised with deadlocks, they had with the EU to strike some agreements. Sandford (2020) states that though the UK's release from the EU was ratified, the negotiations for a future relationship continue with the deadline being 31 December 2020. Dewan (2020) states that until the end of the phasing out period on 31 December 2020, the UK operates under the EU laws. O'Carroll and Rankin (2019) concur with Dewan in that the status core in UK government will remain until the end of the agreed transitional phase.

Layton (2016) assumes that Brexit will not influence the current UK firearms regulation, since its restrictive measures are above what the EU Firearms Directive required. Setchell (2018) contends that it is highly likely that some of the UK's opposition political parties will demand relaxing of the existing firearms control, but not to the level of the USA. It could be argued that the UK's firearm ownerships could be changed if the post-Brexit Government decides otherwise. The proposal to review any legislation is possible, should the need arise. As it stands currently the future of the UK outside the EU is uncertain.

The lesson South Africa can derive from the UK is that it is possible for a nation to go from wide-open freedom for acquisition of firearms to a more restrictive firearms ownership regulation. The indication is that the stringent reform of any regulation is

possible if there is a political will. Initially the UK had a permissive law to firearm ownerships. It later outlawed all semi-automatic rifles which followed by banning all private possession of handguns over .22 calibre and all multi-shot .22s. A strict monitoring of guns coming in and out of the UK was enforced.

3.3.2 United States of America

Firearms on their own are neither good nor bad; it is their ill uses that evoke toxic gun debates. Firearms do not cause violence but do increase its lethality and facilitate the commission of crime to be much easier (Duquet & Van Alstein, 2015; Lichtman, 2020). In the USA, such firearms misuses are prevalent and a persistent public health concern. According to Gallagher and Hodge Sr (2018), firearms are responsible for an average of 93 human deaths per day in the USA. Pérez-Peña (2015) postulates that most contestations of ideas about gun control in USA are based on law, practicality and proposition. The USA has a notorious and highly permissive gun law which is guaranteed in their Constitution (Rozel & Mulvey, 2017). Elkins (2013) states that the USA is amongst the three countries that have gun ownership rights enshrined in the Constitution, something which is considered as strange. All grown up people are constitutionally permitted to purchase firearms, provided they are not barred because of their criminal conviction records and other exclusionary criteria related to firearm ownership (Cook & Pollack, 2017). According to Krouse (2007), the intractable debate over firearms in the USA is centred on the regulation's state of being constitutional, and its efficacy to reduce crime. The contextual understanding of the Second Amendment of the USA Constitution stipulating that *"A well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed"* forms the basis of the contentious argument (Ball, 2017); amongst the two lobby groups who are diametrically opposed. The USA's Constitution recognizes the citizens' birth entitlement to acquire firearms for self-protection. One may emphasize that firearm regulation policy is construed as an infringement of the Second Amendment. The USA's Constitutional right to own firearms serves as the cornerstone of the opposition of the gun interests and calls for bans on handguns and yet most massacres involved legally held handguns. As a result, the legislative debate

in dealing with the increase of firearm violence in the USA is continuously shortened and restricted on constitutional grounds by people who are rooted in their love of firearms. One may think that the USA has a defective Constitution for protecting individuals' rights to acquire and possess firearms. The rhetoric by the gun advocates stating that individuals' rights to keep and bear firearms is contained in the Constitution makes it sound as if the Second Amendment to America's Constitution is immutable. The Constitution of the USA is employed as a stumbling block to reform the gun laws. One should emphasise that such Constitutional right does not change the reality that firearms are mostly used to hurt and kill people. Even though the USA's Constitution suggests the civilian right to own firearms to be a birth right, the court of law have consistently ruled that it does not allow unrestricted rights to individuals to own and possess guns. One can argue that the Second Amendment refers to military weapons, not civilian firearms for personal protection, hunting and sport. Winkler (2011) states that the USA has about 300 million guns owned by civilians which is equal to approximately one for every person of the population. This supposed inalienable right seems to have contributed to having much more gun ownerships in the USA than any other developed countries universally. This right makes it easy for civilians to acquire unlimited guns as if firearms are indispensable for their lives. Gun control supporters state that regulation of firearms limits the likelihood of criminals accessing firearms while the opponents reject the notion that policies make it difficult for criminals to acquire firearms. They contend that firearm regulations often provide many barriers to prevent law abiding citizens from acquiring firearms which constitute an infringement on their constitutionally protected rights.

Gun rights proponents often contend that gun ownership rights contained in the Constitution contribute to the reduction of incidents of violent crimes. Subsequent to the Sandy Hook School mass shooting, Mr Wayne LaPierre of the National Rifle Association (NRA) made a combative statement saying that the only way to stop an armed criminal is to have an armed law-abiding citizen (Lichtblau & Rich, 2012). Immediately after the Marjory Stoneman Douglas School mass shooting, the USA President Donald Trump aligned himself with the assertion by Mr Wayne LaPierre and proposed to arm all schoolteachers with guns to avert mass shootings at schools. His

proposal suggests that being armed will make people safer (Abramson, 2018); however, possession of a firearm cannot guarantee safety. Such an idea for teachers to arm themselves was generally held among pro-gun supporters in the USA. President Trump's proposed problem-solving technique was welcomed by some, however others, including teachers, explicitly disagreed arguing that the idea will make the situation worse (Wil, 2018).

President Trump's remark was intended to stress the significance of arming civilians to discourage prospective criminals. On the contrary, supporters of the firearm regulation commonly account that widespread accessibility to guns negatively influence the levels of firearm-related crimes. Fisher and Keller (2017) and Wintemute (2015) postulate that the USA frequently experiences mass shootings. As stated by Vestal (2019), mass shooting incidents contribute less to the number of all acts of violence in the USA. According to Gold (2013), random mass shootings in the USA do not signify the much broader scale of the gun violence problem. One may assume that because mass shootings killings are considered as fewer compared to all other firearm-related deaths in the USA (Vestal, 2019), consequently they have little influence on policy reforms. Others may postulate that the legislative reviews could only be considered if there is a political desire for reform. Luca, Malhotra and Poliquin (2016) proclaim that incidents of mass shootings evoke a significantly larger policy response than ordinary gun homicides. Based on Luca, Malhotra and Poliquin's (2016) assertion, increased involvement of guns in violence evokes the need to reinforce the gun laws. For instance, California's assault weapons ban was adopted after the Stockton schoolyard massacre in 1989 (Barmann, 2019).

The use of firearms in crime is the subject of an intense and emotive discussion universally. The USA is notorious for its lax gun laws which allow citizens to carry firearms like they are toys. It has many gun laws, but none of them seriously limit access to guns. A study by Hemenway and Miller (2000) revealed that firearm density is highly and significantly associated with increased rates of killings involving firearms. Conceivably, gun availability may increase the likelihood of firearm-related deaths, since a lot of gun violence includes extemporaneous arguments that may cause death

and even severe harm (Miller, Azrael & Hemenway, 2001). According to Cook and Pollack (2017), widespread accessibility of guns is certainly connected with the increased proportion of robberies and murders committed with firearms. Firearm-related incidents are likely to be higher when firearms are densely available (Kubrin & Wadsworth, 2009; Miller, Hemenway & Azrael, 2007). Effective firearm policy, if well enforced, has the prospect to decrease the amount of firearm related incidents. Others may further argue that the fundamental lack of will by law enforcers to enforce the regulation vigorously is the reason for the escalation in firearm-related crimes. This implies that there is a serious weakness in the enforcement of the firearm regulatory law.

The Gun Control Act (GCA) of 1968 is the legislative framework regulating firearm manufacturing and ownership in the USA. It prescribes that a federal firearms licence (FFL) be acquired for trading in firearms. As indicated in the GCA of 1968, the aim of the federal firearm regulation is mainly to stimulate the federal government and local law enforcement agency in achieving its objective of decreasing firearm-associated crimes. The GCA of 1968 was amended by the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act, hereafter called the “Brady Act”, which was legislated on 30 November 1993 and implemented in February 1994. The Brady Act was given that name after James Scott Brady who was shot during an attempt to assassinate the former USA President on 30 March 1981. The Brady Act of 1993 necessitates presale lifestyle screening to be conducted on all gun sales (Goss, 2006). The universal background enquiry system for firearm transactions is significant since it could prohibit the acquisition of firearms by people considered high-risk and could possibly reduce violence. This Act was legislated with the intention of reducing gun violence. Despite its limitations, it was viewed as one of the laws with the most profound impact. Most gun-related crimes are assumed to be perpetrated with guns that were not acquired from licenced suppliers but procured through off-the-books trades which are permitted but not regulated by the Brady Act of 1993. Such transactions happen in a manner where no official record is kept. According to Miller, Hepburn and Azrael (2017), approximately 22 percent of all firearm ownerships in USA were procured without the purchasers undergoing any background check. Prospective firearm purchasers prefer unregulated firearm

transactions, as opposed to buying from a federally licensed dealer, which is considered as a frustrating and timewasting procedure. Karberg, Frandsen, Durso, Buskirk and Lee (2016) and Bowling, Frandsen, Lauver, Boutilier and Adams (2010) state that more than two million firearm application transactions involving prohibited individuals were rejected since the introduction of the Brady personal background investigation. One may argue that there is not enough proof to confirm the effectiveness of the Brady Act of 1993 itself. According to Andres and Hempstead (2011), the waiting periods prescribed by the Brady Act were designed to allow the police department ample time to perform a threat assessment on the firearm applicant. It furthermore provides applicants enough time to settle down and reflect deeply on the decision of purchasing a firearm and it could prevent impulsive acts of violence. That assertion is confirmed by Imas, Kuhn and Mironova (2016) when they point out that the delaying period can allow buyers time to reconsider their decisions and make well-thought-out choices.

In 1998, a new background enquiry system allowed checks to be conducted over the phone and electronically on the internet. The fact that a federal background enquiry was required for acquisitions of firearms from licensed traders but excluding private sellers was identified as a huge gap which is liable to abuse (Misty, Minnaar, Redpath & Dhlamini, 2002). One will expect the federal gun law to require every firearm transaction to be conducted through registered retailers to subject all buyers to background checks. Criminals may take advantage of the private sales gap by acquiring firearms from private sellers without a background check. Citizens had instant access to firearms, and the Brady Act of 1993 imposed a five working days' waiting period prior to registering a firearm to a purchaser's name. Luca, Malhotra and Poliquin (2017) reveal that the waiting period to put off the procurement of guns created by the Brady Act of 1993 has revealed a reduction in gun homicides. On the contrary, the study by Ludwig and Cook (2000) failed to establish the relationship between firearm purchasing delays and the levels of violent crimes. Duggan (2001), in opposition against a causal effect of the policy, said that crime rates which suddenly drop after the law changed is not correct, as normally such decrease preceded the law reforms. Sections in the Federal GCA of 1968 which were not amended restricted

certain classes of people from owning a firearm, such as individuals with criminal conviction records, absconders, people with mental health problems, military members dishonourably expelled, foreign undocumented persons, drug dependent persons and those with domestic violence restraining orders. Misty et al. (2002) criticize the inclusion of only substance abuse and the exclusion of alcohol abuse in the classification. They are of the belief that alcohol and drugs carry the same deleterious effects. In other words, both substance and alcohol abuse should be included to be a disqualification for acquisition of firearms.

In the USA the political and social debates over the confounding question of the suitable control of firearms has been extremely polarized. The infamous mass shootings which have occurred in USA since 1999 propelled the firearm regulation discussion further into the public space (Faria, 2013). According to Goss (2006) and Spitzer (2012), such indiscriminate shooting events have led to one of the opposing lobby groups calling for tighter gun controls, while others were calling for broader use of guns. The prominent lobby group at loggerheads is the Brady Centre to Prevent Gun Violence, which advocates for stringent firearm control and the NRA which lobbies for gun rights. These are the most popular organisations that have the power to influence numerous other groups and organisations. Both sides in the gun debate supposedly want to reduce firearm deaths and injuries, but they cannot reach consensus on solutions, as their ideas are diametrically opposed. Not all gun owners are opposed to all forms of gun control.

The USA has experienced a total of 1,126 random shootings and killing sprees since the 2012 Sandy Hook massacre in Newtown, Connecticut (Lopez, Mark & Oh, 2016). None of them was responded to with effective gun control legislation. The latest occurrence of a mass shooting happened on 14 February 2018 at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, Florida wherein 17 pupils died (Schmidt, 2018). This dreadful act was perpetrated by a lone shooter, the 19-year-old Nikolas Cruz, armed with his licensed AR-15 style semi-automatic rifle. Apparently, Nikolas Cruz is a former student at the same school who was expelled due to ill-discipline. Following the aftermath of the fatal gun massacre at a Florida school, President Trump laid the blame squarely

on the mental health of the shooter, disregarding issues of gun violence and gun control (Levine, 2018). This implies that mental illness is associated with violent acts like random shootings. President Trump's assertion is a narrative that is widely believed, namely that people with personality disorders can commit inconceivable acts of violence. It could be said that President Trump made such assertions because it is generally presumed that an average, sane person would not engage in such barbaric acts of the random killing of multiple people.

However, it is worth noting that while mental health problems cannot be ruled out in acts of violence, not all people with psychiatric disorders are inclined to violence. The causes of mass shootings are very complex in nature and their perpetrators could be influenced by either psychological or social issues. According to Gold (2013), it is unfortunate that, discussion of gun control laws to prevent mass shootings only focuses on measures to prevent individuals with severe mental illnesses from accessing firearms. Jessica Henderson Daniel, the President of the American Psychological Association dismissed President Trump's gut-reaction response for society to blame this phenomenon solely on mentally ill people (Ducharme, 2018). She further said that it was too early to analyse the alleged shooter's mental health while the police were still investigating the shooter's motive. Moreover, he had not yet been diagnosed with any serious mental illness. One can further state that such assumption could stigmatize individuals with psychological sickness, which can discourage them from looking for the required medical treatment and getting benefits for social support for fear of being labelled psychotic. This means that people should resist the temptations of making impulsive statements based on assumptions. Knoll and Meloy (2014) state that no reliable study had established the link between mental instability and mass shooting.

Rogers (2018) opines that President Trump enjoys a mutually beneficial relationship with the NRA, the gun-rights activists representing the interests of America's gun owners, hence his silence on gun violence and gun control. The NRA organization funded his 2016 presidential campaigns with at least \$30 million. President Donald Trump, in his address at the NRA's annual convention, pledged his allegiance to the

organisation and promised to champion their interests in return for their support during his presidential campaign (Sherfinski, 2017). This meant that he would reciprocate their support by fiercely defending the Second Amendment of the USA Constitution, which defends people's right to own and possess firearms. He is seen as a strong and vocal opposition to gun control. A student survivor Emma Gonzalez, from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School advised politicians at a mass meeting held at Fort Lauderdale to reject financial support from gun-rights activists like the NRA (Boboltz & Murdock, 2018). Calls were made to politicians not to be beholden to the NRA lobby groups, basically meaning they are receiving money from NRA.

The shooting incident has stimulated a national debate on gun control. It provoked an extensive outrage and a surge in public support to ban semi-automatic rifles which were considered as weapons of war. It was a decisive moment of public opinion and there was a national revulsion against guns, particularly by students. The students organised a nationwide march to Washington on 24 March 2018, demanding immediate action be taken on gun-control legislation (Aggeler, 2018). The student-led anti-gun violence demonstration was dubbed "*March for our lives*" aimed to make desperate pleas to break the protracted tied knot of the debate on gun control in the USA. Some sister rallies were also planned across the country prior to the main march event. They planned not to rest until the government embraced the need for gun control. President Trump pledged to implement stricter gun control measures after an emotional listening session with teachers, parents and students in the Whitehouse (Lucey & Daly, 2018). In his quest to tackle gun violence, he strengthened the federal background checks, including raising the minimum gun purchase age of semi-automatic rifles from 18 to 21 and to ban the sale of Bump Stocks. The move was met with some public denunciation that it was still inadequate.

On 24 March 2018 a crowd gathered in Washington for the largest protest organised by students demanding stricter laws to regulate guns subsequent to the massive killings at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, Florida (Simpson & Johnson, 2018). A tearful march organiser and shooting survivor Emma Gonzalez, observed 6 minutes and 20 seconds of silence which is the same amount of time the shooter

Nikolas Cruz took to slay 17 of her schoolmates. An organiser reported that more than 800 marches for stricter gun control were held across the country and around the world under the slogan “*#MarchForOurLives*”. According to Hayes, Jackson, Collins and Dastagir (2018), most Americans increasingly support stringent gun laws. There is a general belief that tightening gun-control laws, background checks, as well as banning high-powered rifles like the AR-15 will lower the rate of shooting incidents in the USA.

The lessons South Africa can draw from the USA is that a Constitution that is permissive to unlimited ownership of firearms is likely to create widespread availability of firearms, which could be abused. A high concentration of privately-owned firearms negatively affects the effectiveness of firearm control (Azrael et al., 2017). Wepundi, Nthiga, Kabuu, Murray and Del Frate (2012) postulate that exorbitant acquisition of firearms exacerbates proliferation which may intensify tension and insecurity within the society. The other lesson is for the country to have a Constitution that is unambiguous, which is not the case in the USA. If a sentence is difficult to interpret, it would be difficult to comprehend, and people will draw their conclusions and align themselves with what resonates with their beliefs. The phrasing “*the right of the people to keep and bear arms*” causes confusion because it is interpreted differently amongst USA citizens. The USA chooses firearm ownerships over the fundamental human right to life. Its firearm policy focuses more on the users of firearms than on the sales of firearms. The convenience of firearm ownerships outweighs the risk of misuse. Scholars and legal professionals parsed the words contained in the Second Amendment to America’s Constitution and argued over their meaning without reaching any consensus.

3.3.3 Australia

Firearms in Australia are regulated through Firearms Act, 1973 and its subsidiary Firearms Regulations, 1974. The Act has been revised numerous times since its inception, with the most radical reform in 1996. The 1996 National Firearms Agreement (NFA), together with the Firearms Act, forms part of a national framework of firearms (Law Reform Commission of Western Australia, 2016).

In Australia, the states and territories regulate the local trading, ownership, and use of firearms, while international trade is the competency of the federal government. The Constitution of Australia does not protect the right to own a firearm (Wasserman, 2012). Australia requires the aspirant gun owner to demonstrate a compelling reason to have a firearm. Firearm licences for personal protection are an exception in Australia but are predominantly issued for recognized recreational activities and farming (Chapman, 2013). A firearm licence in Australia is subjected to periodic renewal and could be cancelled due to noncompliance with the Act, such as being involved in domestic violence or due to mental illness.

Gun law reform in Australia proved to be effective until the 1996 Port Arthur mass shooting by a mentally disturbed single shooter, Martin Bryant (28 years old) who killed 35 and injured 18 people (Chapman, 2013). The shooting was regarded as the worst in the modern history of Australia. The guns used in that shooting were widely available and legally permitted in Tasmania but forbidden in most other states. That tragedy was a turning point for Australia, as it ignited an explosion of impassioned public calls for stronger firearm control.

Responding to the Port Arthur massive shooting tragedy, the former Prime Minister John Howard had the courage to express his plan of reforming and strengthening the then existing gun control (Chapman, 2013). The Prime Minister undertook a consultation with all individual states and territories and urged them to also reform their gun control laws to be stringent (Beauchamp, 2018). Subsequently, the Australian Police Ministers' Council (APMC) arranged an urgent special gathering to pledge support for a countrywide plan to introduce a sweeping firearm law. The resolutions taken were refined and moulded, based on the National Agreement on Firearms, universally known as the NFA of 1996. They endorsed uniform gun laws that were recommended in 1988 by the National Committee on Violence on issues of violent crimes that exponentially escalated in the area.

The APMC first envisaged a uniform gun law between 1988 and 1995 but was never

acted upon. Beauchamp (2018) states that the NFA of 1996 prohibited ownership of high-powered firearms, introduced the establishment of a firearm-database centre and a mandatory permit for purchasing a firearm. Since the introduction of buyback programme, a total of 643,726 firearms were handed in (Chapman, Alpers, Agho, & Jones, 2006; Beauchamp, 2018). The 1996 NFA introduced the national buyback programme to motivate licensed firearm holders and traders to surrender their firearms voluntarily and speedily (Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department, 2002). The number of recovered firearms escalated to more than a million with subsequent state, territory and national gun amnesties. The number of firearms collected through the national buyback programme constituted 20 percent of privately-owned firearms (Beauchamp, 2018). One could argue that many people replaced their surrendered guns by purchasing legal single-shot weapons with their compensation payment. It is strongly suggested that the buyback has a causal link to the reduction in firearm deaths. According to Webster and Vernick (2013), the firearm death rate in Australia in 1996 was 2.7/100,000 which constituted a quarter of all deaths in USA. Nowadays the firearm mortality level had decreased to 1/100,000 which is less than one-tenth of USA death rate.

The significant decrease in firearm-related deaths was primarily related to the kind of firearms targeted by the buyback programme. According to Peters (2015), Australia's stricter firearm legislation also accelerated significant declines in armed robbery and attempted murder rates. Implementation of the NFA of 1996 also resulted in preventing mass shootings (Davey, 2016; Garfield, 2018). A decline in the rates of gun violence in Australia could be attributed to the comprehensive changes to gun laws. Opponents of the NFA of 1996 may argue that it had little or no effect on crime levels. According to Leigh and Neill (2010), countries which collect more firearms through buyback programmes are more likely to reduce their firearm-related deaths drastically than those that collect fewer firearms. Gun control is no longer a contentious issue in Australia; it rarely rose in current political debates. Most Australians regard guns as only suitable for use by farmers. Individual states and territories previously had firearm controls which were different until they were harmonized and linked with the NFA of 1996 in 1996.

The lessons South Africa can derive from Australia are that tougher gun laws and restricting gun ownerships are effective in limiting gun violence. The Australian NFA of 1996 restricted some of the legally owned firearms, coupled with a gun buyback programme. Their gun buyback programme managed to remove a many legally owned firearms which had a positive impact of reducing firearms in circulation. This was evident enough that a buyback programme could inspire licensed firearm holders to surrender their firearms and effectively limit the numbers in circulation. The attainment of strong and effective national gun control in Australia is truly a good story and provides an important lesson.

3.3.4 New-Zealand

Civilian firearm ownerships in New-Zealand are governed by the Arms Act 44 of 1983 and its subsidiaries, the Arms Regulations 1992 and Arms Amendment Act 1992. In New-Zealand firearm ownership is of no constitutional significance (Sherman, 2014), and is not a cherished right, but is based on merit rather than entitlement. Firearm licences are not issued for self-defence in New-Zealand. The New-Zealand law does not limit firearm ownership to its citizens only but allows every person who lives there and meets the requirements to apply. Section 23 of the Act prescribes 16 years of age as the maturity age to own a firearm for a basic A-category firearms licence and 18 years for high-powered firearms which require B-category endorsement licence. The applicant is required by law to undergo and pass a theoretical and practical proficiency test (Parker, 2011; Schraer, 2019) which includes a behavioural risk assessment before a firearm licence could be issued. Section 20(1) of the Arms Act, 1983 prohibits possession of a firearm without a licence. Conversely, Section 3(2) of the Arms Act 44 of 1983 allows the New Zealand law enforcement agencies to possess firearms without a licence or permit. Although the law regulating the possession of firearms in New-Zealand requires a relevant licence, there is no law demanding individual weapons to be registered (Kennedy, 2019; Menon, 2019; Schraer, 2019). Battersby (2019) states that the registration of firearms in New-Zealand is not mandatory in terms of the Arms Act 44 of 1983.

In New-Zealand only firearm owners are required to be licensed and not each firearm (Cooke & Devlin, 2019; Greenfield & Westbrook, 2019; Kolirin, 2019). Both the firearms licence holders and the individual firearms are supposed to be registered. This irregular practice could create a major problem of the country's authority not being able to account to the number of firearms in civilian possession, due to the deficiency of the official firearm record keeping database. According to Section 20(2) of the Arms Act 44 of 1983, a standard A-category firearm licence does not allow a person to own all classes of weapons like pistols, or military-style semi-automatics (MSSA) which require B-category endorsement licences and E-category licences respectively. Access to these types of firearms is approved with compelling reasons which include membership of a pistol shooting club and/ or participating in professional sport shooting. New Zealand firearm control permits ownership of an unlimited number of firearms in relation to firearms for sporting activities. According to Schraer (2019) and Battersby (2019), a firearm licence holder in New-Zealand can own as many firearms as possible. The Act is supposed to limit the number of firearms a licence holder can acquire to limit the proliferation of firearms in the country.

New-Zealand firearm control subjects all licences given under the Act to a renewal process after a specific period depending on the type of licence acquired (Parker, 2011). Firearm licences in New-Zealand have a validity period of 10 years, unless it is rescinded or surrendered (s 25(1)). A firearm trader's licence has a one-year validity period (s 8). Section 25(2) of the Arms Act 44 of 1983 provides that a firearm licence issued to a New-Zealand visitor has a lifespan of one year which is renewable until such firearm licence holder leaves the country. According to Lopez (2019b), New-Zealand's firearm regulation is considered stringent relative to the USA, but there is still room for improvement. This means that the Act is not immune to criticism. Apparently, developments are required, particularly on the recordkeeping of firearms and the regulation of MSSA or restricted weapons. McPhedran (2019) states that the stringency of firearm regulations is mainly assessed by the limitations they place on the number of licensed firearm ownerships. According to Kennedy (2019), New Zealand has few firearm ownerships and the crime levels involving firearms are generally low. Sands (2019) states that licensed civilian firearm ownership in New-

Zealand stand at 1.5 million, which equates an average of 0.3 per person of which an estimated total of 13 500 are MSSA rifles. New-Zealand firearms availability figure is still considered high as relative to Australia, despite it being low (Kolirin, 2019).

The easy access of either illicit or legal firearms influences the levels of firearm-related crimes negatively. Martin (2018) postulates that New-Zealand is safe; though, according to Sadeque (2019), safety is not defined merely by the absence of violence but includes feeling comfortable and well in any given environment. Lopez (2019c) further states that New-Zealand government swiftly overhauled its gun laws when the situation dictated. For instance, it took a single random shooting spree which occurred on 15 March 2019 at two houses of worship in Christchurch, New-Zealand for action to be taken and strengthen its firearm laws. Britton (2019) and Schraer (2019) point out that a total of 50 Muslim worshippers were killed and fifty other people were injured following the 15 March 2019 shootings in Christchurch. One of the fifty injured people, Mr Zekeriya Tuyan, later succumbed to his injuries suffered in the attack, increasing the number of deaths to fifty-one (Gumrukcu, 2019).

According to Mann, Nguyen and Gregory (2019), the two consecutive shootings at churches were carried out by a single shooter, the 28-year-old Australian-born Brenton Tarrant, with his five legally obtained firearms which were all found in his car at the crime scene. The assailant's first firearm licence was issued in November 2017 (Wall, 2017) and he had since legally owned an arsenal of firearms which comprised two shotguns, two self-loading rifles and a lever-action rifle (Baer & Mack, 2019; Kolirin, 2019). According to Small (2019), the shooter Brenton Tarrant legally obtained the firearm licence under the New-Zealand Arms Act 44 of 1983.

The indiscriminate mosques attacks prompted the New-Zealand government to strengthen the country's existing firearm legislation swiftly (Greenfield & Westbrook, 2019), as an intervention to curb the incidents of mass casualties involving guns. The firearm legislation reform was widely welcomed by many people in New Zealand, including firearm licence holders. The view held was that the country's existing firearm laws inadequately controlled access to those high-capacity firearms, putting the public

at risk (Sands, 2019). The New-Zealand government reached consensus three days after the mass church shooting to effect amendments on the firearm legislation (Mahtani, 2019). Kolirin (2019) opines that in New-Zealand there is no intractable debate over firearm ownership. Mervosh (2019) states that the New Zealand government made a public announcement six days later about its instant proposal to amend the country's firearm policy. The New-Zealand Governor-general, Patsy Reddy, subsequently ratified the new firearm law on 11 April 2019 to come into effect. The new firearm law officially outlawed MSSA, assault rifles, including related parts like a butt, stock, silencer, sight, large capacity magazines and ammunitions which could be used to construct prohibited firearms (Mervosh, 2019). A brief firearm amnesty and a compensation programme were introduced to facilitate the removal of the prohibited firearms and their parts from circulation. According to Engle (2019), New Zealand will experience a challenge in their endeavour to get back all the now-banned weapons, given the country's lack of an accurate firearm database which confirms the correct number of restricted firearms in circulation. The new firearm laws introduced harsher penalties for offences involving prohibited weapons.

There are numerous positive lessons to be learnt from the New-Zealand firearm control. One of the lessons South Africa can learn from New-Zealand is that the country should advance the interests of citizens first, as those overrides everything. South Africa should also copy the good practices in other countries, for example, New-Zealand's approaches to gun control are inspired by its neighbouring country, Australia, to strengthen its firearm laws. The other lesson is that it is not impossible for a government to take swift action and strengthen any policy that poses a safety risk to society. It is unsafe not to regulate registration of firearms, like in New-Zealand and the USA, as those countries will have no record of the firearms in circulation. Registration of all firearms should be mandatory. The police in New-Zealand are not regularly armed but can still perform their official duties. The firearm lobby group in New-Zealand does not influence firearms policy decisions unlike what happens in the USA.

3.3.5 Botswana

Firearms in Botswana are regulated through the Arms and Ammunition Act 20 of 1979, which is administered by the Commissioner of Police (Molomo, Osei-Hwedie, Sebudubudu, Taylor & Whitman, 2004). Firearm ownership in Botswana is of no constitutional value. The Act controls arms and ammunition regarding possession, manufacture, as well as local and international trading. Furthermore, information involving arms and ammunition is manually documented at the Central Arms Registry (CAR). It could be said that the manual record keeping system often makes it difficult for the police to keep track of the registered firearms. The introduction of an electronic database may assist in keeping the stored firearm records accurate. The minimum legal age required for applying for a gun in Botswana is 18 years. Botswana laws are restricting ownership of handguns and fully automatic weapons by private citizens (Cross, De Caris, Hennop & Urquhart, 2003; Molomo et al., 2004), but private citizen possession of rifles and shotguns is regulated. However, few handguns are still in the hands of private citizens which were licenced prior to the law revision. Furthermore, only a registered dealer can trade, purchase and sell any arms and ammunition. The primary attention of firearms control in Botswana is on controlling lawful civilian ownership and use of firearms. Only a minimum of 400 firearm licences are issued per year, comprising 200 rifles and 200 shotguns. The Act makes provision for a maximum of three firearms per individual with a limited number of 100 ammunitions per annum (Molomo et al., 2004). Botswana has a total of 23 security companies which are government-owned, apart from Securicor Botswana which existed before the law was enacted in 1998. In terms of the Act, police and security guards are prohibited from carrying firearms. Despite having a stringent firearm control, Botswana, like other countries, experiences some incidents of violent offences such as car hijacking, robbery and murder. Generally violent crime rates in Botswana are minimal, relative to contiguous African countries (Gressier, 2015). Seemingly there is no conviction that allowing the police and security companies to carry firearms will combat the increase in violent crime.

Lesson learned from Botswana is that it is possible for the police and security companies to operate effectively without carrying any firearms. Botswana limits the approval of new firearm applications to 400 licences per year which is important for reducing opportunities for the unlimited spreading of firearms. Civilians are limited to own three firearms which exclude automatic weapons and handguns and how much ammunition they may own. This possibly limits the flow of firearms to the illicit market. The weakness identified in the Act is the use of bookkeeping systems for firearms records. This practice is time-consuming, inherently inaccurate and not reliable. It is likely to create a loophole by not being able to ascertain the permissible number of firearms an individual already has quickly.

3.3.6 Lesotho

The Internal Security (Arms and Ammunition) Act 17 of 1966 is a legal framework regulating firearm ownerships and possessions in Lesotho. Firearm ownership rights in Lesotho are not contained in the Constitution. Firearms in Lesotho come from different sources. A high number of illicit firearms in circulation in Lesotho are understood to have emanated from the military mutiny experienced in the country during 1998/1999. South Africa is perceived as the primary source of both legal and illegal firearms in Lesotho. Record keeping of legally owned firearms in Lesotho are registered on a paper-based system at the Central Firearms Registry (CFR). This kind of practice may lead an inaccurate number of registered firearms on the database. Therefore, one may suggest that the system should be reviewed, and an electronic database be considered. For example, the Act stipulates that firearm licences must be renewed every year (Pretorius, 2008); however, the CFR assigned only two people responsible for ensuring that the data base is correct, which is impractical. This may indicate that in practice annual renewals are not feasible and might not take place. Cross et al. (2003) believe that availability of an electronic verification system makes renewal easier by simplifying the process. According to Cross et al. (2003), Lesotho has a basic licensing procedure. However, it is riddled with discrepancies which include: no restriction on civilian ownership and use of military type firearms; competency testing not required; no limitation on quantity of weapons and

ammunitions; limited restraints are placed on how, when and the location where a firearm can be used and no controls on relinquishing firearms. There is no prohibition on leasing, lending, pawning and pledging.

The legally permitted maturity age to own a firearm is 18 years. According to Cross et al. (2003) the Act does not explicitly put any restrictions on the access to firearms by civilians. However, private citizens are restricted from owning rifles, other than shotguns. Private security companies are permitted to use 7.65mm shotguns and 38 special revolvers when performing their official functions. The prevalent use of 9mm pistols in crime prompted the Lesotho government to disallow the military and police from being issued with 9mm pistols (Cross et al., 2003). Bopape (2014) postulates that the Lesotho Firearms Act 17 of 1966 demands community participation when processing a firearm ownership application. The applicant is required to obtain a letter of reference to seek a recommendation letter from the tribal leader before a firearm application can be considered. Lesotho's gun law does not prohibit firearm owners from hiring out their weapons to unlicensed people (Cross et al., 2003). Even if such a firearm is later used in crime, the court will not impose criminal responsibility on the gun owner for the acts of a third person. It could be alleged that an unlicensed person should only be allowed to possess and use a firearm while under the supervision of a licenced firearm holder. In Lesotho, the offence relating to possession of an unlicensed firearm carries a maximum direct imprisonment of less than a period of twelve months.

Lessons learned from the Lesotho gun control legislation is that a handwritten database is dysfunctional and unreliable. A weak firearm control system may increase the proliferation of firearms in the country. Such prevalence of firearms could be compounded by a relatively lenient sentence imposed for possession of illegal firearms. Unlawful possession of a firearm should carry a heavy sentence which will serve as a deterrent.

3.3.7 Namibia

The Arms and Ammunition Act 7 of 1996, implemented on 1 April 1998 is the legal

framework regulating firearms in Namibia. The Act was designed to manage and control civilian firearm ownership, possession and use, licensing firearms to traders, exporters and manufacturers, including explosives, ammunition and the destruction of arms (Boer, 2004). In Namibia firearm ownership rights do not enjoy constitutional protection (Chiringa, 2017; Kahiurika, 2019); however, its firearm legislation is considered less restrictive. Amakali (2018) dissents that Namibia's Arms and Ammunitions Act 7 of 1996 had always been stringent and strictly enforced. With reference to Section 3(1) of the Arms and Ammunition Act 7 of 1996, every Namibian citizen who is 18 years and older can obtain a firearm licence, provided that they meet all the requirements. The legal age requirement should be raised from 18 years to a higher age group which may be more mature and responsible to be entrusted with handling a firearm. Carboni (2013) and Johnson (2019) point out that the mind of a teenager of 18 years is not fully matured and cannot be regarded as grown-up until at the age of 25. The people who are 18 years of age are still young with youthful ideas and are mostly dependent on their guardians and may still need an extensive amount of parental care and help beyond that age.

The Act does not require firearm applicants to be subjected to any competency assessment for firearm proficiency and knowledge (Goitom, 2013). The Act does not make provision for methods to determine the applicant's competence in the handling and use of a firearm (Bopape, 2014; Pienaar, 2019). One would assume that a competency test is necessary and important, as it measures the applicant's comprehension level of the Act, as well as proficiency in the handling and use of a firearm. Such firearm knowledge and proficiency can only be established through prescribed theoretical and practical training upon which a competency certificate will be attained. The inclusion of such provision will ensure that the applicant undergoes competency tests and be declared competent in the use and handling before being issued with a firearm licence. Firearm licence issuance should be competency-based. Firearm applicants should demonstrate proficiency in the handling and use of firearms. Section 40 of the Act prescribes that fingerprints should be taken of first-time applicants for background checks on possible criminal records. This implies that no fingerprints taking is required of people who apply for additional firearms to

supplement their arsenals. This practice is creating a loophole in the firearm regulatory system which could be abused by people with a history of alcohol or drug abuse, violent behaviour, homicidal or suicidal tendencies or poor mental health. Only applicants who are in good standing in society, assessed and qualified should be issued with firearm licences. Currently there are no other comprehensive personal clearance methods applied to determine the applicant's fitness to be trusted with a firearm, except by taking fingerprints. Kahiurika (2019) states that, in Namibia, any person with a clean criminal record can acquire a licensed firearm, provided they can afford it. This means that the current licensing firearms procedure is relaxed (Shinovene, 2013). Amakali (2018) contends that not all applicants who met the requirements were issued with firearm licences. Fingerprints should be taken from all firearm applicants and background checks should be extended to include interviewing family members, neighbours and friends to ascertain applicants' suitability. The applicants' behavioural threat assessment will mitigate the risk and ensure that only people who are beyond reproach in terms of morality and propriety are issued with firearm licences. Third-party character references are important to determine the applicant's reputation and background history.

Section 5 of the Namibia's Arms and Ammunitions Act 7 of 1996 does not stipulate a firearm licence validity period, except to say it remains valid until it is revoked through transfer of ownership or declaration of the licence holder as unfit to possess a firearm. The Act does not require firearm licences to be renewed, once issued it remains valid until the licence is terminated due to undesirable changes in the owner's personal circumstances. This means that the firearm licence validity does not expire, once issued it is permanent until it is cancelled. The renewal of a firearm licence is required after a set validity period, as personal circumstances which could affect an applicant's fitness keep on changing. Through the renewal process such undesirable personal changes can be discovered before a firearm licence is reissued.

Section 8(1) of the Act allows a licensed person to lend a firearm to an unlicensed person for a period of 21 days without informing the authorities. This means that the firearm licence holder can give a licensed firearm to a person who has no proficiency

in the use and handling of a firearm. This is in contrast with Section 2 of Namibia's Arms and Ammunitions Act 7 of 1996 which expressly prohibits possession of a firearm without an appropriate licence. According to Itamalo (2016), this vacuum in the current legal provisions is exploited by private security companies who recruit and give firearms to guards who do not have firearm licences and who are not formally trained in the use and safe handling of firearms. In Namibia, security officers are not required to have licences or permits to possess and use a firearm while performing official duties (Gumedze, 2015). Gumedze (2015) states that the condition is worsened by the absence of regulations in the industry which govern the use of firearms by privately owned protection services. This means that there is no legislation that compels a security officer to undertake training in firearms. It could be argued that the authorization letter for an individual to possess a firearm should be issued by a competent licensing authority after due verification of antecedents to avoid possession and use of firearms by unlicensed and undesirable people. Licence holders should only be allowed to lend out their firearms to an individual holding a firearm licence. In so doing, criminal elements will be prevented from obtaining possession of licensed firearms from licence holders.

The number of legally owned firearms in Namibia had significantly increased since 2004, including the number of firearms stolen or lost (Remmert, 2017; Chiringa, 2017; Pienaar, 2019; Tjitemisa, 2019). This means that Namibia experienced an exponential increase in firearm ownerships, both legal and illegal. The Namibian Police (NamPol) and government were concerned about the increase of both the ownership and losses of firearms, which posed a risk to the safety of the society. Denver (2008) and Remmert (2017) further state that the proliferation of civilian firearm ownerships affects the levels of firearm-related crimes. The easy accessibility of guns breeds a condition for more armed violence, which will harm the country's development efforts.

Due to the public outcry over the increased firearm-related crimes in Namibia, the Auditor General's office was commissioned to conduct an independent inspection on issuing and management of firearms for the period of the 2009/2010 to 2011/2012 financial years (Shinovene, 2015). The audit findings confirmed the high availability of

illegal firearms in circulation and further revealed an escalation in violent crimes ranging from murders and robberies which involved the use of firearms (Shinovene, 2015; Remmert, 2017). The increase in the number of those incidents could largely be ascribed to the easy accessibility of firearms. The auditor general's findings identified the current firearm regulation as being weak and porous and facilitating the widespread issuing of firearm licences to undeserving people (Tjitemisa, 2019). This means that the investigation uncovered some shortcomings and weaknesses in the firearm regulation which contributed to the poor control of firearms. Shinovene (2015) mentions that the investigation proposed that government should effect some changes on the Act to remedy the situation. The Auditor General recommended the existing legal age limit of acquiring a firearm to be raised and to introduce stricter personal clearance and improved background checks to prevent the proliferation of firearms (Remmert, 2017). Other recommendations were to amend the policy deficits to include a mandatory competency and fitness evaluation for all applicants wishing to possess and use firearms. The researcher would add that the firearm competency assessment should be reviewed periodically to ascertain the applicant's fitness to possess and own a firearm.

Haidula (2015) states that, after the investigation was concluded, the Auditor General, Junias Kandjeke presented the final audit report in Parliament. The report outlined the key findings which were exhaustively interrogated. According to Denver (2008) and Ngutjinazo (2019), the evidence of increased civilian ownership and losses of firearms prompted the Ministry of Safety and Security to undertake extensive public consultative meetings between 2008 and 2016 with various key stakeholders such as government institutions, Namibian Arms and Ammunition Dealers, Namibian professional hunters' associations, traditional leaders and regional governors to discuss a review of the law. The purpose of those meetings was to present the Auditor General's proposed law reforms to key stakeholders, exchange information and seek their inputs to find an amicable solution to the identified safety and security risk. The meetings were instrumental in ascertaining stakeholders' perspectives on the firearm policy. During the discussion period, the law's deficiencies and gaps were identified, exhaustively deliberated upon and they expressly supported the proposals to improve

the content of the bill to reflect the object and intent of the firearm policy adequately. It was generally agreed that existing firearm regulations must be reviewed to address the weaknesses. A finalised draft of Arms and Ammunition Amendment Bill was referred to Parliament in August 2018 for consideration and subsequent tabling (Smith, 2018).

Lessons drawn from Namibian firearm legislation is that a law that is so relaxed is bound to be abused. Firearm ownership in Namibia is not enshrined in the Constitution, but its firearm legislation permits every person to acquire a firearm licence. Something of great concern is that the firearm legislation permits a person who is 18 years of age to acquire a legal firearm. This legal permitting age is very low and poses a security risk, as most young people are suggestible, and they can easily be manipulated into becoming involved in anti-social behaviour. The lax firearms law facilitates the widespread availability of firearms in the country. The weakness in the law is to make it legal for a licence holder to lend a firearm to an individual without licence. The loopholes in the legislation are often targeted and abused by criminals. That firearm law does not regulate the borrowing of firearms by persons without firearm licences.

The universal firearm legislations were discussed in section 3.3. Several countries like the UK, Australia, the USA, New-Zealand, Botswana, Lesotho and Namibia were selected with the focus on the dissimilarities of their firearm legislations. These countries have different firearm legislations which vary in strengths, existing figures of civilian firearm ownerships, crime statistics and community perceptions concerning firearms control. The firearm policies of some countries are regarded as stringent while others are purported to be weak. Factors that influence countries to reform their existing firearm policies were also deliberated.

3.4 International debates on firearm legislation

Firearm regulations differ extensively in each country as well as the debated arguments for laws restricting firearm ownerships. The debate over firearms control is

contentious and has been a global and emotive issue for quite some time. This is because of the different views held by opposing groups about the use of firearms. Debates around firearm control frequently point towards the question whether firearms provide security or do they provide a security risk (Pérez-Peña, 2015). Pro-proponents of firearms liken firearm control policies as a method of limiting firearm ownerships, while the opponents regard them as a measure of removing firearms from criminals. Others believe that the antidote to firearm crimes is firearm control while others believe that the converse is true. Some countries have a restrictive firearm control policy, while others adopted more permissive legislation.

3.4.1 Increasing gun availability reduces crime

The theory that more guns deter crime is prominently proffered by individuals opposed to firearm regulations. This idea is common in the USA, given the massive scale of gun ownership there. The USA has a unique violent crime problem with high levels of lethality in the form of mass shootings. At first glance it might seem obvious that firearms are the main cause of the problem. In 1982 the USA Department of Justice funded James Wright and Peter Rossi to conduct ground-breaking research (Faria, 2012). In the beginning, Wright and Rossi (1994) believed that stringent gun control discourages crime, and their results led to the conclusion that weapon-carrying citizens create a substantial restraining effect on criminally motivated persons.

The study by Gius (2014) gives credence to Wright and Rossi's (1994) findings by establishing that a high presence of firearms in an area causes a decrease in violent crimes. Their findings suggest that allowing widespread civilian ownership of firearms would thwart the realization of the criminal's intended goal. In other words, widespread private firearm ownership is beneficial. Vizzard (2015) argues that, though their report has confirmed a correlation between armed civilians and being a deterrent to the criminally inclined person, this alone does not prove a direct causal link between these two factors. Correlation does not indicate cause, but it does suggest it. The assertion may serve to weaken the arguments that widespread accessibility of firearms gives rise to high rates of violent crimes. One could also argue that the proliferation of

licensed firearms in the USA suggest that purchasing a gun will much rather cause tragedy than protection (Geffen, 2013). After they had judiciously studied all existing research hitherto, researchers found no convincing scholarly evidence that America's many guns control laws had translated to a decline in gun violence (Lopez, 2017). One may argue that the reason behind the failure could be attributed to lack of national uniform laws between states and even between local council areas.

Some studies have discovered evidence supporting the assertion that increasing gun accessibility causes a significant decline in violent crime. Such evidence is provided by Lott (2010); Hemenway and Miller (2000); Sorenson and Berk (2001); Duggan (2001); Martin and Legault (2005); Miller et al. (2002); Cook and Ludwig (2006); La Valle (2013); Moody et al. (2014); Webster, Crifasi and Vernick (2014). They further argued that the introduction of shall-issue laws has brought about a preventive effect on criminal activities for fear of retaliation by armed victims. Lott (2010) states that countries with more firearm ownerships experience lower rates of violent crimes. One could suggest that more gun ownerships mean less crime and enhanced personal protection. This does not mean that removing the gun from the equation will end violence, but it may lessen its deadliness. According to Donohue and Ayres (2003), the fact that more citizens carry guns might persuade criminals to act hastily by shooting the victims first in fear of retaliation which might result in more injuries and possible deaths. Lott (2010) further mentions that denying widespread gun ownerships by law-abiding citizens might increase crime because they will be defenceless and easy targets for criminals. One could contend that fewer private gun ownerships mean less crime and that any weapons in possession of law-abiding citizens pose a danger to society. Furthermore, minimising firearm ownerships lessens the chances that criminals will get weapons.

Most people acquire legal firearms for self-protection, but at times those may endanger their lives. There is a great probability of being a target of criminal violence when carrying a firearm. Firearm owners might fall victims of their own firearms. Donohue (2003) challenged Lott's (2010) findings as unreliable, due to lack of evidence from the data he used which suggests that the data were fabricated. Rubin and Dezhbakhsh

(2003) also contend that Lott's (2010) study had inappropriately used imitation variables to manipulate the effects of concealed weapons permit laws which resulted in model misspecification. Similarly, Martin and Legault (2005) discovered discrepancies in the statistical model used in Lott and Mustard's (1997) study. However, Benson and Mast (2001) did not find any significant evidence suggesting that the uncontrolled oversight on aspects of security guard services had an influence on Lott and Mustard's (1997) study results. Other research studies suggest that firearm availability influences neither the decrease nor the increase rates of violent crimes (Kates & Polsby, 2000; Kovandzic & Marvell, 2003; Moody & Marvell, 2005; Aneja, Donohue & Zhang, 2014; Lang, 2016). Several studies conducted in other countries have proved that the innovation of more rigorous firearm controls can effectively reduce the levels of firearm deaths (Beautrais, Fergusson & Horwood, 2006; Leenaars & Lester, 2001; Kapusta, Etzersdorfer, Krall & Sonneck, 2007; Chapman et al., 2006; Kalesan, Mobily, Keiser, Fagan, & Galea, 2016; De Souza, Macinko, Alencar, Malta, & De Morais Neto, 2007).

Some studies give the impression that the "shall issue" law which grant citizens the absolute right to acquire permits for concealed weapons may be responsible for the high rates of homicide involving firearms (Grambsch, 2008; Rosengart, Cummings, Nathens, Heagerty, Maier & Rivara, 2005; French & Heagerty, 2008; La Valle & Glover, 2012). Vizzard (2015) stresses that violent crime rates in America went down between 1992 and 2012, regardless of the growing number of firearms in the country. A distinction must be made of the legality or otherwise of firearm prevalence levels. Illegal guns are mostly used in criminal activities (Collins et al., 2017), but legally acquired firearms may be relevant in decreasing the levels of crime. Apparently, most firearms involved in criminal activities were illegally acquired (Megan, Parker, Scott & Wellford, 2017; Clark, 2018). On the contrary, Squires (2000) is of the view that both illegal and legal firearms are commonly used in criminal actions. According to Stolzenberg and D'Alessio (2000), a high concentration of illicit firearms has a huge impact on the levels of crime. It could be contended that there is no conclusive proof to back up the assertion that a proliferation of firearms has deterrent effects.

3.4.2 Increasing gun availability increases crime

Some speculative perceptions suggest that a proliferation of guns increases firearm-related crime rates (Cook, Harris, Ludwig, & Pollack, 2015; Braga, 2017; Metz, 2019). This finding is based on the belief that a firearm can probably give a potential aggressor more power and immobilize the victim from resisting attack (Cook & Pollack, 2017). Tark and Kleck (2004) contend that guns effectively provide protection, hence they are exceedingly treasured by individuals. Therefore, limiting accessibility of legal guns embolden criminals to attack the victims with ease. One could argue that there is no statistical proof to back up such claim. Lott (2010) also accentuates that making gun regulations permissive provides a powerful deterrent to all kinds of crimes. Those who disagree with these ideas may assert that firearms are more likely to endanger one's life than to provide protection. A study in Australia by Ozanne-Smith, Ashby, Newstead, Stathakis, and Clapperton (2004) discovered that the passage of gun regulation laws positively reduced the incidents of armed robbery and attempted murder. Van Kesteren (2014) has established a direct relationship between high levels of firearms possession and risk of victimisation. The chances of successfully protecting oneself with a firearm are very remote (Branas et al., 2009). If the findings of Lott (2010) are plausible, it means enacting regulations that deny gun possession and use will render law-abiding citizens defenceless who will then be left at the mercy of criminals. This means that potential victims will be deprived of their legal ability to defend themselves, thereby increasing the probability of a crime being successful. One presumably could argue that the rates of firearm deaths and injuries are connected to easy accessibility of firearms; thus, measures to regulate accessibility could reduce their use.

Stringent and well-enforced regulatory controls could assist in reducing gun availability by screening suitable people who may possess weapons and under which conditions. Ghatak (2001) argues that in the absence of stringent regulations on the accessibility of guns, criminals will easily obtain an arsenal of firearms. If gun laws are relaxed, criminals may have golden opportunities to obtain firearms, resulting in the proliferation of guns and increased incidents of violent crimes (Ghatak, 2001). One

may argue that all the firearm control regulations are ineffective because they concentrate on limiting law-abiding citizens access to firearms, rather than limiting supply to the pool of illegal firearms, and subsequently curbing violent crimes. Firearm owners repeatedly contended that strict regulations of civilian ownership of firearms have no bearing on the effect of crime but only strip them of their ability to defend themselves. It is held that having a firearm in one's possession does not offer an absolute guarantee for protection.

A study by Altbeker (1999) discovered that of three quarters of incidents involving armed victims; only 2% successfully defended themselves, while the rest were disarmed by the assailants. One may add that carrying a firearm may also aggravate the attack, causing unintended serious harm and even death to the victim. It could be argued that the number of defensive gun use may seem insignificant due to the difficulty in measuring them as they are seldom reported to the authorities. If firearms were difficult to get, there would be fewer firearm-related incidents. Without firearms criminals would have to use less lethal weapons, like knives. Firearms make it easier for the assailant to attack many people simultaneously than with a knife. According to Kirsten (2016), a 17-year study drawn on mortuary data indicated that stringent firearms control is the reason behind the fewer firearm killings of people in South Africa. GFSA states that during 1999, 45 per cent of murder victims were shot and thereafter the figure drastically dropped to 33 per cent. The study indicated that between 1997 and 2007, gun-related deaths dropped more than 60 per cent (Kirsten, 2016). It was during this time that stricter firearm control law reforms were introduced. But proponents of firearms argue that laws alone are no panacea to curb gun violence.

The possibility exists that the citizens acquire licensed firearms because they lost confidence in government's capability to offer them protection. It could be stated that most of the gun-related crimes involve illegal firearms and the focus of the police should be on confiscating those. One may argue that hundreds of illegal firearms are confiscated by police, but it does not seem as if the number of illegal guns are reducing. This may indicate that the police are dealing with the symptom, rather than with the disease, which is to limit the legal firearm ownerships. To deal with the firearm-

related crimes decisively, the police should start by tackling the deeply rooted firearm culture.

Criminals choose guns, as they are regarded as reliable and more effective weapons to use in committing crime (Kynoch, 2005); while civilian owners use them to resist criminal acts. Firearms are tools perceived to shift the equilibrium of power in a sudden attack to the complete advantage of the armed party. In modern South Africa, this imbalance of power is most often needed by criminals to enhance the expropriation of material possessions or to have an upper hand in a fight. Criminals often use firearms to scare and subdue their victims (Holtmann, 2011). Cook and Pollack (2017) indicate that the main aim for criminals to use firearms is to neutralise the threat of any possible resistance by the victims or to prevent escape or raising any alarm for help. Perhaps, one can argue that it cannot be correct that gun ownership deters crime. Various studies have confirmed that areas with widespread availability of civilian firearm ownership tend to have an increase in murder rates (LaFollette, 2001; Siegel et al., 2013; Duggan, 2001). This suggests that the prevalence of firearm ownerships in an area is likely to increase the levels of murder. Therefore, restricting civilian gun possession could significantly reduce the murder rates. Cook, Ludwig, Venkatesh and Braga (2007) stress that most privately owned firearms are diverted to illegal market. Another perception by Kleck (1997) is that firearm availability has no significant influence on the rates of crime, while other studies have established a relationship between firearm availability and crime (Hemenway & Miller, 2000; Hemenway, 2004).

3.5 South African firearms regulation

South Africa has a policy that regulate ownership, possession and use of firearms (see paragraph 2.3 above). Firearms are inherently dangerous, irrespective whether they are legal or illegal. Firearms proliferation is a global concern and is considered the primary consequence of firearm violence. It is for that reason that there should be regulations against their abuse, criminal use and proliferation.

In South Africa there are high numbers of unlicensed firearms in the hands of individuals which are veritable enablers of criminal violence (Staff Writer, 2015; Chitambo, 2019) (see section 1.2). Violent crimes in South Africa appear to be an acceptable normal lifestyle (Le Roux & Mokhele, 2011). Firearm-related fatalities in South Africa are considered the highest globally, after the USA (Staff Writer, 2015). Gamba (2000) asserts that the easy accessibility of firearms in RSA is the driver behind the high levels of violent crime. Alzheimer (2008) and Lopez (2019d) add that the more firearms prevalent in the country, the higher the risk of firearm-violent incidences. This implies that the proliferation of firearms negatively affects the levels of crimes. It could be stated that the same applies to areas where firearm regulations are lenient.

The problem of firearms in RSA has a history which dates to the Apartheid-era which was vehemently opposed by the anti-apartheid movements. According to Offutt (2015), during the period before the first democratic political contestation in April 1994, the RSA saw an unprecedented increasing level of political instability in which many lives were lost. Communities in townships became despondent because of lack of trust that the police could protect them. This culminated in the public forming self-protection units (SPU) and self-defence units (SDU) in an endeavour to defend themselves against state-initiated attacks. The upsurge in conflict created a demand for firearms for the insurgent groups. The SDU and SPU members were armed by political formations and illegal firearms were trafficked into the country (Azazi, 2011). The apartheid government police clandestinely armed cultural leaders in the former Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei (TBVC) and criminal individuals with the explicit intention to thwart the efforts of anti-apartheid parties. Though the trafficked firearms were initially meant for political battles some criminal elements emerged. Illegal firearms became abundantly available and led to an escalation in criminality and personal violence in different areas (Lamb, 2017). At the end of the conflict many firearms were never surrendered to the State for destruction, and possibly are still in circulation and used to commit violent crimes.

Lamb (2018) and McKay (2020) assert that there are different ways in which illegal

firearms could be spread widely. Such sources range from loss, theft, corruption and permeable borders. Lamb (2018) attributes the widespread availability of firearms to several factors such as dysfunctional state structures, improper control of armouries at national defence bases and insufficient monitoring of security companies. Dordley (2018) states that the multiplying of illegal firearms is sponsored mainly by copious supplies from law enforcement agents and military personnel. One could argue that law enforcement agents are not the sole sources of illegal firearms, while still acknowledging their significant contribution. Bopape (2014) states that firearms leak from official sources to illegal possession through loss and theft.

Hemenway, Azrael and Miller (2017) and Cook (2018) postulate that theft is the most preferred method of acquiring illegal firearms by criminals. According to Lamb (2018), illegal firearms are acquired from law enforcers, other security agencies and civilians. Lamb (2018) further states that the main supplier of illegal firearms is civilian ownership. Others are obtained through corrupt dealings with law enforcers. A typical incident recently occurred in Cape Town where firearms were stolen from the SAPS under questionable circumstances (Dolley, 2017b). Dolley (2017b) further mentions that 33 firearms, which mostly consist of revolvers and pistols, were stolen from police custody from two police stations in Cape Town. Apparently, those firearms were stolen from securely locked steel containers in storerooms at Mitchells Plain and the Bellville police premises in Cape Town. According to the former Minister of Police, Fikile Mbalula, 18 of the stolen 33 firearms were handed in as exhibits and 15 belonged to the SAPS. The former Police Minister alluded to police corruption as the driving force behind the missing firearms which are destined to be smuggled to gangsters. In other words, criminals have infiltrated the police.

The former Police Minister's suspicion could be valid, as former SAPS Colonel Chris Prinsloo is currently in jail for giving over 2 000 guns and ammunition to criminals (Thamm, 2016). Most of those smuggled firearms were used by gangs in the Western Cape (Dolley, 2017b). Investigation had established that at least 1 066 murders in the Western Cape were linked to 900 of the estimated 2 400 firearms sold by former Colonel Prinsloo (Moeti, 2017). The investigation also revealed that between 2010 and

2016 a total of 261 children lost their lives from firearms smuggled to criminals by corrupt police officials.

In 2011 the police top management admitted in Parliament that 20 429 weapons were lost from the police since April 2004 (Steenkamp, 2011). Former Lieutenant-General Gary Kruser presented firearm recovery figures in Parliament which indicated that a total of 4 810 firearms were concurrently recovered. According to Dolley (2017a), most of the firearms stolen from the SAPS are sold in the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal where they are possibly used in killings involving gangsters, politicians and the taxi industry. The former Police Minister, Fikile Mbalula, reported in Parliament that 2 270 police firearms were lost and stolen between 2014/2015 and 2016/2017 (Capazorio, 2017). The breakdown of lost firearms per financial year was 743 in 2014/2015, 767 in 2015/16 and 760 in 2016/17.

Besent (2019) points out that a total of 785 police firearms were transferred to the illicit market in 2017/2018 as a result of theft. In 2018/2019 a further 505 firearms were lost from police custody. According to Brogden (2005), the public have a perception that there is a blurring thin line between peace and anarchy in the SAPS. They profess to defend the citizens and assure public safety, while on the other hand they provide firearms to criminals. This implies that the SAPS have double standards in that they fight and promote violent crimes simultaneously. Those who disagree may assert that only a handful of SAPS members are involved in criminal activities, while the majority take extraordinary measures to prevent people from acquiring illegal firearms. They act as coercive vanguards of state authority by decisively enforcing restrictive firearm control legislation and disarmament measures, including arresting their co-workers in conflict with the law.

Table 3.1: Stolen/lost Firearms from SAPS custody between 2014/2015 and 2018/2019. This table reflects only SAPS firearm losses. All firearms including SAPS's losses (See table 1.1).

Financial Year	Lost Stolen Total
2014/2015	743
2015/2016	767
2016/2017	760
2017/2018	800
2018/2019	607
Total	3 677

Source: South African Police Service 2019

The above table depicts a trend of stolen or lost firearms from SAPS custody over a five-year period. In South Africa some of the firearms circulating in the illicit market are stolen from SAPS custody. Such firearms are amongst those being used in criminal activities. Between 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 the number of police stolen firearms drastically decreased from 800 to 607. The decrease is attributed to a smaller number of attacks on SAPS members in which firearms were robbed, coupled with proper compliance with prescriptions by members.

Malam (2014) adds that permeable borders and local production also contribute to the proliferation of firearms. The porous borders make the illegal trade in firearms virtually risk-free as people easily cross the official borders with illegal firearms. Aning (2005) states that the origin of illegal firearms includes those imported, corrupt leakage from government institutions and security companies. According to Hennop, Jefferson and MacLean (2001) the majority of firearms diverting into the illegal market originate from South Africa. The tidal flows of firearms are also feeding increasing violent crime in the country. One can add that the widespread availability of firearms in RSA could be a legacy of the political violence.

The RSA is experiencing serious challenges of widespread availability of both licit and

illicit firearms, which directly and indirectly aids the growing spectre of firearm-related crimes. The firearm control debates in South Africa prominently surfaced in the post 1994 political contestation and resulted in a 24-hour amnesty being declared by the government on 16 December 1994 to hand over illegal and unwanted weapons voluntarily (Kirsten, 2005). Since 1994, the government of South Africa has developed political will and commitment to initiate processes of reforming the then firearm legislation to be stricter and to limit access to firearms, aimed at addressing firearm-related crimes.

Masters (2016) states that most individuals obtained licensed firearms for the purpose of self-defence; however, Roseveare (2017) postulates that most firearm holders lack competency to protect themselves effectively. The discussion regarding firearms and whether they offer protection is debated with contradicting conclusions. Some people believe that the widespread accessibility of firearms promotes firearm-related crimes, while others hold the view that firearms are necessary to provide security (Pierre, 2019). According to Raphelson (2018), licensed firearm holders seldom use their firearms successfully in self-defence. One may be pardoned to think that the high violence crime situation in South Africa may be encouraging people to acquire firearms for self-defence which could be the source of the wide spectrum of gun ownerships. Violence crimes may be the force driving the growing demands for civilian ownership of firearms. This could be a theory shared amongst opponents of firearm regulations, while the proponents believe that carrying weapons have high prospects of violent victimization. Though self-protective gun use may sometimes be successfully but chances of doing so are very minimal. That does not change the fact that carrying a firearm may instigate a criminal attack.

It is not likely that a licensed individual carrying a firearm could use it in self-defence during an attack, because in most cases such attack is carried out unexpectedly. Burnett (2015) contends that people who possess firearms for self-protection would hardly have their firearms taken. The other thing is that most civilian firearm licence holders do not always carry firearms around with them. Even when in their homes, their firearms are most of the time kept in the safes, which makes it difficult to access

them when attacked. As explained in Azrael and Hemenway (2000), firearms in the house are usually used to scare the partners. It could be stated that private firearms in the country make the citizens less safe. Doing away with firearms could have benefits, such as reduced levels of violent crimes and other socially related ills. According to Meek (2002), firearms in South Africa account for very high number of deaths, more than those lost through motor vehicle accidents.

Since the dawn of democracy in 1994, debates between the opponents and proponents of firearms have been common in RSA. Gould, Lamb, Mthembu-Salter, Nakana and Rubel (2004) state that as early as 1995, there was an increasing availability of firearms which contributed to the increase of violent crimes. Up to now, the involvement of firearms in violent crimes in RSA does not seem to cease, instead, it is ever- increasing. The rise of the levels of violent crimes could signify the widespread availability of firearms. According to Lamb (2018), the more the availability of firearms, the more violent crimes occur. Bopape (2014) postulates that most illegal firearms have their origin in legal ownerships. Lamb (2018) concurs with Bopape (2014) by saying that the high number of firearms in the illegal market that are involved in violent crimes were formerly legitimately manufactured and licensed. This means that the majority of illegal firearms started their 'lives' as legal firearms before being transferred to the illicit pool. The devastating effects of firearm-related crimes are common in most countries, hence the ever reforming of gun control measures. Despite the high violent crime levels in the RSA, little research is conducted concentrating specifically on examining the detrimental effects of firearms.

3.6 The strategic plan for the South African Police Services

The strategic plan is a five-year governmental managing activity which gives guidance on key concepts that ought to be considered by departments during the development of Annual Performance Plans (APP). The strategic plan finds its expression from the government's medium-term strategic framework. The Strategic objective for visible policing component is to curb all forms of crimes through preventative and reactive policing (SAPS, 2014/2019). One could argue that this objective is self-contradicting,

because it promises to perform opposing actions of reactive and responsive policing simultaneously.

The Strategic Plan 2020-2025 provides the SAPS' strategic management which covers a five-year period. The APP, drawn from the Strategic Plan, reflects the policing priorities and objectives which the SAPS pledges to pursue in a specific financial year. In terms of national treasury regulations 2005, each Department's Strategic Plan must have purposes, desired results, indicators, targets and programme outputs. Recovery of illegal firearms is always the apex policing priority for the SAPS. Illegal firearms are continually acknowledged as drivers of increased crime rates involving the use of firearms. It may be said that to address the widespread availability of illegal firearms effectively attention should be focused on the reduction of accessibility to legal firearms. Legal firearms market is supposedly feeding the illegal market.

3.7 The SAPS Firearm Strategy

The SAPS has implemented a Firearm Strategy during the 2001/2002 financial year with the intention to decrease the involvement of firearms in violent criminalities (Sabala, 2004). The SAPS is also the custodian of the FCA 60 of 2000. It is therefore responsible for enforcing the law regarding firearms and ensuring that only licit firearms are available within the country.

In 2003 the SAPS undertook a focused approach against illicit firearms and worked hard to stem them out and checked licensed firearm holders' conformity with the AAA 75 of 1969 legislation in terms of firearms handling (Meek & Stott, 2004). According to Gould et al. (2004), the primary objective of Operation Sethunya was to conduct an audit of firearms issued in terms of the AAA 75 of 1969, including establishing the level of compliance with the AAA by licensed firearm holders. It focused specifically on testing compliance with the provisions of the AAA 75 of 1969 and tracing illegal firearms. The SAPS established a five-pillar strategy aimed at addressing the widespread availability of firearms (Gould & Lamb, 2004) in preparation for the introduction of the FCA 60 of 2000 (Meek & Stott, 2004). Key amongst the priorities of

the SAPS' five-pillar strategy is pillar 3, which focuses on curbing the widespread proliferation of firearms by eradicating unauthorised firearms from circulation (Meek & Stott, 2004; Kirsten, 2005). Operation Sethunya was initiated as a mechanism to achieve that desired objective and it ran from 1 April to August 2003. The primary purposes of Operation Sethunya were to crack down on illegal firearms and organized crime through tracing illegal firearms and investigating whether firearms owned by legal firearm holders followed the SAPS standards. Operation Sethunya was intended to enhance the SAPS firearm strategy to focus exclusively on stemming the widespread availability of firearms.

Operation Sethunya was the best operation which focused primarily on retrieving illegal firearms from circulation ever conducted by the SAPS (Meek & Stott, 2004). Lamb (2017) states that the conventional but intense activities of cordon-and-search and roadblocks were applied to execute Operation Sethunya. The successes of weapons and ammunitions confiscated during operation Sethunya were incredibly overwhelming (Meek & Stott, 2004; Lamb, 2015). Lamb (2017) postulates that violent crimes involving firearms were also reduced during the period of Operation Sethunya. After the termination of Operation Sethunya, firearm recoveries diminished (Lamb, 2015). It could be stated that the efforts to eradicate the widespread availability of illegal firearms are frustrated by the high number of guns stolen from legal owners on a daily basis. Control at the source should be strengthened to break the chain of supply.

Kirsten (2007) states that Operation Sethunya was repeated in 2005 during which firearm amnesty was extended from 1 April to June 2005. The 2005 firearm amnesty was conducted to augment the implementation of the FCA 60 of 2000 (Shung-King, Proudlock & Michelson, 2005). Operation Sethunya II was introduced to coincide with the 2005 firearm amnesty as a method underpinning the implementation of the invigorated FCA 60 of 2000. It could be argued that Operation Sethunya was not repeated despite its impressive successes because the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Safety and Security (PPCSS) felt that it was distracting the SAPS from fully implementing the FCA 60 of 2000, which was in its early implementation stage.

The PPCSS, as an oversight body, wanted the SAPS to redirect their effort on successfully implementing the FCA 60 of 2000. The PPCSS had a legal duty to make sure that the FCA 60 of 2000 is applied. The SAPS was delaying in finalizing the formulation of the Regulations to the FCA 60 of 2000, which were necessary to give effect to the FCA 60 of 2000. The process of formulating the Regulations to the FCA 60 of 2000 was in pillar 1 of the SAPS firearm strategy, whereas Operation Sethunya was the approach of addressing pillar 3. There was also a delay in assembling the machinery required for the implementation of the Act in the form of resources.

The SAPS have developed and implemented various strategic interventions in Gauteng Province, targeted at reducing crime and opportunities for criminality, because of lack of precise policing operations which were effective in dealing with crime (Newham, 2009). Strategic interventions such as Operation Iron Fist and the Gauteng Integrated Aggravated Robbery Strategy were among those implemented. Operation Iron Fist lasted for a semester which was from July until December 2006. Its main objective was to stop the increase in certain crime categories, through increasing police visibility on the streets (Cachalia, 2007). All Police Service Act personnel performed overtime duties to augment the visible policing operations. According to Cachalia (2007), Operation Iron Fist failed to reduce the occurrences of violent crimes such as house robberies and business robberies which collectively form part of the trio crimes, which are sub-categories of robbery with aggravated circumstances. One could state that the failure could be attributed to the duration in which it was allocated and the non-sustainability of the strategy, as it relied too much on the availability of funds for overtime duties. The approach of using more resources than are generally available for high-density crime prevention operations was designed to fail. The time-based allocation of police to perform crime prevention operations is probably not effective and has very little disincentives.

The Gauteng integrated aggravated robbery strategy was introduced in 2008 with the aim of reducing and preventing violent and serious crime through the arrest and conviction of offenders. This strategy was an integrated approach, involving different law-enforcement agencies such as the Metropolitan Police, SAPS, Traffic

Management, and the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA). The Gauteng integrated aggravated robbery strategy was credited for reducing some robbery aggravating incidents between 2009 and 2011 (MISTRA, 2013; Hlatshaneni, 2018). According to Radebe (2013), the Gauteng integrated aggravated robbery strategy, like other previously implemented strategies, failed to reduce the trio crimes to the desired level. One could mention that the strategy's weakness was placing more focus on the prevention of crime rather than arresting offenders. Crime prevention operations normally displace crime rather than eradicate it. Arresting and successfully convicting offenders could deter would-be criminals.

3.8 SAPS Annual Performance Plan 2019/2020

Section 11(2)(a) of the SAPS Act 68 of 1995 mandates the National Commissioner of the police to develop an APP, outlining the key issues of policing and targets to be addressed during the fiscal year. All SAPS structures from division to station levels must in turn develop detailed operational plans reflecting their relevant priorities and how to operationalize them. The APP 2019/2020 finds its expression in the Strategic Plan 2014-2019.

The APP is harmonized with the government's tactical course of action (SAPS, 2019). The APP details SAPS crime-combating strategies and the specific performance targets intended to be reached in a particular financial year, aimed to ensure that the strategic outcomes are attained. The APP 2019/2020 is the fifth annual plan of the SAPS within a cycle of five-year strategic plan. This SAPS's APP is a one-year operational document outlining the programme performance indicators intended to be achieved.

During the 2017 State of the Nation Address (SONA), the previous President of the RSA, Mr Jacob Zuma mentioned that the top priority for government will be to fight against crime, given the high number of hijackings and robberies that require special attention (Zuma, 2017). He further committed to establish special units devoted to tackling firearm-related crimes. Seemingly, former President Zuma's promise of

establishing specialised units nationally never came to fruition. The only specialised unit introduced to deal with firearm-related crimes was an Anti-Gang Unit (AGU) which operated only in the Western Cape Province (Thamm, 2019); despite the fact that it was supposed to be a national competency. Pitt (2018) concedes that the AGU was established by President Cyril Ramaphosa in 2018, in response to public pressure displayed in the form of a Total Shutdown protest demanding protection against gangsterism.

Etheridge (2019) states that the AGU was established without any budget. Dolley (2019) points that the AGU was established in a rush as a political campaign to gain voters for the impending national elections; hence there was no budget allocated. According to Thamm (2019), the Minister of Police, Bheki Cele, made a public statement on 26 June 2019 of the decision to place the Anti-Gang Unit's responsibilities under Operational Response Services (ORS) at national level. The decision came amid the infighting between the unit commanding structure, after members had been attacked by criminals.

The issue of a fight against the ever-increasing crime was reiterated by the President of the RSA, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa during his 2018 SONA speech. He outlined government's plan of action to deal decisively and holistically with crime. His speech on crime was slightly different from that of his predecessor, Mr Jacob Zuma who specifically mentioned firearm-related crimes as government's apex priority. President Ramaphosa said that efforts to fight acts of criminality and the creation of safe environments must be strengthened for the realization of a vision of a crime free country (Ramaphosa, 2018). This insinuates that the citizens' safety is the government's top priority. In response to the increasing crime, the government promised to introduce initiatives to implement the Community Policing Strategy (CPS) and Youth Crime Prevention Strategy (YCPS) to enhance partnerships and public participation in policing.

The CPS was intended to strengthen the working relationship between the police and community to encourage their contribution in strategic crime prevention initiatives in

communities. The initiative was founded on the belief that the public must be encouraged to assume responsibility for the prevailing condition and to contribute expertise in activities to prevent acts of criminality to ensure the safety of all. This was because an effective crime control initiative relies on the philosophies of public involvement in the maintenance of order, which is the good strategic association and working relationship between the community and the SAPS. One may add that community involvement is indispensable for effective policing (Xaba, 2018), as it is not possible for the police to singlehandedly win the fight against crime. Communities need to be involved in a broader concept of safety. The fight against crime requires a strong collective partnership between the police and all sectors of society to deal with crime and its generators in a sustainable manner. The YCPS aimed to encourage the youth of all races and gender groups to be productive in crime prevention initiatives. This was informed by the belief that youth take part in crime, either as victims or perpetrators. In addition, he promised to ensure that police stations are adequately resourced by shifting resources from strategic to operational levels to enhance the fight against crime.

President Ramaphosa, in his 2019 SONA speech, acknowledged that though there was a constant downward trend in certain types of serious crimes since 1994, gangsterism and interpersonal violence indicate that they are deeply entrenched in the country. In the RSA violence and gangsterism remain a growing concern and pose a high risk to safety in society. In his speech he emphasized the call for continued efforts to carry out the overarching CPS which was implemented in October 2018 as a preventative measure to address serious crime.

Lamb (2019) criticizes President Ramaphosa's SONA speech as implausible in that it does not focus enough on crime prevention strategies, which imply that government does not have a clear innovative plan to tackle violent crimes. The President should have outlined specific actions to address existing crime challenges. According to Lamb (2019), the CPS was not new, and it previously did not ameliorate the prevailing violent crime situation. This means that the crime control approach was not responsive to the crime challenges, hence it never made a noticeable impact on violent crime levels in

the past. Hamm (2017) states that one cannot repeatedly apply the same approach and expect changed outcomes from what was previously achieved. One can argue that the CPS is a long-term investment policing strategy and its impact on crime may not be immediately evident. Given the dissimilarities of communities, police-community relations programmes must be tailored to reflect and suit specific community needs. One cannot shy away from the fact that community involvement in initiatives designed to curb crime is crucial. Crime prevention initiatives should include both community and the government rather than being exclusively the responsibility of the police.

Community-oriented policing is not a panacea but is critical to overcome crime challenges, because of its element of shared responsibility. Community policing builds mutual trust and improves the police and community working relationship. Communities that are united and actively involved always find solutions to any challenging situation, including crime. Police must work with the community to preserve law and order through effective policing. In neighbourhoods where police and community relationships are healthy, crime tends to go down.

In his opening remarks for the APP 2019/2020 policing objectives and priorities, the Minister of Police, Mr Bheki Cele, indicated that violent crimes are rife in society and need unconventional measures, as opposed to traditional policing techniques to deal with those decisively. He further mentioned that the government's priority is to professionalise the police, improve their training to be operationally ready and adequately geared to deal with violent crimes and abuse of the vulnerable, especially women and children. He also mentioned the establishment of a sustainable police-community partnership approach as policing strategy to achieve the set policing objectives (SAPS, 2019/2020).

President Ramaphosa, in his 2020 SONA speech on 13 February 2020, emphasised the government's plan to strengthen the DVA and Sexual Offences Act in an endeavour to combat gender-based violence (GBV) crimes such as murders and rapes (Mkhwanazi & ANA Reporter, 2020; Ramaphosa, 2020). This was an indication that

government prioritizes the termination of violent criminal acts against women and children. However, Lamb (2020) expresses disappointment in the government's omission of the plan which will also focus on addressing violent crimes directed at men since a significant proportion of violent crimes are committed against them by other men. This implies that government should direct its efforts on addressing violent crimes in general. President Ramaphosa stressed that government will ensure that police are sufficiently resourced, effectively trained and police visibility intensified. It was further indicated that collaboration between the police and the NPA will be improved to enhance convictions. Lamb (2020) postulates that the government's commitment to fight crime was appropriate since crimes involving violent action were forever increasing. The government's intervention was likely to decrease violent crime; however, its success was dependent on its implementation (Lamb, 2020).

Firearms have always been a concern and the 2019/2020 financial year was no different. The SAPS will continue to address the proliferation of illegal firearms by removing them from society. One of the Visible Policing's key performance areas for 2019/2020 is to increase the recoveries of stolen and lost firearms.

3.9 Summary

The chapter started off by outlining the relationship between firearms and crime. It then focused on the strength of various international firearm legislations governing civilian access to and use of firearms. The aim was to examine the different firearm legislations in each country such as UK; USA; New-Zealand; Australia; Botswana; Lesotho and Namibia carefully. In addition to this was the consideration of international and national perspectives on gun controls. Thereafter, the SAPS strategic plan, the SAPS firearm strategy and the APP were discussed.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

4.1 Introduction

Methodology is the set of techniques and principles applied when studying a subject or executing a specific kind of work. The significance of methodology in a study is to draw up the research plan a researcher will pursue in search for answers to solve the research problem being dealt with in a systematic manner. It also offers an opportunity for the readers to scrutinize the general legitimacy and dependability of the study.

The chapter begins by outlining the research study's worldview after which the research approach and design is identified. It also describes the methods of data gathering, population, sampling, analysis of data and ethical considerations. In conclusion a summary is written.

4.2 The worldview and research approach and design

To better understand any phenomenon, researchers can pursue several methods of inquiry. Scientific research requires a specific research procedure and logically designed plan of action (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015). Creswell (2014) and Holloway (2005) postulate that researchers' epistemology involves their theories of knowledge how to study social phenomena. The epistemological position of the researcher in this study is centred on the belief that rich and valuable data are obtained from the perspectives of people that are involved in the implementation of the FCA 60 of 2000. The researcher involves participants in collecting the required data and relies on their views.

4.2.1 Worldview

A worldview is defined as the philosophical perspectives and suppositions espoused by an individual or society about the universe (Creswell, 2014). Similarly, Guba and Lincoln (2005) describe a worldview as the core beliefs that provide guidance to researchers in their endeavours to investigate. Such views could be influenced by factors like inborn characteristics, previous knowledge, attitudes, values, and lifestyle practices developed. There are four types of philosophical ideas which offer distinctive approaches regarding research processes and they are: the advocacy/participatory, constructivism, post-positivism and pragmatism views (Creswell, 2014). This philosophical worldview significantly influences a researcher's choice of distinct methodology in a scientific inquiry. Each position taken is influenced mainly by the intention of the study.

Creswell (2014) states that post-positivist suppositions portray the traditional practice of research and is primarily used in quantitative research rather than in qualitative research. According to Phillips and Burbules (2000), post-positivism opposes the rational philosophy and reasoning of positivism, rejecting the traditional assumption that truth could be predicted with certainty. Post-positivism believes in an objective reality and acknowledges that one cannot be optimistic about knowledge claims in a study involving human behaviour and actions.

Constructivism holds a different view from the post-positivism worldview and is an approach commonly applied to qualitative research (Creswell, 2014). Social constructivists rely on ideas developed by human thinking which are perceived as reality which is subjective. This implies that those individuals develop their knowledge by interpreting events based on their feelings, judgement and experiences.

Creswell (2014) states that advocacy and participatory worldview is of the opinion that scientific investigation is political in nature and should be interrelated with politics and human affairs to challenge social repression. Therefore, the study holds an action driven programme on specific needs of marginalized groups and individuals that could

bring transformation to their living and working conditions. Neither of the three worldviews relates to the aim of this research.

Pragmatism becomes operative out of the present actions, situations and consequences without being influenced by the preceded conditions (Creswell, 2014). The researcher prefers to employ all available approaches to study and understand the problem and find solutions to the subject of investigation, instead of concentrating on the choice of methods (Morgan, 2014). The study is problem-centred and in such a case the end would justify the means. In this study the researcher follows the pragmatic worldview, as it is a qualitative study investigating and analysing the implementation of the FCA 60 of 2000.

4.2.2 Research approach

Chetty (2016) describes a research approach as the overall plan which provides the detailed account of procedures and methods of collecting, analysing and interpreting data to address the study problem at hand. This study is qualitative and is geared towards analysing the implementation of the FCA 60 of 2000 by the SAPS members. Gopaldas (2016) and Vaismoradi and Snelgrove (2019) regard qualitative research as a general term which includes a wide range of data collection and analytical methods aimed at providing answers to a research problem. Holloway and Galvin (2016) state that regardless of the difference in methods involved in qualitative research, their fundamental commonality is that they all serve to understand, describe and interpret phenomena. According to Kumar (2014) and Mohajan (2018), qualitative study involves gathering data from only a few individuals relative to quantitative research. Qualitative research includes participants' opinions, viewpoints, interpretations and beliefs (Matthew & Ross, 2010; Holloway & Galvin, 2016). A qualitative study investigates the opinions, beliefs, experiences, relationships and attitudes by means of interviews (Levitt, Motulsky, Wertz, Morrow & Ponterotto, 2017; Mohajan, 2018; Leedy & Ormrod, 2015). According to Zohrabi (2013) and Mohajan (2018), a qualitative study can use various approaches to gather information like document reviews, interviews, journals, observational evidence and engagement. The

researcher uses a qualitative research approach to achieve the intended goal of analysing the implementation of the FCA 60 of 2000 by the SAPS through the participants' perspectives. The solution to a research question is attained from the data collected directly from the objects of enquiry. A vital part in this connection is the research tool that one aims to employ. Creswell (2014) states that the term research approach is not simply limited to the methods used like collecting information, analysing and drawing up a report, but encompasses the whole procedure of a study.

Qualitative research is regarded as an approach to a study as distinguished from being a research design. Welman et al. (2005) and Bogdan and Biklen (2007) define qualitative research as a way of dealing with the research project suitable to collect descriptive information in a real-world situation through either interview, observation or examining documents to understand individuals' perspectives. Qualitative research is more concerned with describing the participants' perspectives on a certain thinking or behaviour and less with determining the number of individuals thinking or behaving in a certain way. This implies that statistical and numeric data are irrelevant in a qualitative study to draw meaning from the phenomena (Percy, Kostere & Kostere, 2015; Rahman, 2017). Glesne (2011) states that qualitative research is based on spoken, unspoken or written words which should be described and interpreted. Creswell (2014) and Holloway and Galvin (2016) state that qualitative study is a social inquiry, used to understand what participants perceive about a problem of human or social in nature. It is not easy to describe qualitative research because of the lack of its own distinct theory or paradigm (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls & Ormston, 2013; Mohajan, 2018); and no clear set of its own methods or practices (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Qualitative methodology relates to a study technique that yields descriptive information obtained from the sources through written or spoken words and noticeable behaviour.

Qualitative research involves the element of discovering results with serendipity and allows research plans to be amended in accordance with the unintended findings. Qualitative research is multifaceted in nature and its subject matter requires an analytic and naturalistic approach (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). A qualitative researcher conducts the study by visiting the natural setting (Willig, 2013; Gentles, Charles, Ploeg

& McKibbin, 2015), where the problem is experienced by the social actors to comprehend the phenomena in terms of their personal understanding or experience (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Holloway & Wheeler, 2013; Walia, 2015). This means that individuals are not brought into a laboratory and no questionnaires or instruments are sent out for them to complete (Creswell, 2014). According to Leedy and Ormrod (2015), a qualitative study is not a quick fix solution to a problem. It involves eagerness and the determination from the researcher to do a thorough investigation to comprehend a situation or process. It normally requires a substantial amount of time and an extensive investigation to obtain a cohesive idea of the situation in order to draw an informed conclusion.

Qualitative research approaches and methods have some benefits. Yauch and Steudel (2003) and Creswell (2014) emphasise that a qualitative research approach is accomplished in producing complete and detailed information of the participants' perspectives on the issue under research. Corbin and Strauss (2015) and Mohajan (2018) add that qualitative approaches and methods of inquiry are important for obtaining the complicated issues of the phenomena like emotions, feelings and thoughts which are not easy to study. Qualitative research is used to gain in-depth understanding into topics relating to designing, interpreting and administering (Levitt et al., 2017; Chalhoub-Deville & Deville, 2008). Walia (2015) states that qualitative data use descriptive information or words instead of statistics to generate a valuable and comprehensive information.

4.2.3 Research design

Parahoo (2006) characterises a research design as a precise strategy the researcher will implement during the execution of the research project which describes in what way, at what time and the location where data will be gathered. Burns and Grove (2007) explains that a research design is a plan of action for carrying out a research project in a meticulous manner to ensure that its outcome validity is not compromised. Creswell (2014) describes research design as a series of sequential procedures and methods the researcher will put into practice in the collection, analysing and measuring

of data. According to Polit and Beck (2012), a research design is a comprehensive strategy the researcher uses to get answers for the subject of investigation. The researcher understands research design as a systematically arranged plan of action of the empirical study specifying the method and procedure the researcher will carry out during the data collection, measuring and analysing to validate the trustworthiness of its outcome.

Leedy and Ormrod (2015) state that the research design offers clear guidelines and the procedures that will be applied in the study during the gathering and analysing of data. According to Cormack (2000), a researcher relies on the research design to decide on the suitable types of methods and techniques for achieving the desired outcome. This researcher chose a qualitative research design for this study as guided by Creswell (2014), to discover and comprehend the participants' perspectives about the issue under investigation.

In this research, data is drawn from information-rich participants at their workplace in Ekurhuleni to understand their perspectives regarding the implementation of the FCA 60 of 2000. In this way the researcher obtains first-hand experience to provide meaningful data. The researcher relies on their experience to generate new information from their normal working environment (Mouton, 2001).

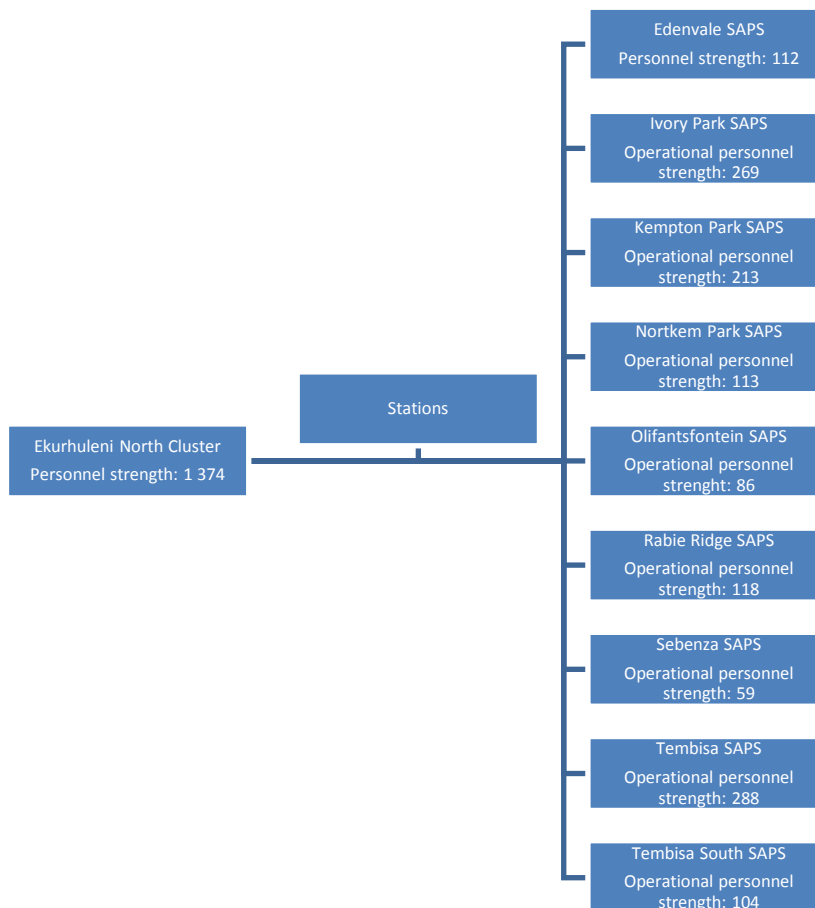
4.3 Population

Umar and Usman (2015) describe population as a general array of living things or items which share similarities necessary for participation in the research from which a study sample is selected. Ultimately inferences can be drawn from the results obtained. Asiamah, Mensah and Oteng-Abayie (2017) and Rahi (2017) explain population as a broad spectrum of the entity that is being studied from which the researcher will choose the sample to collect data in relation to their similar characteristics relevant to the study project. According to Alvi (2016) and Kenton (2019), population is all the study objects that conform to requirements relevant for inclusion in the specific research project. The researcher describes population as the

unit of analysis whose characteristics are essential for inclusion in the study from which a study sample will be chosen for data collection.

The population of interest that is suitable for this study are all SAPS members in the operational environment. The target population for this study refers to 27 members who work in the Visible Policing (VISPOL) component such as the Designated Firearm Officer (DFO), Client Service Centre (CSC) and Crime prevention, including the Detective Service in the Ekurhuleni North Cluster. These officials are SAPS members who are operational and involved in the implementation of FCA 60 of 2000.

Figure 4.1 Ekurhuleni North Cluster Organogram: SAPS



Source: South African Police Service 2017

The above organogram shows the structure of Ekurhuleni North Cluster. It outlines the names of police stations constituting the cluster, including their relative personnel strength. Ekurhuleni North comprises of nine police stations on a land surface of 483 square km. It has a cumulative total of 1 374 operational police members, serving a population of 1 279 107 which constitutes a police/citizen ratio of 1:931 (See section 1.2).

4.4 Sampling

It is generally not feasible to involve the whole target population of interest in the study (Mack, Woodsong, Macqueen, Guest & Namey, 2005; Acharya, Prakash, Saxena & Nigram, 2013; Martínez-Mesa, González-Chica, Duquia, Bonamigo & Bastos, 2016; Elfil & Negida, 2017), hence the research inquiries are typically conducted through a sample of the study subjects (Shorten & Moorley, 2014). The difficulty in collecting data from the whole population is due to lack of various resources such as money, personnel and time (Bornstein, Jager & Putnick, 2013; Acharya et al., 2013; Martínez-Mesa et al., 2016). Gentles et al. (2015) and Sharma (2017) postulate that sampling is a procedure used in research to identify and select a suitable study sample from a clearly defined targeted population. Sampling is the process of selecting a subset from the target group under investigation (Martínez-Mesa et al., 2016; Elfil & Negida, 2017; Polit & Beck, 2017; Rahi, 2017) in a way that the findings generated may be fairly transferred to the entire target group. There are several sampling techniques that can be employed to conduct a study (Taherdoost, 2016). Therefore, it is extremely significant to decide on the sampling techniques to use throughout a research process (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016).

The researcher took a decision to utilize purposive sampling in this research study. A purposive sampling technique was chosen to gain first-hand accounts of the concerns regarding the application of the FCA 60 of 2000. The sampling technique employed in this study is non-probability in which the discretion to select study units representing the subset of a population lies entirely with the researcher (Gentles et al., 2015). This means that the purposive sampling technique allows the researcher to choose

participants. The inclusion criterion in this research study is that of being a member of the specific unit of the SAPS. According to Elfil and Negida (2017) and Etikan et al. (2016), a non-probability sample is inherently subjective, therefore it does not guarantee equal opportunities for the unit members' inclusion in the sample population. The researcher had a leeway in selecting sampling units as the priority is to identify information-rich participants who can provide rich and deep data (Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan & Hoagwood, 2015; Yin, 2011). Participants are selected in terms of them conforming to specific characteristics which are common to the entire population of interest. Purposive sampling involves selective nomination of sample units with great knowledge in a field of the topic based on their own personal experience (Bornstein et al., 2013; Polit & Beck, 2017; Moser & Korstjens, 2018).

The purposive sampling technique is appropriate for this study since the researcher hand-picked specific participants from the operational police members within Ekurhuleni North Cluster based on their knowledge which is the inclusion criterium. The researcher valued participants with two and more years' experience for inclusion in the study. Purposive sampling enables selective inclusion of participants based on qualifying requirements. The rationale for employing a purposive strategy is for the researcher to self-select information-rich participants in the research on account of their insights, understanding and experience of the topic being studied. According to O'Sullivan, Rassel and Taliaferro (2016), categories of individuals included in a purposive sample should possess a unique perspective of the subject matter. The exclusion criterium will be inexperienced individuals in the research field as they will provide poor data. In other words, the decision of who should form part of the sample is dependent upon the researcher. The researcher selected participants from the SAPS members in the operational components involved in the implementation of the FCA 60 of 2000. It could be said that purposive sampling is done when appropriate study subjects are located and found by the researcher for inclusion in the study. Purposive sampling is convenient and economical because the researcher practised discretion in the selection of participants (Etikan et al., 2016). Purposive sample is used in this study to choose participants possessing the relevant qualities. The benefit of purposive sampling technique is that the researchers depend on the knowledge of

the subject matter to select participants (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Martínez-Mesa et al., 2016; Roberts, Dowell & Nie, 2019) in order to obtain information that is rich and comprehensive (Stage & Manning, 2016).

Sampling size has been extensively debated by various authors (Creswell, 2014; Vasileiou, Barnett, Thorpe & Young, 2018). The selection of the population subset and determination of sample size are matters of importance for researchers to determine a suitable research design (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). Nevertheless, the general agreement is that in a qualitative study the size must be small (Charmaz, 2014; Malterud, Siersma & Guassora, 2016), but researchers could not agree on what constitutes a large enough qualitative sample size (Aldiabat & Le Navenec, 2018). Many researchers provide estimation of sample sizes for qualitative studies (Gentles et al., 2015). The authors pointed out differences in the required size of the sample for it to be regarded as the smallest acceptable sample. Vasileiou et al. (2018) state that sample size is important to support the production of significant findings. The study sample size should neither be too small nor too big, as it will impact negatively on the findings (Faber & Fonseca, 2014). A sample size which is extremely small could affect the power of the study and adversely affect the transferability of the findings, while a sample size which is extremely large could heighten the chances of obtaining repetitive data of no significant value. It could be stated that the sample size has no bearing on the standard or significance of the qualitative research since there is no criteria of determining the correct sample size. The sample size of qualitative research is not likely to be predetermined before collection of data, as the sample may require some alterations in the process of the study (Faber & Fonseca, 2014; Vasileiou et al., 2018). This means that sampling will be continued until saturation is attained. Saturation is achieved when the data generated are repeated and adding no value to the study (Ezzy, 2002; Higginbotham, Albrecht & Connor, 2001; Charmaz, 2014; Patton, 2014; Given, 2016). Saunders, Sim, Kingstone, Baker, Waterfield, Bartlam, Burroughs and Jinks (2018) describe data saturation as a measure the researcher uses in a qualitative study to consider terminating the gathering of information. This implies that data saturation could be used as a measuring tool for sample size in a qualitative study. Saturation relates to a point where the researcher is satisfied that

the sampling process should be discontinued, because the data no longer add any value (Jassim & Whitford, 2014; Gentles et al., 2015). Fusch and Ness (2015) state that the inability of the researcher to attain data saturation has bearing on the standard of the study and its trustworthiness will be questionable. The researcher got the indication to stop the interview process when receiving repetitive responses from the participants. Charmaz (2014) and Vasileiou et al. (2018) state that some researchers subjectively proclaim to have reached saturation in defence of their unseasonable termination of the study data gathering task. It can also be stated that in some cases saturation could be claimed prematurely by the researcher to reduce the complexity of the analytic activity.

Palinkas et al. (2015) believe that for purposive sampling to yield positive results the researcher must know how to identify potential participants who possess suitable qualities and characteristics, with the ability and capacity to provide relevant information. This means that the researcher must have a clear recruitment strategy for identifying and enrolling people to participate. Since the individuals meeting the requirements for selection were unknown, this researcher visited the relevant police stations, met the commanders in charge, introduced himself and requested permission to conduct interviews at that station. Potential participants with appropriate characteristics were identified with the help of the commanders and senior officers attached to that station. The researcher then approached them individually and invited them without any coercion to participate in the study by giving them invitation letters while emphasizing their voluntary decision to participate. Participants were assured of their rights of refusal to participate in the study whenever they felt like without any adverse effect. Newington and Metcalfe (2014) state that the achievement of a proposed research objective is reliant on recruitment of enough participants. The researcher circumvented unexpected withdrawals of potential participants by recruiting more than the required number, since there was no assurance that all those enlisted would attend the interview. Upon recruiting potential participants, the researcher introduced himself and provided adequate information about the research in which they would voluntarily participate without discussing the research questions. The researcher identified a convenient venue, free from distractions and comfortable

for the interview. The researcher assured participants of confidentiality and that their identities would not be disclosed in the aggregated findings. The researcher guaranteed each participant not to reveal anything they said to other participants. The researcher built a trusting relationship at first contact with them and obtained their voluntary consent when they signed the informed consent form (see Appendix E) before commencing with the interview. According to Karnieli-Miller, Strier, and Pessach (2009), participants can easily agree to contribute to the research if a friendly rapport is built with them.

The researcher collected data from 17 participants through semi-structured interviews. The composition of the interviewed participants consisted of 12 males and 5 females aged between 31 and 60 years. Four participants are graduates, seven obtained diplomas and six held matric certificates. The participants' duration of employment ranges from 02 to 10 years (1); 11 to 20 years (4); 21 to 30 (8) and 30 to 40 years (4). Five of the participants who were based in DFO environments were trained on FCA 60 of 2000 while 12 who were working in detectives and VISPOL environments were briefly workshopped on the Act. All the interview transcripts were named SAPS to represent the organization from which the data was obtained including a unique identifier for the source. The participants' identities were protected through allocating numerical numbers (e.g., 01, 02) as codes based on the sequence of their interview date and time.

There was limited support received from potential participants. Most of those who were recruited withdrew for undisclosed personal reasons before the interviews and that was identified as a limitation. In future this limitation should be mitigated by recruiting more than the required potential participants to circumvent such disappointments. The lack of anticipated participation affected the study sample size; however, the information gathered from the interviews was sufficient to make an analysis for the study's findings.

4.5 Method of data collection

Data management is crucial to the successful completion of any research project. The

selection of the research technique is strongly rooted on what needs to be uncovered. Bist (2014) stipulates that research methodology deals entirely with various steps to be followed to execute the study. The relevant phases will be discussed with regards to choosing the techniques and the advantages thereof. Research methodology is the scientific way of gathering information for the purpose of carrying out the research project (Igwenagu, 2016). According to De-xin (2018), research methodology relates to the structural base whereon the research process is anchored. Brookshier (2018) regards research methodology as the master plan providing a layout to guide the research project. The researcher describes research methodology as a collection of approaches, practices, principles, procedures and rules applied when studying a research subject. A carefully laid out research methodology plan is a prerequisite to carry out a research project successfully. This suggests that the researcher must plan the construction process including the type of instruments and procedures to be used to gather evidence to analyse the problem. McCombes (2019) states that methodology legitimizes that which generates information and examines that which produces data.

Data collection involves the activity of systematically gathering facts from which conclusions may be drawn (Kabir, 2016). A suitable data collection technique needs to be selected considering the research problem and the population in question (Liu & Tenenbaum, 2018). The researcher selected to use semi-structured individual interviews and literature for data collection in this research. The researcher used an audio recorder and took notes as suggested by Berazneva (2014), Ranney, Meisel, Choo, Garro, Sasson and Guthrie (2015) and Spear (2019). Generally, the study relied exclusively on information received from the participants.

Interviews are techniques through which data collection takes place to answer research questions (McGrath, Palmgren & Liljedahl, 2019) and is mostly used in qualitative research (Jong & Jung, 2015; Bryman, 2016; Keeley, Williamson, Callery, Jones, Mathers, Jones, Young, & Calvert, 2016). When interviews are properly used, they could yield good results since the interviewer can focus on the main subject of interest. Face-to-face contact with the participants offers specific constructive feedback; they are also useful for collecting detailed and valuable information (Kabir,

2016); and fewer participants are required to produce rich information (Vasileiou et al., 2018).

To collect valuable information that can be used in this research, the researcher conducted qualitative interviews with carefully chosen research participants to get their subjective perspectives. Furthermore, semi-structured interview questions were used as set out on an interview schedule (Annexure F) which was prepared in advance. Semi-structured interviews are carried out with flexible pre-set questions pertaining to the area of focus. The interviewers are at liberty to deviate from the interview guide when they feel it is appropriate (Blandford, 2013; Jong & Jung, 2015). Stage and Manning (2016) claim that semi-structured interview questions are open-ended questions which are more focused on answers of the 'how' than the 'why'. According to Jong and Jung (2015), the researcher may utilize semi-structured interviews to clear out confusing and incomplete responses from participants. The researcher utilized closed as well as open-ended questions to allow participants to give their opinions freely. The question types will give divergent responses in answer to the research questions. The researcher used interviews as primary data collection while data collected from the literature review were secondary.

Piloting an interview in a research study is a way in which the researcher practically experiments the research questions in an interview to check their qualities before putting them into real practice by applying them in the main study (Majid, Othman, Mohamad, Lim & Yusof, 2017). The pilot study could be regarded as a trial of the main research wherein the interview questions are tried out. The person involved in the pilot interview should possess the same characteristics required for inclusion as a study sample. The research methodology applied in the pilot study should emulate that of the real study. The reason is that the purpose of the pilot study is to evaluate the practicability of research instruments which are indispensable to the successful finalization of the main study.

The researcher initially recruited three participants to partake in the pilot study. Potential participants with appropriate characteristics were identified through their

commander from the SAPS units which did not form part of the targeted stations. The participants were given invitation letters to voluntarily participate in the study. Assurance was given to them that the researcher will respect their right of withdrawal from the study at stage without any consequences.

The researcher conducted a pilot interview with one participant in preparation for the main study. The other two potential participants withdrew from the study before commencing with the pilot interviews for personal reasons. The same conditions set out for the main interviews were followed.

The semi-structured interview questions were used as set out on an interview schedule (Annexure F). The researcher used an audio recorder and took notes during the pilot interview. The interview was transcribed and forwarded to the supervisor together with the recording for consideration. The supervisor gave positive feedback about the pilot interview project.

The literature refers to credible written and published documents containing information that is related to a topic under study. This includes articles, textbooks, magazines, research reports and other relevant sources. Houser (2018) regards literature as an essential element of the process of research project that offers an in-depth analysis of previous studies. O’Gorman and MacIntosh (2015) postulate that the primary function of a literature is to provide a comprehensive background on the topic which will serve as a foundation of knowledge on the subject. Garrard (2017) advises that each literature consulted should be thoroughly analysed and consider its suitability, relevance, and meticulousness prior to inclusion in the review. The researcher consulted and reviewed previous scholar articles to gain a comprehensive understanding and identify knowledge gaps on the topic under study to present logical arguments.

4.6 Data analysis

Data analysis is one of the crucial stages in conducting qualitative research. Ngulube

(2015) and Ravindran (2019) describe data analysis as a technique of processing collected information and interpreting the underlying meaning. Kabir (2016) describes data analysis as a procedure of classifying and summarising collected information. McMillan and Schumacher (2014) and Ravindran (2019) argue that data analysis happen concurrently with data collection, explanation and writing the report in qualitative research. However, Mohajan (2018) asserts that data analysis is conducted during and after the data collection process. The researcher regards data analysis as a procedure of splitting the collected information into small segments with a view of interpreting and giving meaning to the voluminous collected information by scrutinising the unprocessed data to formulate findings. According to Creswell (2014), data analysis involves examining collected data, conducting different analyses, representing and interpreting the data.

The researcher employed the thematic spiral technique as described by Braun, Clarke and Weate (2016); Nowell, Norris, White and Moules (2017) and Caulfield (2019) to analyse transcribed interview data (Maybee, Doan & Flierl, 2016). Braun et al. (2016); Nowell et al. (2017) and Caulfield (2019) outline the following phases to be followed when analysing data:

- Phase 1: Study collected information. This stage involves recording, transcribing, reading through and understanding all the data collected from empirical interviews.
- Phase 2: Data coding. This stage comprises highlighting and grouping the concise statements which form the main ideas of the text which emerged from the participants' responses and field notes describing the expressions which could be defined to interpret the hidden meaning.
- Phase 3: Creating themes. The stage involves scrutinizing the identified key points or phrases to identify their patterns and formulate themes for analysis.

- Phase 4: Refine themes. The stage involves verification of the correctness of the extracts for each categorized storyline with the aim of rectifying any error identified.
- Phase 5: Determine and phrase themes. The stage entails accurately describing and formulating succinct and comprehensible themes.
- Phase 6: Produce an analysis report. This stage comprises analysing the data extracts and describing its contexts.

The researcher used thematic analysis to enable in-depth rich descriptions from the transcribed interviews. The choice of the thematic method was influenced by the views of Thorne, Stephens and Truant (2016); Roberts et al. (2019) and Vaismoradi and Snelgrove (2019) that the thematic method can produce valuable insights that may address the study questions. Caulfield (2019) defines thematic analysis as a technique applied in qualitative research to identify, categorise and examine salient frequently used key words with similar meaning from the interactive texts to describe their implied meaning. Nowell et al. (2017) describe thematic analysis as a qualitative research method used to discover, examine, arrange, define and report storylines from collected information. The researcher regards thematic analysis as a process of identifying and organizing recurring main ideas from the interview extract for the purpose of analysis. Original field notes can be reviewed to identify themes. Bryman (2016) states that themes could be identified from both the field notes and interview transcripts. According to Connelly and Peltzer (2016) and Graneheim, Lindgren and Lundman (2017), a theme is formulated with recurring storylines identified from the interview data. Yi (2018) states that themes are not easily noticeable. Mohamed, Ragab and Arisha (2016) add that developing meaningful themes could be hampered by the researcher's lack of knowledge and expertise. Data collected during the qualitative study need to be analysed carefully to identify possible patterns and trends that may have occurred. The method is normally applied to empirical information collected from participants during interviews (Maybee et al., 2016). By and large, thematic analysis

is regarded as the most preferred qualitative approach to many researchers (Nowell et al., 2017; Vaismoradi & Snelgrove, 2019).

4.7 Ethical considerations

Research is an investigation which in most cases, involves dealing with people and therefore should be approached with great circumspection. The researcher should always strive to win the participants' trust for them to cooperate (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delport, 2011). This means that no participant should be compelled to partake in the research and the researcher must protect them against any potential risks of research. Bickman and Rog (2009) postulate that ethical challenges can be encountered at every step of the enquiry process. Ethics are principles that are influential to human behaviour to conform to a code of conduct which outlines standards of professional in an organisation (De Vos et al., 2011). Davis, Francis and Jupp (2011) describe ethics as standards of appropriate behaviour towards others when conducting a research study. The researcher followed the Unisa Research Ethics policy (UNISA, 2016). Ethical approval was acquired from the UNISA College of law Ethics Review Committee with reference number ST32 of 2018 (Annexure D). The researcher identified the following ethical issues to ensure that the study adhered to all ethical principles:

4.7.1 Voluntary participation

The standard foundation of voluntary participation entails that prospective participants should not be compelled to contribute to the research (Babbie, 2008). The researcher enlightened the prospective participants regarding the nature of the study and assured them that their participation would be voluntary. They were assured of their prerogative to terminate their participation at any given time without any repercussion.

4.7.2 Protection from harm

Research participants can be hurt either physically, physiologically or emotionally

(Babbie, 2008). The researcher is ethically obliged to ensure that participants are always protected (Babbie & Mouton, 2008; Polit & Beck, 2014). Huysamen (2001) concurs with Babbie and Mouton (2008) in that the researcher is responsible for the well-being of the study participants. The researcher made sure that no harm, undue stress or strain of any nature was caused to the participants (De Vos et al., 2011; Polit & Beck, 2014). The important rule of ethics in social research is to circumvent harm to participants (Babbie, 2008). Consequently, the researcher is obliged to offer participants protection from any form of bodily, psychological and social distress that may arise (Creswell, 2014). The researcher acquired permission from the SAPS (Annexure C) and the participants (Annexure E) to conduct this study.

4.7.3 Right to privacy

Confidentiality is an ethical principle which cannot be overemphasised and therefore must be maintained in a study. The participants' basic rights to privacy should not be violated in the name of research (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015). The right to privacy is constitutionally protected in the RSA and therefore should be treasured. De Vos et al. (2011) state that privacy means to withhold one's information from public knowledge to circumvent being observed and analysed. The participants' privacy was taken into consideration and respected. The research participants' personal information, thoughts, attitudes and experiences will strictly remain confidential and no reckless publication will be made that will compromise their anonymity (Polit & Beck, 2014). Rogers (2006) states that confidentiality is an entitlement to a research participant which must always be preserved. In securing the participants' confidentiality, the researcher did not record their names anywhere. Code numbers were used in the text to replace their names to ensure that collected data are not associated with any participants. Electronic information which includes the transcribed interviews files is stored in encrypted form. Written informed consent forms, field notes and printed versions are kept in a lock-protected cabinet with no access by others. All audio data files were removed from the digital recorder after each interview to a password-protected computer.

4.7.4 Informed consent

Giving voluntary agreement to partake in a study is generally a major moral consideration. Even though the research was not intrusive and could cause no harm to the participants, informed consent was required. The participants were requested to sign their informed consent forms prior to the actual empirical interviews (Hakim, 2000). Research participants were furnished with full details of the study so that they can make voluntary decisions to participate in the study (Polit & Beck, 2014).

4.7.5 Honesty and professionalism

The researcher is obliged to obey the set of ethical standards of morality, fairness and respect of others in their profession. According to De Vos et al. (2011) researchers respecting ethical issues demonstrate respect towards society. The researcher reported the findings as a true reflection of what transpired, without distorting data to support a conclusion.

Ethical concerns are essential elements of a study design and considerations for ethics. The act of research, particularly when it involves persons, creates an overabundance of possible ethical problems. Researchers need to be cognisant of ethical considerations which are imperative to professions. The key to ethical research is a professional approach. Ethical principles of the study are closely connected with guaranteeing the quality of study, rigour, dependability and credibility.

4.8 Trustworthiness of the study

Holloway (2005) describes trustworthiness as the standard for determining quality and the inherent worth of the research study. As claimed by Noble and Smith (2015), a research project is trustworthy when the results accurately reflect the participants' perspectives. This means that the truthfulness or otherwise of the participants' perspectives is irrelevant. Trustworthiness of the research should be determined by the extent of the partakers' personal involvement rather than their theoretical

knowledge (Streubert & Carpenter, 2011). Trustworthiness serves to establish that the qualitative research study's findings are credible, dependable, transferable and confirmable. The researcher followed the guidance of Lincoln and Guba (1985) by using credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability as indicators of trustworthiness.

- **Credibility**

Credibility relates to the belief and trust one has in the authenticity of the research findings and subsequent explanations (Holloway & Wheeler, 2013; Macnee & McCabe, 2008; Denscombe, 2014). Credibility exists when the research findings accurately present the participants' perspectives (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). Patton (2014) dissents in that credibility is attained when the research findings are consistent with the intended research purpose. The first step the researcher took to protect credibility was the use of a purposive sample selection. Participants' interview sessions were audio-recorded and transcribed to ensure a reasonable accurate reproduction of what was said to enhance data validity.

The researcher also applied a member checking method to validate credibility of the research's findings. Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell and Walter (2016) describe member checking as a validation method the researcher employs to support the credibility of the research results. Member checking is a qualitative method in which the study participants are involved to demonstrate the ethical manner in which the research data were gathered, analysed and reported to increase its credibility. The researcher involved the study participants to confirm the veracity of the data collected. As stated by Birt et al. (2016), member checking minimises the chances of the researcher being biased since the researcher is an active participant in qualitative study. Birt et al. (2016) and Carlson (2010) explain that member checking could be conducted by using either the interview transcripts or analysed information. Birt et al. (2016) postulate that the collected data or results could be used for member checking. Creswell (2014) recommends member checking to be done by using refined themes and patterns developed for more credible results, as opposed to actual interview transcripts. It could

be argued that interview transcripts should be used for member checking for the participants to consider and acknowledge the narratives of the entire interview rather than a concise version. The researcher gave each participant both the verbatim hard copy transcripts and audio-recordings of their interviews to recall the context of the interview to confirm their congruence. Participants were advised to rectify, simplify, elaborate and erase inaccurate narratives contained in the transcripts as Carlson (2010) recommends. The participants' edited transcript version was used develop themes for this study.

- **Dependability**

Dependability involves the likelihood of study results remaining unchanged when the same study is repeated, using the same measurement instruments (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015). Collis and Hussey (2014) define dependability as the degree in which a measuring tool can consistently produce similar findings if the research was repeated. Consequently, dependability in qualitative research lies with consistency of analysing the collected information (McDaniel & Gate 2010). The researcher will present the record involving the full account of sources and techniques applied when gathering and analysing information which will indicate a rationale for the decisions made.

- **Transferability**

Transferability involves the extent at which the qualitative study results could be applied in other circumstances, locations and groups (Tobin & Begley, 2004; Bitsch, 2005). Transferability shows that the findings could have applicability in similar situations, populations and phenomena (Schurink, Fouché & De Vos, 2011). According to Flyvbjerg (2006), qualitative research studies are typically not generalizable to the research population, due to a small sample size involved. Tracy (2010) disagrees in that information produced by means of qualitative methods can invariably be transferred and be useful in other contexts. The researcher enabled the transferability of the inquiry by handpicking potential participants through purposive sampling (Bitsch, 2005; Tiwani 2010).

- **Confirmability**

Tomal and Schwartz (2019) state that confirmability is measured according to the extent at which the study results could be verified by others. The research findings must be the result of the actual study and not simply figments of the researcher's suppositions and predeterminations (Tobin & Begley, 2004). The researcher reported research findings and interpretations truthfully, based on the participants' responses. According to Korstjens and Moser (2018), confirmability is used to measure the degree of researcher's neutrality in making sure that the study findings are reliable.

The importance of the study's trustworthiness cannot be overemphasized. The study must be undertaken in a manner that it will produce meaningful and useful results. For the research study to be accepted as truthful, the researcher must demonstrate that the process applied when gathering and analysing information was credible without element of bias.

4.9 Summary

The chapter began by presenting the researcher's worldview, followed by an explication of the study approach and design. The population, sampling, collection and analysis of information were also discussed. The study ethical considerations were included in this chapter.

CHAPTER 5

PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

The chapter begins by presenting the research outcomes based on the context of the participants' responses obtained through semi-structured interviews. It also identifies and describes the main themes linked to the data collected from the interviewees for analysis. The theme is a concise and comprehensive statement in which the researcher identifies, analyses and interprets the fundamental message within the qualitative data collected. The summarized main ideas identified are accurate representations of the participants' views obtained from the interviews.

An inductive coding approach was adopted in this study to analyse interview transcripts (Yi, 2018). Vaismoradi and Snelgrove (2019) recommend that more time and effort should be focused on data analysis to develop high quality themes. The researcher repeatedly read each transcript to get an insight of the content before ideas of interest were identified (Connelly & Peltzer, 2016). Subsequently, analysed important aspects of text which formed the basis of themes were highlighted and grouped according to their similarities in terms of hierarchical relationships with the study objectives (Vaismoradi & Snelgrove, 2019). The identified data extracts were later categorized and coded into different themes that represent the topic being studied. The identified texts were reviewed to verify their suitability in the preliminary categories. The texts with similar meaning were incorporated into main themes within the scope of defined study objectives.

The themes that emerged are important in that they address the relevant research questions which ultimately will lead to an understanding of the research phenomena. The following themes emerged when analysing the interview data, which will be discussed in chronological order in this chapter: understanding of the FCA 60 of 2000;

understanding of the purpose of the FCA 60 of 2000; the effectiveness of the FCA 60 of 2000 with regards to the control of firearms in South Africa; perceptions on violent crimes involving firearms; exposure to training; accessibility of information; and compliance with the provisions of the Act by law enforcers. This chapter concludes with a summary.

5.2 Theme 1: Understanding of the FCA 60 of 2000

The understanding of the FCA 60 of 2000 refers to the degree of awareness and knowledge of the SAPS members. The reason behind this theme was to uncover what they knew about the interpretation of the Act. Demonstrating an understanding of the Act is significant for the police, as they are responsible for implementing it. Understanding of the Act is vital for its proper enforcement.

The participants' opinions were required to ascertain the level of knowledge and understanding of the FCA 60 of 2000 the SAPS members have, since they are responsible for its enforcement. The participants gave different opinions regarding their cognizance of the Act, with the majority supporting the view that members are not fully knowledgeable of the Act. From the participants' information, it was deduced that they do not have much knowledge of the provisions contained in the FCA 60 of 2000, which is essential for effective enforcement.

The following are extracts from the participants interviews regarding the understanding of the FCA 60 of 2000:

SAPS 01 *“The knowledge for me is very minimal. Members of the SAPS are not knowledgeable in terms of the FCA 60 of 2000”.*

SAPS 03 *“If we only look at the members in the CSC, your VISPOL members I think that for them to grasp all the conditions in the Firearm [Control] Act 60 of 2000, they are not up to par. That is why they would work on the surface, when to*

take a firearm for section 102 and when to arrest a person for unlicensed firearm and or ammunitions”.

SAPS 11 *“Amongst the SAPS members, I think is above ninety percent. Because all SAPS members undergo the competency certificate [training] which falls under the FCA 60 of 2000 so that everybody has got some knowledge about this Act especially in the SAPS”.*

SAPS 14 *“There is approximately lack of knowledge by most members in the South African Police, because they do not use effectively all the avenues that are available, for example, it is seldom that the members of SAPS initiate section 102 [inquiry] in which the aim is to declare all the suspects that were involved in violent crimes unfit to possess a firearm. We receive very minimum cases whereby we call them initiated section 102 [inquiries]. So, there is a very minimum participation by the members of South African Police”.*

These participants’ responses suggest that there is inadequate knowledge of the Act amongst the participants. In-depth knowledge, understanding and skill are the primary requisites for effective enforcement of any laws. Since the participants’ responses suggest that members have a rudimentary knowledge of the Act, there is the need to increase knowledge on the Act.

5.3 Theme 2: Understanding of the purpose of FCA 60 of 2000

The main idea was to establish the participants’ awareness and knowledge of the purpose of FCA 60 of 2000. The participants were required to explain what they understood about the purpose of the FCA 60 of 2000. The reason behind this was to get an indication of the understanding of their responsibilities that were introduced by the FCA 60 of 2000.

The inputs received from the participants indicated that, in general, SAPS members understood what the purpose of the FCA 60 of 2000 and its functions were. Their

responses were concise and comprehensive. It was established that all participants were able to describe the purpose of the FCA 60 of 2000 unambiguously.

The following are *in vivo* quotes obtained from the participants:

SAPS 02 *“The FCA 60 of 2000 is legislation. What I understand is the legislation passed and approve by parliament for the control of legally owned firearms in South Africa as well as the assurance of personal fitness or competency to own any firearm by any individual in South Africa”.*

SAPS 04 *“The FCA [60] of 2000 was established by the government to stop the illegal firearms not to be in the hands of criminals. And, the government to can properly regulate or control the movement of firearms in South Africa”.*

SAPS 09 *“According to my knowledge and information, firearms must be controlled in any country and is good that South Africa has implemented this Act so that we can have control of firearms manufactured and issued and that are in possession of any legal firearm owners”.*

SAPS 05 *“The Act or legislations that regulate the application, possession and handling of firearm, all sorts of firearms in South Africa”.*

The participants' ability to give a precise explanation of the purpose of the FCA 60 of 2000 is an indication that they are aware of the existing Act that is regulating and controlling firearms in South Africa. It also demonstrated that the SAPS members have the basic knowledge of the FCA 60 of 2000. It was also deduced from their responses that the participants understood the rationale for firearms to be controlled by the Act.

5.4 Theme 3: FCA 60 of 2000 effectiveness on the control of firearms in South Africa

Under this theme the researcher intended to ascertain the level of effectiveness of the

FCA 60 of 2000 in controlling firearms and the ability of SAPS members to enforce the Act. The supposed issues that were hampering the efforts of effectively implementing the FCA 60 of 2000 were expected to be identified. Since firearms are regulated by the FCA 60 of 2000, it is important to get an evaluation of its effectiveness. This was to get a perception of the vigour or impotence of the FCA 60 of 2000 in regulating firearms. Expressing its impact, whether negative or positive, will be a confirmation of their awareness of the role that the FCA 60 of 2000 plays.

Under this theme the intention was to establish the participants' opinions regarding the FCA 60 of 2000's effectiveness in controlling firearms and the ability of SAPS members to enforce the Act. The participants' inputs exposed mixed comments. Some were of the view that the Act was not effective; however, the majority indicated that the FCA 60 of 2000 in its current form was effective, but highlighted that implementation was the problem.

The following are opinions about the effectiveness of the control of firearms as described by the participants:

SAPS 01 *"Since the promulgation of this FCA 60 of 2000 not anybody can be issued with a firearm, because there are processes in place in terms of the Act, where one will have to undergo the proficiency test [and] background checks being conducted".*

SAPS 03 *"No, I don't think so because of the high volume of robbery aggravating committed with firearms. I do not think that the FCA 60 of 2000 has the desired outcome which was intended".*

SAPS 14 *"Obviously the inhibiting or stumbling blocks it's a lack of insight of the Act. Most of the members of the SAPS, they lack the insight of this Act. They don't know the nitty gritty. Put it differently, you can say, we lack the knowledge of the contents or we can say the lack of the content knowledge. What do I mean by the lack of the content knowledge? We lack the knowledge about the content*

of the whole Firearm [Control] Act 60 of 2000 and so forth. Because if we acquainted ourselves with the whole subjects, the whole sections it's a very useful Act that can also serve in terms theories of punishment".

SAPS 16 *"The FCA 60 of 2000 as I have already indicated is a good Act that can assist the police in executing their duties but, in the other hands, it's a problem to us [the SAPS organization]. Members who cannot handle the firearms while attending firearm maintenance within the organization, they are saying they mustn't handle firearms because they cannot shoot properly. And, as a result we are running short of members. You cannot deploy a member outside while he is not having the firearm. So, now some of the members are using this Act for laziness. I want to be placed in the CSC; I don't want to go to the street to confront the criminals. Now, when I went for my firearm shooting practice, I failed the firearm, the handling of the firearm, then I am placed in the CSC for which we are running short outside. So, the Act itself is good for us to arrest the criminals but within the organization it gives us a problem. Because members who cannot handle the firearms in terms of this Act mustn't be given the firearm during the execution of their duties. And, as a result, the members are placed inside the CSC and outside we are running short. Some of the members who are failing the handling of firearms it is through deliberate. And, as a result, you cannot deploy him outside because he is not having the firearm. So, as a result, the Act now is against the organization".*

These participants' accounts suggest that the FCA 60 of 2000 is effective; however, their supporting reasons were unconvincing which cast some doubts on their inferences. The implementation of the FCA 60 of 2000 was identified as a weakness. This suggests that they are not capable to implement the FCA 60 of 2000 effectively. The researcher is of the view that one can look at the implementation of the Act to evaluate whether it is effective or not. If it is effective on paper but not in practice, it will be difficult for one to ascertain its effectiveness. The effectiveness of the Act lies with those that are supposed to be enforcing it. It means that the effectiveness of a legal framework is dependent on the enforcer's capability. Various issues were pointed

out as inhibiting factors affecting the effective application of the Act. The central issues identified include lack of knowledge and understanding of the Act by members due to poor or no training provided and failure by management to share information with members.

The SAPS members are supposed to have the skills to enforce the law competently. In instances where effective implementation is cited, the firearm holder was involved in criminal conduct, not necessarily in contravention of the provisions in the Act. This suggests that monitoring of compliance of the licensed holders in terms of FCA 60 of 2000 is receiving little attention. By law any breach of the FCA 60 of 2000 provisions carries a penalty which should be acted upon in terms of the Act.

5.5 Theme 4: Perceptions on violent crimes involving firearms

Under this theme the idea was to get the participants' views of the extent of violent crimes and the way they perceive those. The perception of violent crimes involving firearms is about individuals' impressions and attitudes about the prevailing crime situation. The information was to provide a picture of people's feelings regarding the rate at which firearms are involved in crimes.

The main aim was to obtain participants' views on the nexus between firearms and crimes. The information given by the participants seem to have been learned indirectly, rather than their direct lived experience as crime victims. The most common responses confirmed a rising number of crimes committed with firearms. The participants' views suggest that there is a relationship between the widespread availability of firearms and the upsurge in the levels of crime (see section 3.2).

The following interview quotes illustrate the views held by the participants in relation to firearm-related crimes:

SAPS 01 *“Crimes committed in South Africa through firearms, the highest scale is*

violent crimes committed through illegal firearms. If you look at the number of our trio crimes, the number is very high versus numbers committed with licensed firearms”.

SAPS 02 *“My perspective is that 90% of crimes committed with firearms are done so with so called illegal firearms. In other words, these are firearms that are not licensed even registered on the system”.*

SAPS 04 *“My perspective with crime committed with firearm is that, these are the firearms that have been robbed from owners or stolen during housebreakings house robberies and other crimes related whereby firearms are stolen. And, these are the firearms that are used in the commission of crimes”.*

SAPS 08 *“The crime, more especially that are committed in use of firearms went up drastically”.*

These participants’ responses suggest that guns are mostly involved in the commission of criminal acts of violence which are escalating. Some indicate that unlicensed firearms are generally used as opposed to licensed firearms. This confirmed that the transfer of licit firearms in the illicit market could be responsible for the increase in violent crimes. Therefore, it is reasonable to believe that stricter enforcement of the FCA 60 of 2000 on legal firearm owners could result in decreasing the availability of illegally owned firearms through minimising opportunities of firearms getting lost.

5.6 Theme 5: Exposure to training

Under this theme the aim was to ascertain whether learning in the workplace did take place, in other words to establish if participants were exposed to training to develop and improve their knowledge, skills and competencies to enhance their performance. This also helped in establishing the relevance and standard of training provided to participants.

The aim was to establish whether the SAPS provided any training on the Act in preparation for them to implement it effectively. The participants gave contradicting views on the issue of members' training. Some indicated that members were sent for training on the FCA 60 of 2000 while others suggested that there was no training provided. Those who are suggesting that there was training given, further conceded that it was not enough to prepare members to implement that Act adequately.

The following are the interview quotes relating to exposure of the participants to FCA 60 of 2000 training:

SAPS 07 *"The whole Act is not being taught. We are not being aware. As the police officers, we are not being aware of the whole Act. We are only aware of the applicable Act like the one that is guiding us on how to safeguard the firearm, when to use the firearm. The whole Act, only those who are working at the designated firearm office (DFO) are fully aware of the whole FCA 60 of 2000. But, other members, they are only aware of certain act that will enable them to handle those firearms. Like in street survival, they don't go for the whole FCA 60 of 2000, they only go to some acts that are related to use of the firearm, especially when to use the firearms and that the firearm must be with you all the time".*

SAPS 08 *"I don't think there is enough that is being done other than the fact that they are being just taken to training for them to be able to use their own firearms. But, when it comes to the Act itself, I don't think there is anything enough or there is any if there is anything that is being done to make sure that the members are in good knowledge of the Act, what is expected of them when it comes to the Act itself".*

SAPS15 *"The SAPS members are not clued up as to the nitty gritty aspects of the FCA 60 of 2000. We've got a broad idea of [what] the FCA 60 of 2000 is all about but for the policing purpose, I don't think there is much knowledge given to the members as to the finer things".*

SAPS 16 *“In my organization, immediately they take you to that workshop, the indication is that we have trained you in this. So, immediately after it [FCA 60 of 2000] was introduced, members were given that workshop then they were left unattended, then that implies that the members were trained. I believe you will find somewhere within the organization there will be that we have trained members in terms of FCA for which it was just a workshop, is not a [fully] fledged course”.*

These participants’ responses suggest that the SAPS management does not give members proper orientation as to what the Act entails. The management has a duty to educate members on the FCA 60 of 2000, including all other relevant legislation to empower them to enforce the Acts successfully. The indication is that members are exposed to training on the use of firearms, not necessarily on the Act itself. The purpose of the firearm course is for the organization to prepare its members to be ready to use the firearms operationally. To be trained to implement the Act one needs to engage the provisions of the FCA 60 of 2000 thoroughly.

5.7 Theme 6: Accessibility of information

The theme was to assist in determining whether the information that is circulated within the organization is accessible to members. The aim was to ascertain their awareness of the communiques regarding the withdrawals and amendments effected on the Acts and whether those communiques do reach the members on the ground who are responsible for operationalizing them. By having the correct information members will feel empowered, as they will know what is expected from them.

The participants’ point of views were required to ascertain whether the FCA 60 of 2000 document is easily accessible to members. The participants gave contradicting responses regarding the accessibility to information, particularly the FCA 60 of 2000 policy document. Many participants indicated that the FCA 60 of 2000 document is accessible while few confirmed the contrary to be true. Many participants’ responses indicated that the document is not easily accessible at the police stations.

The following are few pertinent opinions relating to accessibility to information as described by the participants:

SAPS 03 *“It’s mostly accessible by the DFO. Because of the thickness of the document and the constant changes in the document, I did not put it in the CSC. Is going to [get damaged], I do not think it would assist me at that stage”.*

SAPS 07 *“No, before we do this interview, I went to the charge office to check about this Act, I did not find it. But maybe in the intranet, in the computer is there but on the noticeboard is not there”.*

SAPS 13 *“Yes, [FCA 60 of 2000 document] it is accessible to them. It is posted in the police intranet and every police officer can be able to access it. And, also through the circulars that are send from National to Provincial to the Districts and so forth”.*

SAPS 15 *“Personally, I had to go to the firearms office when you phoned me about this to get the FCA 60 of 2000. And, then I was speaking to someone that said that when the new FCA 60 of 2000 was brought in place there was supposed to be workshops held for the members to attend to get them up to speed with the new firearms control. And, me, I personally wasn’t in such a workshop. So, I had to get the paperwork and read through it so that I can understand what this [Act] is all about”.*

These participants’ responses suggest that the FCA 60 of 2000 document is accessible to members to consult, however the indication is that it is not readily and easily available for members. Although they shared a common response, they differed in ways in which the document is accessible which include being placed at the DFO office, read during official gatherings and being posted on the intranet. This confirmed that the Act is not uniformly available at the police stations included in this study. In view of the different ways in which the Act can be accessed, it is possible that the information cannot reach all the target groups. Non-accessibility to information creates

a barrier for members to be empowered. It is important for proper procedures to be in place that will facilitate easy and convenient accessibility to information in the organisation. Such measures associated with the locating of educational resources would enable members to acquaint themselves within the content of the subjects. One should also mention that such access to information for learning should not replace training of members on subject matter.

5.8 Theme 7: Compliance by the law enforcers with the provisions of the Act

Under this theme the aim was to ascertain whether the SAPS members were upholding the law they were responsible to enforce. This was to assist in understanding the significance and the respect the members accorded to the Act. Being dutiful to the requirements of the law is mandatory to all citizens.

The participants' point of view was required to ascertain the compliance level in relation to the Act. Some of the participants confirmed conformity with the Act by members, while others disagreed. Most of the participants' opinions suggest that there is a glaring disregard of the FCA 60 of 2000 policy by SAPS members.

The following are the interview quotes relating to compliance by the law enforcers with the provisions of the Act:

SAPS 01 *"I see police officers are not having [firearm] permits. So, it means we are implementing the Act, but we are not abiding by the Act. We are in a way saying, private citizens must have valid firearm licences, but police cannot adhere to the provisions of the Act. We don't have permits which are provided for by section 98 of the FCA 60 of 2000. So how do we implement the Act if we are not abiding by the Act?"*

SAPS 03 *"SAPS is battling itself to obtain competency [permit] certificates, the one that is printed. So, currently even your own organisation is battling to conform*

to the FCA 60 of 2000. And, I am not even talking about your yearly maintenance shoot. Then I do not think that we are adequately geared for the FCA 60 of 2000”.

SAPS 07 *“Some carry [permits], some they don’t carry. Some they use these police ID (Identification Document) card as a permit”.*

SAPS 14 *“There is a very minimum compliance. One would say, there is a very minimum compliance”.*

These participants’ responses indicate that there is minimal compliance with the Act from the police members. The police as custodians of the Act should be exemplary in terms of compliance. The disregard of the laws is setting a wrong precedent when it is exhibited by those in authority with impunity.

5.9 Summary

The chapter presented the process involved in identifying the themes from the participants’ interview transcripts. Seven themes were identified which were linked with the relevant interview extract as described by the participants, namely: Understanding of the FCA 60 of 2000; Understanding of the purpose of FCA 60 of 2000; FCA 60 of 2000 effectiveness on the control of firearms in South Africa; Perceptions on violent crimes involving firearms; Exposure to training; Accessibility to information; and Compliance by the law enforcers with the provisions of the Act. The findings from this chapter are explained in chapter 6.

CHAPTER 6

INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS

6.1 Introduction

The chapter presents the developed explanation of the findings emanating from the participants' answers gathered through the semi-structured interviews. The themes developed from the interview quotes in the previous chapter are analysed and presented in this chapter in a systematic manner to be able to interpret them. The interpretation is done by reflecting on the information gleaned from the literature review, including the legal context. The findings are presented comprehensively to represent the views as expressed by the participants. Ultimately the chapter round off with a summary.

6.2 The implementation of the FCA 60 of 2000

The Act is a strategically formulated government plan aimed at addressing a problem within the society. That Act needs to be implemented to give effect to the realization of its intended objectives. The implementation of the Act involves the process of translating the strategically formulated government plan into action, aimed at the realisation of the objectives. According to Khan (2016), the success of any Act is dependent on how effective its implementation is. Irrespective of how well the Act is designed to be, without proper implementation its objectives cannot be achieved. This means that implementation is the most crucial part and a cornerstone of the strategic planning process. The participants' responses suggest that the implementation of the FCA 60 of 2000 is a weakness.

6.2.1 Understanding the FCA 60 of 2000 and its purpose

The understanding of the FCA 60 of 2000 and its purpose encompasses the ability of members to comprehend the stipulations of the FCA 60 of 2000 and the reasons for

its existence completely. The participants' opinions were essential to ascertain the level of knowledge and understanding of the FCA 60 of 2000 possessed by the SAPS members, since they are responsible for its application and enforcement. The participants gave differing opinions regarding their knowledge of the Act with the majority supporting the view that members are not fully conversant with the Act. Feedback from the participants suggest that they do not have much knowledge of the provisions contained in the FCA 60 of 2000 which is necessary for effective enforcement.

In relation to understanding the intended purpose of the FCA 60 of 2000, it was established that the participants had elementary knowledge only. This was an indication that they were predominantly just aware of the existing Act that regulates and controls the legal possession and use of firearms in RSA. It was also deduced from their answers that the participants understood the rationale for firearms to be controlled by the Act.

Since the participants' responses suggest that they have a rudimentary knowledge of the Act, it is necessary to improve their knowledge on the Act. This finding gives merit to the study by Bopape (2014) wherein he found that SAPS members had inadequate knowledge of the FCA 60 of 2000. The SAPS members' lack of knowledge on the Act is contrary to section 9(2)(q) of the FCA 60 of 2000, which stipulates that every firearm user must have knowledge of the FCA 60 of 2000 regarding the possession of firearms. Regulation 79(1) of the FCA 60 of 2000 also prescribes that an official institution, in this case the SAPS, must ensure that their members are trained on the safe use and handling of firearms, as put forward in section 98(8)(b) of the FCA 60 of 2000. In-depth knowledge, understanding and skill are the primary requisites for the effective enforcement of any law. Tougher regulatory measures are put in place by government to be translated into action by those tasked with the responsibility. It is no use to have a perfect law if it cannot be enforced.

The implementation and monitoring of the FCA 60 of 2000 prove to be difficult. SAPS members seem to have poor knowledge of the Act. It is inconceivable that police who

are tasked to implement the FCA 60 of 2000 have very little, if any knowledge about it. Others may believe that the FCA 60 of 2000 is an effective Act, but what seems to be deficient is the proper implementation. Any effective policy that is poorly administered is doomed to fail. A classic example is that a good food recipe is not enough without a good cook, you need a good cook to produce delicious food from a good recipe. It is imperative to develop the skills of the employees to be effective or to meet their work demands to the benefit of the organization.

The SAPS derive its powers and mandate from section 205(3) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, to give credence to the rights and freedoms of citizens. As a result, the researcher found that it is important for the SAPS members to know the legislation that guides them in their responsibility regarding police firearms. But it must be pointed out that knowledge of the Act is not enough without the ability to apply and enforce it. Legislation is an important instrument used by government to maintain discipline in the society. The behaviour, rights and responsibilities of individuals are regulated through legislations.

It is disappointing how little the participants know about the FCA 60 of 2000 and yet the FCA 60 of 2000 is directly affecting their jobs. According to Barrett (2004) and Khan (2016), poor expertise of frontline bureaucrats adversely affects the implementation of any Act. Competent employees facilitate easy and effective implementation. It appears that most of the police do not possess the requisite competency to implement the FCA 60 of 2000. The participants identified poor training as being responsible for the insufficient knowledge of the Act. The participants' assertions seem to be correct, because if one was adequately trained in a subject and applied the same acquired knowledge regularly such as enforcing the law, one will progressively improve one's skill and eventually become an expert in that field. But if one displays many levels of incompetence in the subject one was trained in; it casts serious doubt on the level or standard of training offered. The level of training presented becomes questionable.

Seemingly the SAPS management is cutting corners when offering the FCA 60 of 2000 training to members, if there is any training at all. Management has the responsibility of ensuring that members are properly trained to achieve the organisation's priorities. Members should exude confidence in the execution of their duties. The more the members are knowledgeable about the FCA 60 of 2000, the better the application of the regulation will be. There was no evidence that suggested that there was a fundamental lack of resolve by members, except the limited training which seems to be at the heart of the poor implementation of the FCA 60 of 2000. It is also difficult to question the members' attitudes and commitment towards implementing the FCA 60 of 2000. Therefore, the disposition of implementers of the Act could not be established to be affecting its successful implementation. Seemingly the core problem of poor enforcement is placed at the doorstep of the SAPS management. The FCA 60 of 2000 training needs serious and urgent attention to improve the effectiveness of enforcement.

6.2.2 Effectiveness in the control of firearms

The effectiveness in the control of firearms involves the determination of the extent at which the Act is regulating firearms and the relationship between firearms and crime. This was extended to include the participants' views on the ability of SAPS members to apply and enforce the FCA 60 of 2000. The participants' inputs on the effectiveness of the FCA 60 of 2000 exposed mixed comments. Some were of the view that the Act was not effective; however, the majority indicated that the FCA 60 of 2000 in its current form was effective.

The theme allowed the researcher to obtain the participants' views on the FCA 60 of 2000's effectiveness in regulating firearms. The majority of the participants' accounts suggest that the FCA 60 of 2000 is effective; however, their supporting reasons were different. This confirmed the assertion by Lamb (2017), who stated that the general control of firearms by the SAPS is inappropriate. However, it was in contrast with the findings by Bopape (2014) who found that the FCA 60 of 2000 was regulating firearms adequately. Amongst them there were participants who generally concurred and

pointed out poor implementation of the Act as the main problem, while others based their reasons on the restrictive measures of screening prospective applicants brought by the Act. This assertion confirmed the findings by Cook and Ludwig (2013) who discovered that applicants' background screening led to the decrease of violent crimes involving firearms. The participants who viewed the Act as ineffective cited the escalation of firearm-related crimes as the basis for their inferences. The regulatory failure identified could be ascribed to lack of knowledge by the implementors.

The researcher believes that one should look at the implementation of the Act to evaluate its effectiveness. A legislation's failure is normally detected in its response to the intended substantive objectives (Nwafor-Orizu, Chinyere & Tochukwu, 2018). If it is effective on paper but not in practice, it will be difficult for one to ascertain its effectiveness. The effectiveness of the Act lies within those that are supposed to be enforcing it (Hunter & Peckham, 2019). It means that the effectiveness of the Act is as good as its enforcement. If it is not properly enforced, it cannot be effective. Therefore, based on the views expressed by the participants, implementation needs to be improved. The effectiveness of any legal framework is dependent on the enforcer's effort, commitment and action (Ewalt & Jennings, 2004; Khan, 2016).

In terms of the participants' views on crimes committed with firearms, their responses suggest that firearms are usually involved in committing violent crimes, which are escalating (see section 3.2). This assertion confirmed the studies by Siegel et al. (2013) and Moore and Bergner (2016) who found that there was a close connection between the widespread accessibility of firearms and the high levels of criminal acts of violence. However, the participants' views differed from the studies by Lott and Mustard (1997) who found the contrary to be true. Their responses also indicated their awareness of the role of firearms in violent crimes. Some indicated that unlicensed firearms are generally used, as opposed to licensed firearms. This confirmed that the transfer of licit firearms in the illicit market could be responsible for the increase in violent crimes. Therefore, it is reasonable to believe that stricter enforcement of the FCA 60 of 2000 on legal firearm owners could result in decreasing the availability of illegally owned firearms through minimising opportunities of firearms getting lost.

It is extremely challenging to identify the level of influence the law-enforcers have to the prevailing firearm-related crime situation. The participants' assertions indicated that the availability of illegal firearms pose a risk to the society. This confirmed what Squires (2000) and Lopez (2019a) postulate that the proliferation of firearms forms part of the problem not the solution. This suggested that the FCA 60 of 2000 could not be contributing meaningfully to the eradication of illegal firearms. The other possible contributing factor could be the reluctance by the street-level bureaucrats to apply and enforce the FCA 60 of 2000. Tummers, Steijn and Bekkers (2012) state that individuals' attitudes are critical to the proper application of any public policy.

On the issue of the members' competency in the application of the FCA 60 of 2000, the participants gave opposing views on the members' competency levels. The majority views suggested that the application of the FCA 60 of 2000 is ineffective. The participants' responses suggested that they are unable to apply the FCA 60 of 2000 because of a lack in competency. Competency in the job is critical to achieve the desired results. SAPS members should possess the enforcement skills and knowledge to apply the law effectively. In instances where effective implementation is cited, it is only when the firearm holder is involved in criminal conduct or a domestic-related incident, not necessarily in contravention of the provisions in the Act. These participants' assertions indicated that the police focused more on the criminal part of the Act for instance, arresting suspects possessing unlicensed firearms and unlawfully shooting others. The DVA 116 of 1998 incorporates the immediate withdrawal of firearms out of the home environments where there is a dispute, as contemplated in Section 9 and as such members are compelled to act. This suggested that monitoring of compliance of licensed holders in terms of the FCA 60 of 2000 is receiving little attention and SAPS members are scratching on the surface when enforcing the FCA 60 of 2000. Khan (2016) states that it is highly unlikely for the Act to achieve its intended purpose if implementers are not following the standard procedures or directives properly in carrying out its decisions. Rossi, Freeman and Lipsey (2004) add that in most cases the Acts are not executed in line with their designs and guidelines, which could lead to implementation failure of the Act.

In terms of the law, any breach of the FCA 60 of 2000 provisions carries a penalty which should be acted upon in terms of the Act. It should be emphasized that enforcing compliance does not always guarantee achieving full compliance, but it is likely to improve regulatory compliance by discouraging noncompliant behaviour. The police's lack of action on compliance failures (Nix, Pickett & Mitchell, 2019), could be attributed to inadequate comprehension of the Act. They seem not to know which actions constitute violation of the Act, hence their concentration on the criminal conduct only.

Some firearm licence holders lose their firearms through negligence, which could be detected by monitoring compliance, for instance, failing to mount the safe or having no firearm safe at all. Moreover, Section 102 inquiries could be initiated for noncompliance which will eliminate the likelihood for such firearms to be stolen. According to some participants, there are fewer declarations of unfitness in terms of Section 103 at police stations because of detectives' failure to complete SAPS 304 forms and submit them to the Central Firearms Register (CFR) before the dockets are filed. Without effective enforcement, noncompliance will thrive, which will erode the rule of law considerably. The regulators cannot expect citizens to self-regulate or voluntarily comply with the Act, but they must play an oversight role. The sustained intensified enforcement is an essential control measure for improving compliance to achieve substantive policy objectives. In terms of Sections 106, 107 and 110 of the FCA 60 of 2000, monitoring of compliance should be done through requesting firearm licence holders to produce both the licence and firearm for routine checks to address compliance risks. Whenever compliance failure regarding a firearm is detected, there must be consequences such as revoking the authority to carry a firearm so that the desired effect of the Act could be achieved.

6.3 Challenges encountered with the implementation of the FCA 60 of 2000

In the process of the implementation of the Act there could be some stumbling blocks. As Allcock, Dorman, Taunt and Dixon (2015) note, people working in the front-line directly with the public are crucial to identify the Act's enforcement challenges much better than the national policymakers. The participants' point of views were required

to establish issues hampering the efforts of effectively implementing the FCA 60 of 2000. The participants shared common thoughts regarding the availability of hindrances to the implementation of the Act.

The participants' opinions confirmed that the SAPS members are not as effective as they should be in implementing the Act due to a variety of reasons. Various issues were pointed out as inhibiting factors affecting the effective application of the Act. The central issues identified include lack of knowledge due to poor or no training provided, failure by management to provide in-service training to members or share information with members, as well as noncompliance with the Act by SAPS members. Other participants identified corruption, multitasking and shortage of both human and physical resources as some of the challenges affecting implementation of the FCA 60 of 2000.

6.3.1 Training

The training involves exposure of the employees to learning and development in equipping them for their roles and responsibilities within an organisation (LaMarco, 2018). The aim was to establish whether there was any formal training on the Act provided to SAPS members in preparation for them to implement the Act effectively. Training is considered the most effective tool of imparting knowledge and skills to individuals who must in turn amass that. According to Kumar and Siddika (2017) and LaMarco (2018), public service should value training of employees to develop their skill levels and competencies to achieve the organisation's core strategic objectives. All participants confirmed that there was training provided; however, they conceded that the training given was not sufficient to prepare them to implement that Act effectively. The participants' assertion is very worrisome, since proper training on the FCA 60 of 2000 was supposed to be provided to members.

The participants' responses suggested that the SAPS management does not give members sufficient orientation as to what the Act entails. The management has a duty to educate members (Andriotis, 2018; Fisher, 2018) on the FCA 60 of 2000 to enable

them to implement it properly. Comprehensive training of employees and ongoing teaching are important aspects to bring about an effective culture of compliance. The indication is that members are exposed to the training relating to the use of firearms and not necessarily on the Act itself (see section 5.6). Seemingly the firearm training place more emphasis on the use and handling of firearm and less on the implementation of the Act. The existing firearm course proffered to members appears to be designed only to equip members with skills to be operationally ready in the use of firearms. It should be acknowledged that it was a good start to train members on the use of firearms, because it encompasses part of FCA 60 of 2000, but it was not enough to equip members to implement the Act.

Personnel resources are the most significant asset of any organization because they determine the success or failure of an entity (Elnaga & Imran, 2013; Kumar & Siddika, 2017). Asfaw, Argaw and Bayissa (2015) postulate that the formal education system does not equip all employees sufficiently with specific skills necessary to work effectively in the organization. It only offers a brief orientation hence some of them come into the workplace with different level of skills, knowledge, abilities and competencies. For this reason, organizations are compelled to offer extensive training for employees to contribute to its success substantively.

The knowledge, attitudes and experiences possessed by employees are mostly influenced by the types of training received. According to Armstrong (2009), organizations who put money into training and development of personnel turn to win their hearts and minds to work with passion, as they would develop a sense of profound connection to the organization. Such organizations bring the best out of their employees to be productive in their work. It is beneficial for an organization to invest in human capacity building. According to Herway (2018), employees whose identity is aligned to that of the organization are more productive and better performers. Reilly (2014) adds that engaged employees are always willing to go the extra mile in their endeavour to pursue the organization objectives.

Formal training equips the workforce with specific job-related knowledge, skills and competencies necessary to deliver a professional service (Meyer & Smith, 2000; Shen, 2004; Rahman, Ng, Sambassivan & Wong, 2013; Asfaw et al., 2015; Kumar & Siddika, 2017). Learning through training and experience improves the individual's intellectual and competency levels for better performance. Training and development are exercises that should be compulsory and constantly pursued, as they provide personal and professional development (Kumar & Siddika, 2017).

6.3.2 Accessibility of information

The accessibility of information refers to the manner and the extent to which important information affecting their work is disseminated to members within the organization. This was expanded to include the barriers affecting accessibility of information. The participants' point of views were required to ascertain whether the FCA 60 of 2000 document was easily accessible to members. The participants gave contradicting responses regarding the accessibility to information, particularly the FCA 60 of 2000 document. Many participants' responses indicated that the FCA 60 of 2000 document was not easily accessible at the police stations, while only a few confirmed the contrary to be true.

The participants' responses suggested that the FCA 60 of 2000 document is accessible to members to consult, however the indication was that is not readily available for members. Although they share common responses, they differed in ways in which the document is accessible, which includes being placed at the DFO offices, presented during official gatherings and being posted on the SAPS intranet. Worryingly, this confirmed that there was no uniformity of access to the document at police stations, despite being one organization. It should be noted that the DFO offices are not open all the time, for instance they are closed at night, during holidays and on weekends. Furthermore, although the computer systems are a means of accessing immense and unprecedented information, not every member has the same access to them. As a result, they could encounter difficulties in gaining access to information. Considering the different ways in which the information can be accessed, it is possible

that it could not reach all the targeted groups.

The point of departure is that the legal entitlement to information is a constitutionally protected right in the RSA. Section 32(1)(a) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, guarantees everybody entitlement to obtain information in the custody of the government to the extent required by law. Parliament enacted the national legislation in the form of Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000 to give meaningful effect to section 32 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. Personnel are required to remain well-informed on all matters involving their work, such as new legislations, rescinded directives, technical developments, policy revisions, rules and regulations relating to performance of their responsibilities. In the police there is standard practice concerning the flow of educational information and correspondences to keep members knowledgeable. These official memorandums are circulated to all personnel through their commanders who should disseminate the information during shift briefings and lectures. Hard copies should also be kept for future references. Management has a responsibility to help members get access to information to increase their knowledge, vision and ability to deliver (Jehanzeb & Bashir, 2013).

Non-accessibility to information creates a barrier for members to be empowered. It is important for proper procedures to be implemented that will facilitate easy and convenient accessibility of information in the organisation. Such measures associated with the easy locating of educational resources would enable members to acquaint themselves with the content of the subjects. One could mention that such easy access and sharing of information for learning is crucial but does not equate to formal training of members on specific subject matter.

6.3.3 Own compliance with the Act

This involves the levels of being compliant with the prescribed law. The participants' point of view was required to scrutinize the SAPS compliance levels with key provisions of the FCA 60 of 2000. The participants gave different views on compliance.

Some participants confirmed compliance with the Act by members, while others disagreed. Most of the participants' opinions suggested that there is a glaring disregard of the FCA 60 of 2000 provisions by SAPS members, which had gone completely unpunished. These participants' responses indicated that there is minimal compliance with the Act by police members in terms of the carrying of firearm permits as provided for by Section 98 of the FCA 60 of 2000 and being competent to use those firearms. There are several reasons raised that are deemed to be contributing to the failure by members to carry firearm permits, which include incompetency in the use of firearms; ignorance of the law due to lack of command and control; administrative challenges relating to printing of permits and non-attendance of yearly maintenance shooting assessments due to shortage of ammunitions and absenteeism.

In some instances, SAPS members are apparently using the same regulation for their benefits, which management seems to embrace and celebrate because they fail to confront such violations. Firearm incompetency is used by others in the police to avoid performing operational duties. Therefore, some members deliberately fail their yearly maintenance shooting assessment, so that they will be deployed in CSC (see section 5.4). They use firearm incompetency to their advantage, because it has no negative impact on their work security and benefits. Such behaviour condones laziness in the organization which will negatively affect service delivery. Firearm proficiency is a fundamental prerequisite for the police profession which must always be maintained to sustain eligibility.

Noncompliance with regulations could be due to either the lack of detailed understanding of the context in which the regulation works (see section 5.4), or lack of clarity of a rule, or through deliberate disregard of the law. The participants had pointed out several instances in which police are inconsistent with the FCA 60 of 2000. These include the following: police members that are carrying state firearms although they failed their annual maintenance shooting assessments; keeping state firearms in unmounted safes because their landlords object to the installation of safes in the rooms; and, using appointment certificates as replacements for firearm permits (see section 5.8). In some instances, police wore firearms inappropriately by failing to

conceal them from public view when not in uniform and carrying them in disapproved holsters.

The law applies to everybody, including the law enforcers (Mkhonza, 2019). The law compels certain behaviour and restricts discretions on all people without exception. It is of great concern that SAPS members who are supposed to implement the law are actively involved in subversive activities by failing to uphold the law which they are mandated to enforce. It will be hypocritical of the police to expect licensed firearm holders to abide by the provisions of the FCA 60 of 2000, while the police themselves are doing the opposite. The wilful violation of the laws is setting a wrong precedent, particularly when displayed by those in authority who are always supposed to respect and obey the law. The police as custodians of the Act should be exemplary in terms of complying with provisions of the FCA 60 of 2000 to the latter. They must adhere to the SAPS Code of Ethics and Conduct to foster public confidence. They should avoid any behaviour which might jeopardize their honour, erode citizen's trust in the police and thus damage the rule of law. All police members should obey the FCA 60 of 2000 provisions contained therein. Failure to comply should be grounds enough for internal corrective action to be instituted.

6.4 Summary

The chapter presented interpretations developed from the participants' answers gathered through semi-structured interviews. The themes developed from the interview quotes in the previous chapter were analysed and presented in a systematic manner to describe the findings. The findings were presented comprehensively in a way that represents the views expressed by the participants. The implementation of the FCA 60 of 2000 which involved understanding the FCA 60 of 2000 and its purpose, as well as the effectiveness in the control of firearms was discussed. This was followed by discussions on the challenges encountered with the implementation of the FCA 60 of 2000 which focused on the training, accessibility of information and own compliance with the Act.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a brief recapitulation of the preceded chapters prior to the recommendations and conclusion. It starts by presenting a summary of the study background, overview, literature review, methodology, presentation and interpretation of the findings. Thereafter, specific recommendations are made regarding the research results. In addition, a conclusion with regards to the aims and purpose of the study is discussed.

7.2 Summary of the study

Chapter one presented the background of the research. The endeavour to pursue the research was motivated by an increase in firearm-related crimes which suggested that there was widespread availability of firearms in the area. The researcher tried to establish whether there were flaws in the application of the FCA 60 of 2000 which could contribute to these perpetual increases in violent crimes. It was not certain what caused the increases in violent crimes in Ekurhuleni. However, the researcher argued that if the FCA 60 of 2000 was appropriately implemented, it could have prevented legal firearms from being stolen and transferred to criminals, which could subsequently lower the number of firearm-related crimes, such as house robbery, business robbery and car hijacking. The purpose of the research was to analyse the application of the FCA 60 of 2000 in Ekurhuleni. The objectives of the study were to explain the firearm legislative framework and procedures of implementing the FCA 60 of 2000; analyse the implementation of the FCA 60 of 2000 by the SAPS towards proper management and control of firearms; identify difficulties encountered in the application of the FCA 60 of 2000; and make recommendations on the improvements that can be made to implement the FCA 60 of 2000 more effectively.

Chapter two presented a brief history of the firearms legislation including other legislative frameworks controlling firearms in RSA. The current South African firearms controlling framework consists of the FCA 60 of 2000 and its supplementary FCR which replaced the AAA. The FCA 60 of 2000 was enacted in 2000 but was fully introduced in 2004. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, is the primary law and the key element of all laws in the country. All other laws must conform to the requirements as prescribed in the Constitution. The Constitution authorizes the establishment of the SAPS in respect of Section 199(1). It mandates the functions of the SAPS in Section 205(3) and it also protects the rights of all human beings in the Republic in respect of Chapter 2 of the Bill of Rights. Section 198 (c) of the Constitution stipulates that National Defence must be administered in accordance with the law of the country and global rules. This gave rise to the establishment of the SAPS Act 68 of 1995. It served as a regulatory framework regulating the establishment, organisation and controlling of the SAPS.

Chapter three focused on the review of literature concerning the relationship between firearm availability and violent acts of criminality. The question under review was whether firearm accessibility has an impact on the rise or decrease of firearm-related crimes. Several studies reviewed presented contrasting findings which confirmed the assertion by Moore and Bergner (2016) that researches conducted to establish the influence of widespread availability of firearms to the levels of crime produced contradicting findings. There have been many studies conducted concerning the nexus between the availability of firearms and violent crimes (Hepburn & Hemenway, 2004; Cook & Ludwig, 2006; Fleegler et al., 2013; Sherman et al., 2014; Moore & Bergner, 2016). Some studies supported the notion that availability of firearms increased violent crime rates (Miller et al., 2002a; Branas et al., 2009; Moore & Bergner, 2016), whereas others (Lott & Mustard, 1997; Lott, 2010) found that availability of firearms reduced violent crime rates. Other studies found that availability of firearms had no bearing on the rates of violent crime (Hemenway & Miller, 2000; Hepburn & Hemenway, 2004; Sherman et al., 2014). These contrasting findings confirm the argument by Moore (2017), who states that researchers are unable to reach consensus on the precise role of firearms in crime. International Firearm

Regulations of the following countries were discussed: the UK, the USA, Australia, New-Zealand, Botswana, Lesotho and Namibia. The countries included were chosen based on the interest in the variations of the strength of their firearms legislations and the aspiration to include a wide range of Afrocentric and Eurocentric continents and cultures. It was based on the context that some of the countries are considered to have restrictive firearms regulations while others are characterized as lenient.

Chapter four discussed the research methodology and outlined the techniques employed. The study used a qualitative research design. A sample size of 17 SAPS members working in operational components such as the DFO, CSC, Crime Prevention and Detective Services were used as respondents. The purposive sampling technique was utilized to gain first-hand information on the concerns regarding the application of the Act. The inclusion criterion was that of being a member of the specific units, while the exclusion criterion was inexperienced individuals in the research field, as they were deemed to provide poor data. Face-to-face interviews were utilized as a primary information gathering technique, while the literature review was the secondary data gathering tool. The interviews were audio-recorded. Semi-structured interview questions were utilized as a tool to gather information. The thematic technique was used to analyse collected data according to the guidance by Creswell (2014). The ethical considerations of the participants were considered to guard against any potential risks of unethical research. The researcher followed the Unisa Research Ethics policy (UNISA, 2016). Ethical approval was acquired from UNISA College of law Ethics Review Committee with reference number ST32 of 2018.

Chapter five presented the study results in the context of the responses as obtained through semi-structured interviews from the participants. The recognition and description of the themes linked to the collected data were also discussed. The themes were analysed and meaning, and relevance were assigned to each theme. The following themes emerged when analysing the interview data and were discussed in chronological order: Understanding of the FCA; Understanding of the purpose of FCA; FCA effectiveness on the control of firearms in South Africa; Perceptions on violent

crimes involving firearms; Exposure to training; Accessibility of information; Compliance by the law enforcers with the provisions of the Act.

Chapter six explained the findings of the analysed information discussed in the previous chapter. Subsequently, the findings of the above-mentioned themes were discussed.

7.3 Recommendations

In this section recommendations are presented in relation to the study's findings. The recommendations may bring about improvement in the application and enforcement of the FCA. Some of the recommendations responded to multiple questions which are interrelated. Recommendations for this study are drawn as follows:

7.3.1 Understanding of the FCA and its purpose

The findings indicated that the participants do not have much knowledge of the provisions contained in the FCA 60 of 2000 which is necessary for its effective enforcement. Poor training or the absence thereof could be the cause of the lack of knowledge on the Act. In-depth knowledge, understanding and skill are the primary requirement for effective enforcement of any law. This is a serious concern, as the participants are responsible for applying the Act. The researcher is of the view that it would be highly unlikely for the police to apply the Act effectively if they are not knowledgeable of the Act. Therefore, there is a need to increase the members' knowledge on the Act. The researcher recommends that SAPS members should be trained comprehensively on all the provisions of the FCA 60 of 2000 to improve their knowledge and understanding in the implementation and enforcement of the Act.

The findings also revealed that participants are able give clear descriptions of the FCA 60 of 2000. This was an indication that they were aware of the existing policy that is regulating and controlling the legal possession and usage of firearms in RSA. It also confirmed that the participants had basic knowledge of the FCA 60 of 2000. It was

also revealed that they understood the reasons for firearms to be controlled by the Act. It is important for SAPS members to know the legislation that guide them in their responsibility to police firearms. However, it must be pointed out that knowledge of the Act is not sufficient without the ability to apply and enforce it. The researcher recommends that the SAPS members be properly trained on the entire Act to augment their knowledge.

7.3.2 Effectiveness in the control of firearms

The findings revealed that the Act itself is generally considered effective, but its implementation was poor. The regulatory failure pointed out by the participants was attributed to poor knowledge, not the capacity or means for its implementation. The participants are not capable of implementing the FCA 60 of 2000 successfully. This suggested that in general, members are incompetent to implement the Act. Competency in the job is critical to achieve desired results. The participants should possess the enforcement expertise and understanding to apply the law effectively. The effectiveness of the Act lies within those that are enforcing it. It was also disclosed that the police focused more on the criminal part of the Act, for instance, arresting suspects possessing unlicensed firearms, using firearms to commit crimes, and DVA 116 of 1998 incidents. This emphasised the limited knowledge the SAPS members have on the Act. There is minimal monitoring of compliance on licence holders. The researcher suggests that command and control by management should be improved and guidance be provided to members in addition to merely training them on the Act. All provisions of the FCA 60 of 2000 are enforceable and complying with them is fundamental. The provisions of the FCA 60 of 2000 should be consistently applied, and its application effectively enforced. Management should also pay attention to issues of regulatory compliance and not limited to criminal conduct.

The findings also revealed that firearms are mostly involved in committing violent crimes, which are escalating. The fact that participants had similar perceptions indicated their awareness of the role of firearms in violent crimes. It was also discovered that unlicensed firearms are usually used to commit violent crimes, as

opposed to licensed firearms. This also could indicate that the transfer of licit firearms to the illicit market could be responsible for the increase in violent crimes. The researcher recommends that management should improve the monitoring of the implementation of the Act. This recommendation can be achieved through measuring the members' performance based on the number of noncompliance transgressions recorded in terms of section 102 and 103. An increase in the number of fitness inquiries will be an indication that monitoring of compliance is taking place.

7.3.3 Training

The findings revealed that some members, especially the DFOs, were sent for training on the FCA 60 of 2000, while others were only trained in the use of firearms. It was found that the purpose of firearm training is to prepare members to be operationally ready to use firearms, not necessarily for them to implement the Act. Such training was insufficient to prepare members to apply the Act competently.

To be trained to implement the Act one needs to be engaged comprehensively on all provisions of the FCA 60 of 2000. The researcher recommends that members should be subjected to the same training programme as the DFOs to equip them better, because their training is considered as detailed. A quality training programme which will deliver results should be provided to all members. An improved training programme should include a practical examination in which the necessary completion of forms will be done by the members. They should be given simulation dockets which they will have to handle practically. Thereafter they must be sent regularly for refresher courses to improve their levels of knowledge and competence in the interpretation and implementation of the FCA 60 of 2000. Members should also be sent for shooting assessments regularly to maintain their own competencies to remain relevant and fit for purpose. Training should not be compromised, as it is a vital means of ensuring that members are knowledgeable and skilled. The SAPS members should be trained on the entire FCA 60 of 2000 to improve their skills and competency to increase their performance in the implementation of the Act.

7.3.4 Accessibility to information

The findings exposed that the FCA 60 of 2000 document is not easily accessible to members, which makes it difficult for information to reach members at ground level. The indication was that there are various ways in which members access the FCA 60 of 2000 document, ranging from the DFO office, read during official gatherings and being posted on the intranet. This confirmed that the Act is not uniformly available at police stations. Considering the different ways in which the Act can be accessed, it is possible that the information cannot reach all the target groups. Non-accessibility to information creates a barrier for members to be empowered. Considering these findings, it is recommended that necessary procedures be implemented to facilitate easy and convenient accessibility of the information. Those measures should include implementing information files in visible policing, detective and support environments. Additionally, it is recommended that SAPS management should make a consistent effort to keep members informed about any new developments on the prescripts. Inadequate sharing of information could hamper the performance of members. Despite information being made available to members, intensive training should still take place.

The results of this research should not be generalized from the participants to the entire SAPS. It is highly recommended that further study should be undertaken which will encompass a bigger sample size from the police stations located in different districts in Gauteng Province. Researchers should continue to conduct studies to determine the factors contributing to ineffective implementation of the FCA 60 of 2000.

7.3.5 Own compliance with the Act

The findings revealed that there was a glaring disregard of the FCA 60 of 2000 by some SAPS members in terms of own compliance. There is minimal compliance with the Act by police members in terms of carrying firearm permits, as provided for by section 98 of the FCA 60 of 2000 and being competent in the use of firearms. With reference to this study findings, members do not comply with the Act. To remedy these deviations, it is advisable that command and control be improved and strict to address

non-compliance by members decisively. The administrative challenges relating to printing of permits should be addressed and the issuance of manual temporary firearm permits be enforced strictly in the absence of computer-generated permits.

The primary responsibility for members' discipline in the SAPS lies squarely with the management, and as such close attention must be paid to their conduct. Consequently, those who are involved in misconduct should face the consequences of their misdeeds. The sworn employees who repeatedly failed their firearms requalification standards, including remedial training, should be decommissioned, pursuant to the established FCA 60 of 2000. According to Section 40 of the SAPS Act, internal disciplinary proceedings should be instituted against any member on account of negative conduct. Hence the SAPS disciplinary Regulation of 2016 was enacted. Incompetent police members should be dealt with either by initiating SAPS disciplinary Regulation 5(3) of 2016 or convening a board of inquiry in relation to Section 34(1)(b) of the SAPS Act to determine their suitability to carry out official duties.

The deliberate failures of competency assessments by members should be taken seriously and swiftly dealt with through convening a board of inquiry on the strength of Section 34(1)(b) to determine their suitability to be retained in the service. It should be noted that compliance with the Act is not optional but obligatory and therefore non-compliance should be sanctioned to promote compliance with obligations and maintain high level of discipline. It is possible that when employees realize that violations of internal prescripts are swiftly and consistently acted upon by management, they will be discouraged from non-compliance attitudes.

7.4 Conclusion

The study's fundamental aim was to analyse the implementation of the FCA 60 of 2000. The question that assisted in getting the answer to the aim of the study was, are SAPS members implementing and enforcing the FCA 60 of 2000 effectively? The study revealed that the FCA 60 of 2000 is not adequately enforced by the SAPS members as a result of poor knowledge and understanding of the Act. The main issue

raised as a contributing factor to improper implementation of the Act was lack of training on the FCA 60 of 2000. The indication is that members are currently exposed to training which prepares them to be operationally ready to use and handle firearms only, and not necessarily on the entire provisions of the Act. Apparently, the use and handling of firearm training that is provided is not equipping them sufficiently to implement the Act. Since training was identified to be at the centre of the members' poor knowledge and understanding of the Act, it is necessary for SAPS management to provide them with proper training.

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LIST OF APPENDICES

Annexure A

P. O Box 2978, Halfway House, 1685

Reference	:	0464515-4
Inquirer	:	Lt/ COL RAKGALAKANE
Telephone	:	011 316-7402
Fax number	:	011 316- 1424
E-Mail	:	lieutenant@libasec.org.za

THE OFFICE OF THE PROVINCIAL COMMISSIONER
SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE
GAUTENG

APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE, EKURHULENI NORTH CLUSTER: NO: 0464515-4 LIEUTENANT COLONEL DITABENG MICHAEL RAKGALAKANE.

1. I am No: 0464515-4 Lieutenant Colonel DM ~~Rakgalakane~~ in the South African Police Service, stationed at Olifantsfontein SAPS as the station commander.
2. I am currently enrolled for a Magister ~~Technologiae~~ (M-Tech) degree in Policing at the University of South Africa (UNISA) in the Department Police Practice School of Criminal Justice College of Law.
3. My research proposal was approved in 2018 and I am required to conduct a survey within Ekurhuleni North Cluster to finalize my dissertation.
4. The title of the study: **An evaluation of the implementation of the Firearms Control Act 60 of 2000 in Ekurhuleni.**
5. The purpose of the study includes the following:
 - 5.1 To explain the firearms legislative framework and procedures in which the FCA is implemented.
 - 5.2 To evaluate the implementation of the FCA by the SAPS towards proper management and control of firearms.
 - 5.3 To identify challenges in the implementation of the FCA in Ekurhuleni North Cluster.

- 5.4 To make recommendations on the improvements that can be made to implement the FCA more effectively.
6. Since firearm related crimes such as business robberies, carjacking and house robberies are presently problematic in Gauteng Province; the researcher wishes to be amongst those who will assist through the study in combating this crimes.
7. In this study the researcher undertake an evaluation into the implementation of the firearm policy, procedural and technological systems related to firearm registration and tracing with a view to identify ambiguities and gaps that facilitated and may continue to facilitate the diversion of firearms and ammunition into the illegal market.
8. The study will contribute to the body of knowledge regarding the implementation of FCA.
9. I am requesting to conduct one-on-one semi-structured interview with operational members such as Commanders, Designated Firearm Officers (DFO), Client Service Centre (CSC) and Detective Services.
10. Each interview will last for approximately 60 – 90 minutes and the interview will be recorded using an audio-recorder.
11. All responses are confidential and will not be used in any way that may identify the participants.
12. I will abide by the rules of the organization while conducting the study within the service.
13. Regards:



DM RAKGALAKANE
2018-08-21

LT/COLONEL

Annexure B



23 August 2018

THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE HEAD QUARTER
Pretoria

To Whom It Concerns

CONFIRMATION OF MR RAKGALAKANE'S MASTERS STUDIES

I hereby confirm that I have been appointed as the supervisor to Mr D.M. Rakgalakane's studies in the Master's degree in Criminal Justice Studies. He completed the research proposal during 2017 and enrolled for the dissertation in 2018. He has already obtained ethical clearance for his empirical data collection from the Ethical Clearance Committee of the College of Law. He has made good progress with his studies as he completed already four chapters of the dissertation.

The title of his study is:

An evaluation of the implementation of the Firearms Control Act 60 of 2000 by the police in Ekurhuleni

His student number is:
39706095

My contact particulars can be found below my signature.

Sincerely Yours

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H.F. Snyman', written in a cursive style.

Prof. H.F. Snyman
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Annexure C

<i>South African Police Service</i>		<i>South African Police Service</i>
Private Bag 394	Pretoria 0001	Fax No. Fax No. (012) 334 3518
Your reference/Verwysing:		
My reference/My verwysing: 3/34/2		THE HEAD/RESEARCH SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE PRETORIA 0001
Enquiries/Navrae:	Lt Col Joubert AC Thenga (012) 393 3118 JoubertG@saps.gov.za	
Tel:		
Email:		

Mr DM Rakgalakane
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SAPS: AN EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FIREARMS CONTROL ACT 60 OF 2000 IN EKURHULENI: UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA: MASTERS DEGREE: RESEARCHER: DM RAKGALAKANE

The above subject matter refers.

You are hereby granted approval for your research study on the above mentioned topic in terms of National Instruction 1 of 2006.

Further arrangements regarding the research study may be made with the following office:

The Provincial Commissioner: Gauteng:

- **Contact Person:** Lt Col Etsebeth
- **Contact Details:** (011) 547 9131
- **Email Address:** etsebethj@saps.gov.za

- **Contact Person:** Capt Newumbani
- **Contact Details:** (011) 547 9131
- **Email Address:** newumbanivj@saps.gov.za

The Divisional Commissioner: Visible Policing:

- **Contact Person:** Col Si Simelane
- **Contact Details:** (012) 353 6397
- **Email Address:** SimelaneS3@saps.gov.za

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SAPS: AN EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FIREARMS CONTROL ACT 60 OF 2000 IN EKURHULENI: UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA: MASTERS DEGREE: RESEARCHER: DM RAKGALAKANE

Kindly adhere to paragraph 6 of our attached letter signed on the 2018-09-17 with the same above reference number.


MAJOR GENERAL
THE HEAD: RESEARCH
DR PR VUMA
DATE: 2019-02-22

Annexure D



UNISA CLAW ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 20180403

Reference: ST32 of 2018

Applicant: DM Rakgalakane

Dear Mr Rakgalakane

**Decision: ETHICS APPROVAL
FROM 3 APRIL 2018
TO 2 APRIL 2021**

Researcher(s): Ditabeng Michael Rakgalakane

Supervisor (s): Prof HF Snyman

An evaluation of the implementation of the Firearms Control Act 60 of 2000 in Ekurhuleni

Qualification: MA (Policing)

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Unisa CLAW Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for 3 years.

The low risk application was reviewed by the CLAW Ethics Review Committee on 3 April 2018 in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment. The decision was ratified by the committee.

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the CLAW Committee.
3. The researcher will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.



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4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.
5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data require additional ethics clearance.
7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date of 2 April 2021. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

The reference number ST32 of 2018 should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.

Yours sincerely,



PROF N MOLLEMA

Chair of CLAW ERC

E-mail: mollema@unisa.ac.za

Tel: (012) 429-8384



PROF CI TSHOOSE

Executive Dean: CLAW

E-mail: tshoose@unisa.ac.za

Tel: (012) 429-3005

Annexure E

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET



Ethics clearance reference number: ST32 of 2018

Research permission reference number: 3/34/2

2018-02-10

Title: An evaluation of the implementation of the Firearms Control Act 60 of 2000 in Ekurhuleni

Dear Prospective Participant

My name is Ditabeng Michael ~~Rakgalekane~~ and I am doing research with H F Snyman, a professor, in the Department of police practice school of Criminal Justice College of law towards a Magister in criminal justice in the subject policing at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled an evaluation of the implementation of the Firearms Control Act 60 of 2000 in Ekurhuleni.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

I am conducting this research to evaluate the implementation of the firearm policy, procedural and technological systems related to firearm registration and tracing with a view to identify ambiguities and gaps that facilitated and may continue to facilitate the diversion of firearms and ammunition into the illegal market.

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a member of the South African Police Service who serve in an operational component and involved in the implementation of the Firearms Control Act 60 of 2000. Approximately twenty-seven SAPS members will participate in the study.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to take part in an interview. The study involves audio recording and semi-structured interviews. In the interview you will be asked the following questions:

- What do you understand with Firearms Control Act (FCA) 60 of 2000?
- What is your perspective with crimes committed with firearms?
- What is your view of the control of firearms in South Africa?
- Do you think the FCA has impact on crime levels, elaborate?
- In your view what is the level of knowledge and understanding of the Firearms Control Act, 2000 amongst the SAPS members?
- Do you think the SAPS members are adequately equipped to effectively implement the FCA?
- Does South Africa have effective legislation to police firearms?
- In your opinion, how do you assess the effectiveness of the FCA?
- Are SAPS members effectively implementing and enforcing the FCA?
- What oversight is there by management on ensuring the adherence to standards regarding implementing and enforcing the FCA?
- How are you involved in the Implementation of the FCA?
- In terms of your experience are there inhibiting factors towards effective implementation of the FCA?

If you do not wish to answer any of the questions during the interview, you may say so and the interviewer will move on to the next question. The interview will be face to face and will take place in a private office at your work place, and no one else but the interviewer will be present unless you ask for someone else to be there. The interview will be recorded by audiotape and will be fully transcribed. The information recorded is confidential, and no one else except me Ditabeng Michael ~~Rakgalakane~~ will have access to the information documented during your interview. The interview will take up to 2 hours.

CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and



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be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

We cannot promise the study will help you but the information we get from the study will help to improve the implementation of the Firearms Control Act 60 of 2000 which will reduce the proliferation of illicit firearms.

ARE THERE ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR ME IF I PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?

The only foreseeable risk of harm is the potential for minor discomfort or inconvenience, thus research that would not pose a risk above the everyday norm.

WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND MY IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

Your name will not be recorded anywhere, and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give. Your answers will be given a code number, or a pseudonym and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings.

Your answers may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including the transcriber, external coder, and members of the Research Ethics Review Committee. Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records.

Your anonymous data may be used for other purposes, such as a research report, journal articles and/or conference proceedings. A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.

HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER(S) PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?

Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet at No: 109 Noddy Close Street, Rabie Ridge, Ext2, Midrand for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password



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protected computer. Hard copies will be shredded, and electronic copies will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer using a relevant software programme.

WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

You will not be provided with any payment to take part in the research.

HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL?

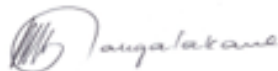
This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the College of law, Unisa. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Ditabeng Michael Rakgalakane on 078 682 9718. The findings are accessible for a year.

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Prof HF Snyman at RSnyman@unisa.ac.za. Contact the research ethics chairperson of the CAES General Ethics Review Committee, Prof EL Kempeel on 011-471-2241 or kempeel@unisa.ac.za if you have any ethical concerns.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.
Thank you.



Ditabeng Michael Rakgalakane



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CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I, _____(participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the <insert specific data collection method>.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname..... (please print)

Participant Signature..... Date.....

Researcher's Name & Surname..... (please print)

Researcher's signature..... Date.....



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Annexure F

THE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Station Name:

Date:

Starting Time:

Ending Time:

AN EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FIREARMS CONTROL ACT 60 OF 2000 IN EKURHULENI

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Kindly answer all the questions in this section by placing X in appropriate box.

1. Age : 20-30 31-40 41-50 51-60

2. Gender: Male Female

3. Qualification: Grade 6-9 Grade 10-12 Diploma Graduate

4. Rank: Constable – Warrant Officer Captain - Colonel Brigadier - General

5. Years of service:

0-10	
------	--

11-20	
-------	--

21-30	
-------	--

31-40	
-------	--

6. Title/Post:

Official	
----------	--

Commander	
-----------	--

7. Component:

Visible Policing	
------------------	--

Detective	
-----------	--

SECTION B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- What do you understand with Firearms Control Act (FCA) 60 of 2000?
- What is your perspective with crimes committed with firearms?
- What is your view of the control of firearms in South Africa?
- Do you think the FCA has impact on crime levels, elaborate?
- In your view what is the level of knowledge and understanding of the Firearms Control Act, 2000 amongst the SAPS members?
- Do you think the SAPS members are adequately equipped to effectively implement the FCA?
- Does South Africa have effective legislation to police firearms?
- In your opinion, how do you assess the effectiveness of the FCA?
- Are SAPS members effectively implementing and enforcing the FCA?
- What oversight is there by management on ensuring the adherence to standards regarding implementing and enforcing the FCA?
- How are you involved in the implementation of the FCA?
- In terms of your experience are there inhibiting factors towards effective implementation of the FCA?

REMARK ON THE INTERVIEW

Interview code number or name:

--

REMARK ON THE INTERVIEW

Interview code number or name:

Date:

Length of interview in minutes:

How did the interview appear to me/Observation?

Station profile concerning the Designated Firearm Officer (DFO) situation

No	STATION NAME:	EDENVALE	IVORY PARK	KEMPTON PARK	NORKEM PARK	OUFANTSFONTEIN	SEBENZA	TEMBISA	TEMBISA SOUTH
1	Rank of Station Commander:								
2	Geography of station:								
3	DFO available:								
4	DFO Rank:								
5	Year Appointed:								
6	Trained on Firearm Control Act?								