



Inside view

Police officials' perceptions of corruption and integrity management at three Gauteng SAPS stations in 2009

INTRODUCTION

When asked in 2009 to qualify his perception that corruption was a serious problem pervading the South African Police Service (SAPS), a captain replied, 'You read about it every day.' His belief that corruption exists on a large scale throughout the organisation in which he has based his career was shared by 66 of the 77 respondents interviewed for this paper. Are these perceptions fair? What do they suggest about how members¹ perceive the integrity of their colleagues and organisation? What impact do they have on organisational morale? What are the forces shaping these perceptions and what is being done to improve matters?

This paper explores and compares the manner in which corruption, fraud and integrity management manifested within SAPS stations in 2009. It examines employee perceptions of police corruption and the causal factors that may influence the prevalence or control of corruption and integrity violations. The research was conducted at three Gauteng priority stations² during the first six months of 2009 at a time when the SAPS was finalising and attempting to implement the Corruption and Fraud Prevention Plan (CFPP). Launched late in 2008, the CFPP was the first organisation-wide corruption prevention strategy developed since the closure of the Anti-Corruption Unit in 2002. It has since developed into what is called the Anti-Corruption Strategy to be launched in December 2011; post-2009 developments, however, are not discussed in this paper.³

METHODOLOGY

The intention of this research was to ascertain to what extent the CFPP had filtered down to and was being implemented at station level in 2009. Closely linked to this goal was the need to gain insight into the organisational culture of the stations and into the attitudes of members and managers towards integrity

and corruption management. There was also a need to understand whether any specific action had been taken to curb corruption and raise integrity, whether guided by the CFPP or not.

The three study stations are referred to in this paper as Kerensa, Holbeck and Sizakele. The names of the stations (and surrounding areas) have been changed in order to protect the identities of those respondents who would otherwise have been easily identifiable. Very serious claims and accusations made during the interviews have been brought to the attention of senior management at the SAPS head office, with the identities of the respondents being protected. The selection process for the stations is outlined under the heading 'Locating the study stations' later in this paper.

Data were gathered through semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with roughly 22 per cent (n = 22) of employees at Kerensa, 10 per cent (n = 28) at Holbeck and 14 per cent (n = 27) at Sizakele. The respondents included station commissioners, operational members and their managers (uniformed shift members, detectives and crime-prevention members), administrative staff, police reservists and student constables. Researcher control of the respondent samples was limited by the fact that the respondents were interviewed during their workday. This meant that most interviews could not be planned in advance (or based on scientific random sampling) and were therefore conducted when circumstances allowed. Because the researcher was permitted to request interviews with any employee, however, he was able to ensure relatively representative (and random) sampling by consciously approaching respondents based on their categories of rank or position, division or unit, race,⁴ age and gender in relation to the station demographics. A senior member of Gauteng strategic management and the chairpersons of the three community policing forums (CPFs) were also interviewed.

The interviews sought to gauge respondent perceptions of corruption and integrity with regard to both the

individual stations and the SAPS as a whole. They explored selected themes pertinent to the management of integrity in the SAPS. These focused on the perceptions of discipline and on the understanding of the rules at the stations; on the quality of relationships between junior and senior members; on attempts to manage integrity and corruption; on what should be done to reduce corruption and improve professionalism (both at the individual stations and in the SAPS as a whole); on the causes of corruption; and on whether corruption was deemed to be a problem at the individual stations and in the SAPS as a whole.

In addition, observations were made of the station environments and members, including their engagement with clients in the community service centres. No observation of members took place 'outside' (the stations).⁵

In order to protect the anonymity of the respondents, interview dates and times have not been indicated and the ranks of the commissioned officers have been withheld. Ranks that are indicated are based on the old, civilian rank system in place at the time of the research but changed in April 2010.

POLICE, INTEGRITY AND CORRUPTION

When engaging this subject, it is important to remain cognisant of the most basic principles of police organisations and of the resulting vulnerability to corruption and other abuses.

A common view is that police organisations exist to assist in the enforcement of the social contract and legal framework by which societies operate. In order to do this, police are endowed with a wide range of state-sanctioned discretionary powers, including the use of force and power of arrest. These powers are most regularly employed by junior members who work independently, in pairs or in small groups beyond the gaze of any immediate organisational oversight. Engagements with civilians often occur beyond public and organisational view and often involve contact with lawbreakers and those defined as criminals.

The public often has a love-hate relationship with the police, perceiving it as a necessary but often unwelcome element of democracy. As a result, police organisations develop closed organisational cultures, suspicious of outsiders and protective of their members.⁶

For all these reasons, members of the police can find themselves in positions in which power can easily be abused, often with a very low risk of negative repercussion. Other factors that may increase a police organisation's vulnerability to corruption include the morale and professional pride of the members, the norms and

practices of the communities in which they operate, the manner in which they are perceived by communities, managerial command and control, training and competence.⁷ Ultimately, corruption is recognised as a near-universal aspect of state policing.⁸

IMPORTANCE OF CULTURE

In order to contextualise the discourses emerging out of interviews, it is helpful to have some understanding of organisational culture and its relevance to integrity management.

Most South Africans would not doubt that they understand the meaning of the word 'corruption'. Many, however, misunderstand the concept, as station commissioners and investigators in an anti-corruption structure would testify. This view is based on the numerous complaints that they receive from complainants who refer to their complaints as involving 'corruption' but that do, in fact, fall outside the parameters of a technical definition of corruption.

To many South Africans (including some members of the SAPS), police 'corruption' is interpreted as any abuse of official power, as any criminal activity involving police or as poor service delivery. While abuse of power is an important aspect of corruption, however, almost all definitions include 'for personal gain'.⁹ In other words, an act that contravenes a code, rule or law is considered to be formal corruption only when it results in gain for the perpetrator. However, while the act of an SAPS member sleeping on duty or stealing a cell phone from a colleague may not constitute corruption, it should still be considered an integrity violation.

Leo Huberts defines integrity within an organisation as 'the quality of employee behaviour in accordance with the values, norms, rules and obligations of the organisation and its environment'.¹⁰ An integrity violation is therefore any action that contradicts these values and norms. In the case of the SAPS, this would include contraventions of the legal and constitutional framework within which the organisation operates as well as contraventions of the organisation's code of ethics and code of conduct, which define the moral and ethical obligations of all employees. The code of ethics includes the following pledge:

I commit myself to ... uphold the Constitution and the law[,] ... act with integrity in rendering an effective service of a high standard[,] ... act in a manner that is impartial, courteous, honest, respectful, transparent and accountable[,] ... exercise the powers conferred upon me in a responsible and controlled manner; and work towards preventing any form of corruption and to bring the perpetrators thereof to justice.¹¹

The code of conduct, under the heading 'Integrity', states the following:

We, as the employees of the SAPS, continually strive to uphold the mission, values, ethical principles and ethical standards of the SAPS. We will behave in a manner, which [sic] is consistent with these values. We will act honestly and responsibly in all situations. We will always tell the truth, perform our duties with noble motives and set an example in the communities we serve.¹²

Research suggests that large proportions of the South African populace do not trust the police.¹³ By implication, these citizens would likely contest the dedication of SAPS employees to the above principles. With concepts as generic as 'honesty', 'truth' and 'courtesy', it is inevitable (and clear) that violations of these principles – in essence integrity violations – would occur on a daily basis.

Basic violations in a police organisational context, characterised by high stress, danger and sometimes impossible expectations of crime reduction, threaten to lead to major violations.¹⁴ For this reason, an understanding of the culture of the organisation and stations becomes a vital variable in the process of understanding integrity and corruption. In general, organisational culture can be defined as:

... the basic, taken for granted [sic] assumptions and deep patterns of meaning shared by organisational participants and manifestations of these assumptions and patterns ... [It manifests in] many forms, including: myths, values and ideologies; sagas and stories, legends and heroes, metaphors and slogans; rituals, rites and ceremonies ...¹⁵

The testimonies in this paper speak to this sense of the mythology of corruption and integrity violations. Where members may not have evidence to back up their perceptions of corruption, corridor whispers and media exposés lead to the development of mythologies, which are added to the official culture.

Police culture is often understood as manifesting most clearly within station-level discourses, particularly through the passing on of meaning through story telling. This, too, is a fostering of myth.

In exploring police culture, Nigel Fielding stressed the need to distinguish between the police organisation and police occupation. The organisation is the formal structure, while the occupational culture develops out of police members' responses to official structures and mandates.¹⁶

While the occupational culture within the SAPS manifests in response to the structures of the institution, the

institutional structures themselves are shaped by the broader socio-political landscape of contemporary South Africa, not least of all by the ongoing political transformations and excessive levels of particularly violent crime. The values and norms of politicians and broader society influence the degree to which an organisational culture is deemed ethical.¹⁷ For example, perceptions in South Africa that politicians are generally corrupt and yet repeatedly call for societal moral regeneration have an impact on the attitude and behaviour of the members of society, including police, who may perceive these leaders as hypocrites.

Understanding police occupational culture requires cognisance of the legal framework in which police are required to operate, juxtaposed with the seemingly insurmountable task (in South Africa at least) of bringing an end to the threat of crime. Restricted by law, yet asked to perform the enormous task of what Anthony Altbeker accurately calls 'the dirty work of democracy', SAPS members inevitably develop their own sets of rules and guidelines according to which they fulfil their mandate as best as they can.¹⁸ Some of these may not be considered acceptable within the integrity framework of the country or organisation but they may be deemed necessary by those who use them as tools to do their job.

Integrity violations, however, should not be considered only within the realm of 'getting the job done'. Police involvement in criminal activity or corruption would often be difficult to justify as an informal but necessary policing activity. Some members may, in extreme cases, believe that they are assisting the justice process by punishing offenders through extortion or brute force rather than through the formal justice system, but this should be considered extralegal in a far more threatening sense than minor violations.

Whatever the misconduct – be it corruption, the use of excessive force or other violations of integrity that manifest within the SAPS – it should be understood as a product of the organisational (and station) culture. This develops within the occupational culture shaped by the institution, itself moulded by the socio-political history and context of South Africa, in particular the period since the fall of apartheid and the transition to democracy.¹⁹ In order to understand and address the structures that negatively influence such a culture, the voices of the participants should be heard and their perceptions considered.

GAUTENG PROVINCE

Considering that macro-contexts influence local culture, it is worth reflecting on the make-up of Gauteng Province at the time of the research.

Gauteng is both South Africa's smallest and most economically significant province. A thoroughly urbanised region, it occupies less than 2 per cent of the country's land but is home to both its capital, Pretoria, and the largest and richest city on the continent, Johannesburg. The province is the financial centre of the continent, generating 10 per cent of Africa's gross domestic product and over 30 per cent of South Africa's wealth. It boasts the highest per capita income in the country, juxtaposing soaring wealth with extreme poverty. The province's riches attract people from around the country and region, resulting in a diverse range of cultures. Population density is the highest in the country, with 576 residents per square kilometre, 97 per cent of whom live in the two cities.²⁰

These factors do not always work in the province's favour. Extreme wealth, inequality, urbanisation, population density and proximity to national borders contribute to the province suffering the highest crime rate in South Africa. Subsequently, Gauteng police operate in the most volatile, high-risk, high-crime environment in the country. All these factors contribute to the macro-environment in which the stations in this study are located.

Guided from above

As a nationally centralised organisation, the SAPS national head office in Pretoria formulates policy, standing orders and strategy and then communicates these to the nine provincial head offices for implementation. The provincial head offices are responsible for communicating and monitoring implementation at station level.

The strategic management division at national head office was responsible for the development of the CFPP. Once disseminated to Gauteng Province, it became the responsibility of the provincial commissioner and provincial management to guide and monitor its implementation, together with facilitation support from provincial strategic management. From a national head office perspective, provincial management was therefore responsible for the CFPP's application.

Gauteng provincial management

Provincial management in Gauteng appeared relatively active with regard to acting against corruption in 2009. Prior to the national head office disseminating the CFPP in 2008, a special provincial committee had been assembled to discuss the options at the province's disposal to address corruption. On learning that the CFPP was near finalisation, all but one of the committee's recommendations were put on hold and a provincial anti-corruption task team was established. The task team, which was founded with nine members, was, at

the time of the research, due to be increased to twenty because of the high volumes of complaints received.

Although a task team (or any other formal anti-corruption unit) is a vital component of any successful anti-corruption strategy, the CFPP did not allow for the establishment of such a structure. This could be considered an important flaw in the SAPS's approach to fighting corruption at the time and Gauteng should be commended for moving ahead on this despite national head office not having taken the lead.²¹ However, the risk existed that, with the task team in place, provincial management would fail to push for the implementation of the CFPP at Gauteng stations, relying instead on the task team alone.

Views expressed by a senior provincial strategic management member suggest that, while some station commissioners in the province took the CFPP seriously, its length and complexity led some to set it aside. He believed that there were too many pressures on station managers to implement everything requested of them. The manager also felt that national head office should have applied pressure and forced commanders to account. Head office argued that it did do this by making corruption and fraud prevention a compulsory part of the stations' annual planning and by linking it to the managers' performance assessments. While this was important, the evaluations did not set a minimum standard of action to be taken, allowing for managers to make the most minor (and often unverified) claims with regard to addressing corruption and fraud.

Gauteng strategic managers also believed the 2008/09 CFPP to be too reactive.

LOCATING THE STUDY STATIONS

The stations selected for this study – Kerensa, Holbeck and Sizakele – ranked within the 169 stations in South Africa known as 'priority' or 'high contact crime' stations in 2009. Over 50 per cent of all contact crime (such as rape, murder, robbery and assault) in the country occurred in these 169 station precincts in this period.

Kerensa and Holbeck were selected because of the high levels of violent crime in the areas in which they are situated (the SAPS response to which is an important culture-forming factor) and because of the diversity of the precincts with regard to infrastructure and population. These two stations did not rank highly among Gauteng's priority stations as based on the SAPS performance chart used to measure and compare station performance.

Sizakele was selected because it was ranked among the best-performing priority stations in the province.

Due to SAPS restructuring, the station commissioners at both Kerensa and Holbeck had been in their

posts for less than a month at the time of the research. However, the former commissioners were also still based at the stations and it was these commissioners who were therefore interviewed.

Kerensa SAPS

Although policed by a proportionately small workforce (91 operational members and 10 civilians), the Kerensa precinct spans 512 km². Most of this area comprises smallholdings referred to by the members as 'farms'. However, where farming is carried out, it is on a very small scale. Most of the other 'farms' serve as permanent or holiday homes for residents of Pretoria and Johannesburg. The station is located in the small suburban section of the precinct. A small industrial area and a township, Grootboom, are located between the suburb and the 'farms'. Located on the precinct's periphery, taking up only 20 km², is the township of Siyathala.

At the time of the research, a satellite police caravan to which Kerensa members were posted at the beginning of a shift and to which members of that community could turn for assistance was located in Siyathala. A new police station was in the process of being built specifically to serve Siyathala.

The area comprises a combination of Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) houses and shacks. It then had a population of approximately 150 000, half of whom Crime Intelligence believed to be unemployed. This small area could be considered the primary contributor to Kerensa's extreme levels of crime.

Members appeared to be genuinely afraid of working in Siyathala, where murders were committed weekly, where a member of the station had recently been shot and where, during the fieldwork period, two SAPS members from a specialised unit were killed. Apart from a sense of fear among some members, however, morale at the station appeared healthy.

In addition to the new station commissioner, a new head detective had also been appointed a month prior to the research.

Holbeck SAPS

The Holbeck SAPS precinct spans 194 km² and was home to approximately 850 000 residents in 2009. The station employed approximately 260 staff, including administrators.

The area consists of a relatively large and affluent suburb, a business district, an industrial area, a middle-income residential area (Bush Downs) and the Oranje informal settlement. The population includes a predominantly white middle-class-to-affluent population and a predominantly working-class and poor African

population, including a significant number of African foreign nationals. Zimbabwean residents of Oranje have, on a number of occasions, been the victims of violent attacks by South African residents who accused them of committing criminal acts.

The physical layout of the station was changing at the time of the research, as the station was being relocated from one set of buildings to another. As a result, many of the new buildings were made of prefabricated material. These had been built on a gradual incline, creating uneven ground.

Holbeck exhibited the weakest morale of the three stations. Members appeared to struggle under the weight of what was clearly a heavy workload in a very busy, physically disjointed station (although Sizakele appeared equally busy). Holbeck was also the station at which research was most difficult, where respondents were most suspicious of the researcher, where it was difficult to meet with some of the respondents and where official documentation was not forthcoming. This is most likely due to the size and busyness of the station, however, rather than to a deliberate attempt to withhold information.

Sizakele SAPS

Sizakele is a large former township. At the time of the research, the Sizakele SAPS station was less than six years old and boasted a large, clean and modern building. It also had the reputation of being among the best-performing priority stations in Gauteng as measured by the SAPS performance chart in 2009. While the older and established sections of the Sizakele precinct contain basic RDP and attractive middle-class housing, a single road separates these from a large, growing, informal settlement. At the time of the research, the station employed 187 staff. Observations and interviews suggest that it was the most efficiently run of the three stations, with the highest staff morale.

KNOWLEDGE OF STRUCTURES AND STRATEGIES

Almost none of the respondents in this study had heard of the CFPP or of any of the other formal SAPS strategies or policies to prevent or address corruption. The exceptions were two station commissioners, one crime-prevention shift commander and one senior detective. While these respondents knew that a formal framework existed within the SAPS, only one respondent knew its name – and he had specifically worked against corruption for many years.

For the most part, however, the members were unable to make reference to any formal anti-corruption

structures. Instead, initiatives that they referred to included an anti-corruption unit, Crime Intelligence, Organised Crime and an anti-corruption hotline.

The members who referred to an anti-corruption unit may have meant the province's task team, although, from the way that they spoke about it, it seemed more likely that they meant the former Anti-Corruption Unit, closed in 2002. Very few respondents referred to crime intelligence or organised crime, while eight respondents mentioned a hotline without probing, and another forty-six said that they were aware of one when asked directly. No respondents were able to recite the toll-free hotline number and not many were sure whether it was located within the SAPS or not.

However, as outlined in the remainder of this paper, formal anti-corruption strategies, plans and structures are far from the only tools necessary to prevent corruption, and members know this.

PERCEPTIONS OF EMPLOYEE DISCIPLINE

Within a police environment, integrity violations often have their genesis in ill-discipline.

When asked to explain the levels of discipline at Kerensa, nine of the respondents felt that it was poor and eight felt that it was average. The remaining four expressed individual views, such as that discipline was good in one division but not in another. The only two members who praised the discipline were a student and reservist, comparatively vulnerable respondents who might have been nervous about speaking negatively about the station.

Similar trends emerged at the other two stations. At Holbeck, perceptions were slightly more positive than at Kerensa. Eleven Holbeck respondents felt that discipline at the station was very good. While the remaining 17 held mixed feelings, none dismissed the station as having extremely bad discipline. Most of those with mixed feelings felt that at least half the members were well disciplined. The senior members at Holbeck tended to view juniors as less disciplined. Unlike the other two stations, the Holbeck respondents blamed lack of discipline on poor communication.

At Sizakele, a third of the members felt that discipline was good, a third felt that it was bad and a third felt that it was satisfactory. Importantly, two commissioned officers who had taken up posts at the station in the weeks prior to the interviews reported that discipline at Sizakele was far stricter than at the stations where they had previously worked. Yet, at Sizakele, the reservists repeatedly complained about the disrespectful, ill-disciplined manner in which permanent members allegedly treated them. This may

be linked to sexual relationships between permanent members and reservists, which is discussed under the heading 'Relationships between juniors and seniors' later in this paper.

Among those who were critical of discipline or who thought it to be average, emphasis was placed on a perceived decline in discipline since 1995 or since the shift from a 'force' to a 'service'.²² These sentiments were shared across all three stations, as illustrated by the following statements:

[Discipline is] pathetic. It's not like the old days anymore. The youngsters, no respect ... [Y]ou know if someone is talking to you they don't use your rank anymore, they just call you by your surname or name. – Inspector, Detectives (Kerensa)

It's a problem, a real problem. If you compare 1994 to now, these new police officers don't respect their senior, the constables are just doing their thing and when they call you they call you by your name ... The old ones understand the code of conduct but now, nothing. – Inspector, Detectives (Sizakele)

The SAPS is no longer like the SAP. The discipline is very poor, the members don't respect each other anymore, even the officers [I]n the SAP it was fine. These junior members go out without wearing a cap, they say there's nothing wrong. For me the important thing is my job, [including] wearing the uniform in the right way – Commissioned officer, Crime Prevention (Sizakele)

It's not like it was when I joined the SAPS in the old days, now it is like people aren't working to help the community, it's like we are here just for month end. In the old days you couldn't smoke without your cap on, or if you walk into the mall you wear your cap, or if you eat you go into a room and eat. The discipline is not that bad, it just needs to be a bit stricter. – Sergeant, Shifts (Holbeck)

These examples are important. None of them illustrates an extreme integrity violation and yet, to the speakers, these were clearly signs of a loss of past discipline. When basic command and control, self-respect and organisational respect are lost, it becomes more likely that further violations will occur. This nostalgia for the past was later adopted by senior SAPS leadership in their motivation for the reintroduction of military ranks in 2010.

Summary

Most members at the three stations felt that discipline was satisfactory or good. Among the younger members,

it is possible that this was due to their not having anything to compare their experience to. While many of the older members remembered a time when things were supposedly far stricter, some, including station commissioners, were generally satisfied with the levels of discipline and respect exhibited by members. The respondents' testimonies, however, are weakened by the numerous claims of violations in the station mythologies, which are discussed under the headings 'Perceptions of corruption at the stations' and 'Perceptions of corruption in the broader SAPS' later in this paper.

RESPONSES TO INTEGRITY VIOLATIONS

One of the roles of managers is to shape organisational culture and reality in order to meet organisational needs.²³ This can be achieved by including stakeholders in decision-making processes and remaining sensitive to their needs, while maintaining formal structures and adhering to policies and values.²⁴ This is far more complex than disciplining participants and a considerable proportion of the South African public – and of the SAPS – might, in any case, see strict discipline against members as the best way to manage corruption and integrity, as suggested by the 2010 reversion to a military-rank system. In reality, negative discipline should be balanced with positive reinforcement, otherwise local-level occupational culture develops as a negative backlash to the discipline approach.²⁵ Nevertheless, it is important to understand the approaches to the management of discipline within the subject stations.

Formal station responses

The records of disciplinary action at Kerensa and Sizakele reveal important differences in approach to discipline. Unfortunately, it was not possible to access the disciplinary register at Holbeck.

The Kerensa and Sizakele registers for the period 1 January 2007 to 3 March 2009 were compared. During this time, Kerensa's register recorded 35 disciplinary hearings while Sizakele's recorded 169. This translates into a disciplinary-hearing-to-staff ratio of 1:2,9 at Kerensa and of 1:1,1 at Sizakele. Although Kerensa's workforce is 45 per cent smaller than Sizakele's, the disparity in numbers is far too great to account for the disciplinary discrepancy.²⁶

Descriptions of offences at Kerensa are broad and non-specific compared with those at Sizakele. Kerensa's descriptions are broken up into only nine categories, compared with Sizakele's thirty-nine. The most common offences at Kerensa are 'failure to comply

with regulations or instructions'. Other proportionately notable offences are 'contraventions of the code of conduct' and 'failures to report on duty on time'. The remaining cases, recorded only once or twice, are so broad that they obscure the degree of misconduct to someone not privy to the proceedings.

By contrast, Sizakele's register goes into notably more detail, from 'negligently managed the finance of the state or telephone funds' to 'failure to report on parade during working hours' and 'refusal to accept post'. Other descriptions may be considered as broad as Kerensa's, such as 'disregard or neglect of duty' and 'criminal injuria'. Just under a third of the hearings at Sizakele are for members being absent without leave. Importantly, however, the criminal offences of 'rape' (2), 'attempted murder' (2), 'assault common' (3) and 'malicious damage to property' (2) are recorded, as are 'aiding an escape' (2) and 'prejudicing the administration of justice' (7).

These discrepancies can be interpreted in two ways. The first is that integrity violations are less common at Kerensa than at Sizakele. The second is that Sizakele is more aware of violations that occur and that disciplinary action is formalised. The interpretation that discipline is handled in a more informal manner at Kerensa is supported by respondents at that station. This senior member describes how theft by an SAPS member was dealt with:

Theft in the station goes with the seasons, it all depends who's here. When certain individuals are here you find petty thefts of cell phones or R50 out of the safe. But those type of things, because of the fact that we have control over that [the SAP13²⁷], they don't want to report it, all they do is they replace it. The members responsible for taking care [of the SAP13], they get together and they replace [the stolen items]. – Commissioned officer, Shifts (Kerensa)

Another respondent claims that a member caught stealing from suspects was forced to replace the stolen goods rather than being subjected to any formal disciplinary action.

It is important to note the ranks of the members who were disciplined. At both stations, inspectors were the most commonly disciplined rank, accounting for 60 per cent (n = 21) of hearings at Kerensa and 48 per cent (n = 82) at Sizakele. Sergeants were the second-most frequently disciplined, accounting for 20 per cent (n = 6) at Kerensa and 22 per cent (n = 37) at Sizakele. It is members of these ranks who have most contact with new recruits and constables and it is therefore their actions that new members are most likely to learn from as they are socialised into the organisation.

These disproportionate violations are likely influenced by a number of factors, including the inspector-heavy structure of the SAPS. Due to the greatly disproportionate ratio of inspectors to captains in the organisation at the time of the research, many of the inspectors will never be promoted, while others will wait ten to fifteen years. The subsequent frustration is compounded by the fact that salary increases are linked to promotions and by the perception (of both black and white members) that promotions are driven by nepotism and mismanaged affirmative action.

Eighteen hearings were held involving captains.

Verbal and written warnings were the most common form of formal discipline at both stations. A total of 75 per cent (n = 26) of Kerensa hearings resulted in verbal warnings and 25 per cent in written warnings. The breakdown at Sizakele was 41 per cent verbal warnings, 25 per cent written warnings and a variety of other punishments, including two suspensions, one dismissal, one full suspension, five suspensions from driving and two prison sentences (presumably following criminal trials). Notably, ten members were referred to Employee Assistance Services (EAS) for counselling, indicating a corrective rather than a purely punitive approach in some cases.

Although not recorded in the register, it emerged during interviews that at least two corruption cases involving Kerensa members had been registered with Organised Crime and Crime Intelligence. The cases were ongoing. They were known to very few at the station; the managers had not received any feedback on the cases since reporting them.

Perceptions and experiences of disciplinary management

The respondents were asked to share their perceptions and experiences of the managers' approaches to ill-discipline, integrity violations and corruption. At Kerensa and Sizakele, the respondents' perceptions about action taken were contrasted with formal disciplinary action reported in the relevant registers. Despite the disproportionate number of disciplinary hearings held at Sizakele, personnel there seemed to have a higher morale than at the other two stations. While the criminal actions recorded in the Sizakele register represent extreme integrity (and criminal) violations, the frequent and strict discipline of members for less severe offences may have contributed towards a respect for the managers. Evidence for this is reflected in the testimony of a new commissioned officer at the station:

In the two weeks I've been here I've heard of steps taken against people, especially for vehicle misuse. People were disciplined through hearings. It happened before my time but it gives me the impression that [the station commissioner] wants to take care of his state assets. – Commissioned officer (Sizakele)

The fact that this officer was new to the station but had, through the organisational grapevine and mythology, heard of these actions suggests a tough approach to discipline by the managers. In the same vein, within three months of his arrival, the station commissioner seems to have instilled in the civilian quoted below the sense that corruption is detrimental to society and is not tolerated (civilian staff are not considered to be as prone to corruption as operational members):

The only place I hear [of management's interventions] is in the station lectures. We are always reminded about that. The [station commissioner] tells us that we know what we have to do outside, you know that you have to protect society. I remember one day he said 'doing crime with another member of society, you don't help them, you expose them to a worse life' – Civilian (Sizakele)

Similar sentiments were expressed by most of the other respondents at the station.

All three stations have members assigned to deal with disciplinary hearings. At Sizakele, an administrative assistant is assigned to help manage hearings, bolstering the disciplinary officer's capacity. This is her experience:

If someone commits something, before the station commissioner takes any action he will talk to the person, communicate with them. I think that's a good approach. I've realised the employees here don't like to communicate with the commissioner but I think it's good. He wants to know his members. If someone commits a crime but it was not his intention, you have to get his side of the story before you take action. Even if they will be charged. – Civilian, Discipline Administration (Sizakele)

The station commissioner's strong stance against integrity violations is further demonstrated by his apparent dedication to community needs, perceptions and complaints. This was shown through his delaying a station lecture held during the fieldwork period – much to the annoyance of his members – in order to allow a community meeting at the station to conclude 30 minutes late. A senior detective describes the situation as follows:

The station commissioner goes around, he has meetings with the community people, saying they must help us with the members who are corrupt, saying we need their names so that we can take steps against them. – Commissioned officer, Detective Head (Sizakele)

Both these statements reflect an effective and holistic approach to discipline by the station commissioner and one that is appreciated by the employees. Few negative words were spoken about the commissioner during the research period and his management was repeatedly praised. It was stressed that he constantly lectured members on the dangers of corruption:

They often inform us about corruption. They put the ball in our court. If we do corruption we will be charged, lose the house, the job and live in a shack. – Inspector, Community Service Centre/Public Order Police (Sizakele)

Yet, despite the positive light in which the station commissioner was viewed by most of the members, allegations were made by some of the respondents that the commissioner himself was engaged in serious integrity violations. These are discussed under the heading 'Relationships between juniors and seniors' later in this paper.

The disciplinary officer at Kerensa, like many of the members with ten or more years of service, felt that discipline and respect for ranks had eroded since the late 90s and since transition to the SAPS. This officer believed that managers were afraid to reprimand their members for fear of being accused of racism or of becoming unpopular. An inspector at Kerensa articulated a similar view, claiming that managers were afraid to take action against members for fear of having their lives threatened. While these views are serious, they were expressed by a minority of respondents.

The disciplinary officer, along with nine other Kerensa respondents, reported that station management had taken steps to prevent corruption and improve integrity. This, it was reported, was achieved through rapid responses to complaints and rumours of corruption or abuse of power and through punishment when discovered:

I know they have done investigations and opened criminal cases against members who were suspended or transferred. – Inspector, Human Resource Management (Kerensa)

We've had quite a lot of incidences where we've suspended a few guys and dismissed some reservists. We press it in the parades. – Commissioned officer, Crime Prevention (Kerensa)

We give information through to organised crime units and projects are registered on members if the need arises. – Commissioned officer, Crime Prevention (Kerensa)

Six respondents at Kerensa believed that there were instances where a member at the station had reported another for corruption or wrongdoing, although accounts were vague. Still, there were employees who had never heard of any action having been taken:

I have no idea [what management has done]. You hear certain things about corruption but nothing concrete ... you won't ever hear somebody's been caught or charged. I don't know if they keep it hush-hush or that nobody ever gets caught. – Civilian, Human Resource Management (Kerensa)

Notably, none of the cases recorded in Kerensa's disciplinary register pertains to a serious offence, such as assault or corruption. Despite this, a number of anecdotes and claims of serious abuse of power contributes to station discourse around corruption. While most of these claims are repeated by enough respondents to give them credence, the knowledge remains largely in the realm of rumour and myth. These are sketched under the heading 'Perceptions of corruption at the stations' later in this paper.

The former station commissioner at Holbeck was well known in Gauteng SAPS management circles for his tough stance against corruption, particularly for his past interventions at a station notorious for its high levels of crime and corruption. He was also part of the Gauteng team formed to discuss the province's options with regard to corruption. Some members referring to him spoke as though he had had an open-door policy, while others suggested that there had been no support structures or interventions at Holbeck:

Yes, we have some strategic measures from the [former station commissioner]. He has put some measures in place that whenever there are suspicions or allegations against a member, the member that hears that is obliged to report that. There are also other measures, that when criminal offences are reported a case must be opened, for example, if a bribe is attempted then a case must be opened [against the member of the public]. – Commissioned officer, Crime Prevention (Holbeck)

While the former station commissioner's initiatives and support of the members are important, the onus remains on the members on the ground to take action. Whether this happens depends on the culture within the station, something that managers play an important role in shaping.

The most important intervention at Holbeck, as at Sizakele, was deemed to be station and parade lectures, as described by this constable:

They are trying their best, speaking to the members, telling them not to commit crime or do corruption. Investigating how members work[,] ... they set traps if members of the community complain. The community complains often about corruption. – Constable, Shifts (Holbeck)

Although two members referred to entrapment (the setting of traps) to catch corrupt members, there was no evidence from interviews with commissioned officers that this had been used against members in recent years. This may suggest the merging of organisational or public mythology regarding the fighting of corruption with that of station mythology.

Not all the managers felt that they, as leaders, were doing enough. Questioning the impact of lectures, a senior detective said the following:

I don't know, I don't think [we are doing] much, even if you talk about corruption and tell members not to be involved in corrupt matters, I don't think members even view it as serious, I don't know what else needs to be done, just to make them aware of the consequences behind corruption. It's not enough. – Commissioned officer, Detectives (Holbeck)

In a more explicit attack on the strategy of lectures, a constable reflected as follows:

The captains and officers also always tell you not to associate with corruption. It's always preached, even though they are doing it themselves! We can see them doing it themselves. A guy gets arrested; you arrest him then the next day he is released because they are buddies or because of racial influence ... Sometimes you'd think the cells are designed for black people or for poor people only. – Constable, Detectives (Holbeck)

Three black members at the station made similar references to the manner in which some white detectives allegedly gave preferential treatment to white suspects by, for instance, issuing police bail or persuading uniformed members not to open cases against them. While such allegations are important, these members may not have adequately queried the circumstances under which such releases were negotiated. At all three stations, the managers referred to the way in which community members misinterpreted the issuing of police bail as corruption. While police bail certainly presents detectives with an opportunity to extort

money, it cannot be assumed that it is generally used in an abusive manner.

Summary

The anti-corruption interventions most commonly perceived to be practiced at the three stations (particularly at Holbeck and Sizakele) were the issuing of verbal warnings against corruption, and education and instruction through lectures and parade briefings. At Holbeck, these were viewed by some as being worthless and ineffective – even hypocritical – due to a belief that corruption was being committed by some of the commissioned officers. At Sizakele, however, the messages and consistency of the lectures seemed to strike a deeper chord, possibly due to the frequency with which members were disciplined for infractions. This disparity may also be due to the manner in which managers approach lectures at the two stations. At Sizakele, it was reported that the lectures focused more on the negative effects that corruption and abuse have on the community than on threats of the punishment of members. The opposite was true at Holbeck, where the lectures reportedly focused on the consequences that members would face if caught engaging in such offences.

These perceptions are ironic if one reflects on the proportionately large number of disciplinary hearings held at Sizakele. Again, this balanced approach to the management of discipline may partially account for the members' positive view of their seniors. It is also likely that Sizakele's managers gain respect by complementing their anti-corruption rhetoric with disciplinary action.

At Kerensa, formal disciplinary action (including reporting members to the Organised Crime unit) was complemented by testimonies of informal solutions to integrity violations. Similar testimony did not emerge at Holbeck and Sizakele, although it is very possible that similar processes do exist there. At Holbeck, members appeared less willing than at the other two stations to report colleagues involved in illicit violations. This relative indifference and secrecy may inhibit the management of integrity and discipline at this station more than at the others. While at all three stations anecdotes (or myths) of members who had been arrested, disciplined or caught engaging in criminal or corrupt activity were part of station discourse, references to this mythology at Holbeck suggest a greater acceptance of the inevitability of corruption.

While station lectures may not be considered a particularly robust approach to corruption control, it is an attempt to engage the culture-forming attitudes of members. That Sizakele's members appeared to respond favourably to appeals not to disenfranchise community

members suggests evidence of this. However, the high rate of disciplinary infringements at that station, although not linked to corruption, suggests a disconnect between attitude and action.

Education and communication through station lectures and briefings represent an important component in the management of corruption and integrity. However, their effect is diminished if those factors that threaten and erode integrity are not addressed.

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN JUNIORS AND SENIORS

Organisational productivity may be greatest when employees identify as a group and when that group supports the goals and values of the organisation.²⁸ For a group to form, members need to like each other and the idea of a unified group.

Within the SAPS, one organisational value is a respect for rank hierarchy. Poor relationships among co-workers, juniors and seniors contribute to an occupational culture of rebellion, where members ignore instructions, codes and values communicated by managers. Additionally, if managers are not respected, the likelihood of a successful anti-corruption intervention or of the formation of a strong ethical culture is diminished.²⁹

When asked to describe the relationships between commissioned and non-commissioned officers at the stations, most of the respondents reported them to be good, characterised by mutual respect. This is illustrated in the following statements from respondents at Kerensa:

[Relationships at the station are] not strict but you know who the officer is. You try to have some degree of respect but you can joke around with them. They treat all the members like that. – Civilian, Human Resource Management (Kerensa)

I've been an officer since '91 ... and I must say that I don't have any trouble with discipline with my junior members, or respect from them towards me. What I do see is that junior members are on a much more casual foot. We have a captain who lives with a junior, they are in a relationship. – Commissioned officer, Crime Prevention (Kerensa)

Twenty respondents at Holbeck spoke positively of collegial relationships there.

Despite this praise, few believed that rank was respected as much as it should be, a perception founded on an increase in commissioned officers working 'outside' at an operational level.

Once again, comparisons were drawn with the pre-1994 era, when the ranks of sergeant and warrant officer, equivalent to the ranks of sergeant and inspector at the time of the research, wielded far more power, command and control over their subordinates. Due to a disproportionate number of inspectors in the SAPS at the time of the research (and of writing), these ranks were often not valued as much as would be expected, especially in stations where their numbers significantly outweighed the ranks of constable and sergeant.

Members felt that the perceived flattening was a result of captains and superintendents working on the street with numerous inspectors and sergeants beneath them, diluting these subordinates' authority.

At Holbeck, two captains and a superintendent oversaw each shift. Similar concerns were not raised at the other two stations.

Members made reference to the fact that officers working 'outside' with juniors aided the formation of friendships and good relations between juniors and seniors. It is unclear from this data whether the benefits of this approach outweigh possible negatives. As at Sizakele, a member expressed feelings of being able to turn to commanders for advice with both personal and work-related problems.

Illustrating the potential danger in overly friendly relations between seniors and juniors, Holbeck's former station commissioner articulated what is probably an ideal scenario for relationships between seniors and juniors:

[They should be] relatively cordial, there has to be a good relationship between juniors and seniors, but not overly familiar to the point where people call each other by first names. – Former station commissioner (Holbeck)

He believed that this was the case at Holbeck. To an extent, other respondents agreed that relationships were mostly good at the station, although many suggested that this 'good' went beyond 'cordial'.

Despite testimonies of good relationships at a personal level, complaints of poor internal communication suggest that good personal relations do not necessarily aid official communication.

Morale and attitude at Sizakele were in general notably better than at the other two stations. This is a likely contributing factor to its being among the best-performing priority stations in the province. However, fewer respondents at the station praised member relationships than at Kerensa. Respondents tended to combine complaints of disrespect with praise, particularly in respect of senior managers, as shown in the following example:

At this station most officers think positively. Not all of them. Some use rank as a power to instruct or talk down to you[,] ... so if they use rank and don't respect age, it demoralises us. He's a senior in rank but a junior in age. He doesn't consider you as a father or brother, he considers you as a child ... [B]ut most officers are very positive, they help us with personal and professional problems ... Rank doesn't matter, it goes according to humanity. I am a human, you are a human, we must respect each other. – Inspector, Support Services (Sizakele)

Most reservists at Sizakele described senior-junior relationships along the lines of, 'It's OK, everything is fine.' However, most also complained about what they felt was abuse and disrespect of reservists by permanent members. A reservist had recently opened a case against a permanent member, for example, after allegedly being called names and pushed aside while helping a client. If true, these complaints suggest that permanent members do not appreciate reservists despite the fact that most at the station work the same hours as permanent members but without pay.

Three reservists independently claimed that some commissioned officers, including the station commissioner, were sleeping with female reservists. It was alleged that these managers offered the reservists incentives, such as lunch or groceries, or promised permanent posts in the SAPS in exchange for sex. It was also alleged that a reservist had borne a child with a married officer. One reservist claimed that some inspectors were also sleeping with reservists, spurred on by the fact that their seniors were. Another claimed that a member had been charged with raping a suspect in a cell and another for having sex with a minor (these anecdotes are supported by two separate disciplinary records relating to rape).

A junior member, new to the station but ignorant of the alleged sexual relationships between reservists and seniors, made a similar claim about the station commissioner, alleging that he had made blatant sexual proposals to her on a number of occasions. The member said that she had reported the incidents to her commanding officer (an inspector), who had told her that, if it happened again, she should report it to the commanding officer's senior. Although significantly junior to the station commissioner, this lack of immediate action by the inspector and, indeed, the suggestion that, if the violation occurred again, the complainant should independently approach another officer, suggests a failure in leadership.

Although the reservists (but not the permanent member) are allegedly consensual in these sexual relationships, the actions represent an abuse of power and threat to organisational cohesion.

These alleged relationships aside, almost everyone in the station had only praise for the station commissioner and senior managers. This suggests effective management but also suggests a culture in which seniors' abuse of power is tolerated by juniors. It illustrates the ease with which illicit activities can come to be considered acceptable within a particular station culture.

Summary

Most respondents reported that relationships between seniors and juniors were good and that there was mutual respect between them. This is positive and important but poses certain risks, as indicated by suggestions of a flattened hierarchy at Holbeck. Testimony regarding the use of names rather than rank titles to address superiors may also be considered a subtle but important flaw in the state of the hierarchy. The risk that members become, in the words of one respondent, 'too buddy-buddy' is that seniors become reluctant to discipline their juniors, while the juniors take liberties in interpreting instructions. This did not seem to be the case at Sizakele, in particular, where formal discipline was frequent and command and control appeared functional.

Positive relationships between members should be considered healthy. In an environment where rank is respected and where respect remains mutual and cordial, these contribute to the health of the organisation and the occupational culture within which the members work.

PERCEPTIONS OF CORRUPTION AT THE STATIONS

Ten respondents at Kerensa, 16 at Holbeck and nine at Sizakele believed that corruption was a problem at their stations. Altogether five respondents at Kerensa, five at Holbeck and nine at Sizakele were fairly certain or confident that there was corruption at the station but they could not substantiate their belief with evidence. When the two totals are added at each station, 15 of 22 respondents at Kerensa, 21 of 28 at Holbeck and 18 of 27 at Sizakele had a fair to very strong belief that corruption was a problem at their stations. However, both those who believed that corruption was a problem at their stations and many of those who did not still recounted corruption claims and anecdotes of integrity violations at their stations. While some of these were repeated by enough respondents to give them credence, this knowledge remains largely in the realm of myth-forming rumours. Often, these stories were not recalled or shared until the researcher probed, having had the story recounted by previous respondents. These beliefs

and anecdotes generated mythologies of corruption and other integrity violations, which emerged in the interviews. Mythologies manifested in three general forms, referred to here as:

- Rumour-informed beliefs
- Factual rumour-informed beliefs
- Factually informed beliefs

Rumour-informed beliefs refer to perceptions based on rumours without access to reliable informants or concrete knowledge of investigations or disciplinary action. The following are examples of this discourse:

[I believe there is corruption here] because of the rumours. You hear stuff. I think nobody gives a damn so they don't report it. Nobody cares enough to want to make a difference. I don't have proof so I can't report it. – Civilian (Kerensa)

You hear people talking but you don't have substance so you can't say it's a problem. When you call them they don't say any more. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. – Commissioned officer, Detective Head (Sizakele)

I've never seen any [corruption], sometimes I hear about it. Not in my shift. Sometimes when you attend a complaint sometimes they will say 'so and so are my friends', just the minor things but it's still corruption. – Constable, Shifts (Holbeck)

Factual rumour-informed beliefs are those based on the alleged knowledge of violations that have not been dealt with through formal structures or on rumours that have been accepted as truth:

[We don't have corruption here] in a real sense but there is some stuff that's going on but I won't say it's affecting the whole station. There is but it's not prominent. It's *tjou-tjou*³⁰ money that they take and when they go out they take the liquor for themselves and the cigarettes, and then on the detective side they make deals with the suspects, make docket go missing. – Inspector, Human Resource Management (Kerensa)

The community offers money to the police outside, maybe at roadblocks and with stolen vehicles. If someone has been caught with a stolen vehicle instead of arresting them they take a bribe and then take the car to the pound but let the guy go. Then they also give the police items from the car. – Inspector, Registration (Sizakele)

Most members take bribes, especially those who work outside. Especially from the foreigners, those who don't

have their IDs or passports, they just release them ... [Foreigners who engage in criminal activity] pay bribes. If they get arrested they will pay bribes to the detectives mostly so they don't have to go to court. – Constable, Shifts (Holbeck)

Factually informed beliefs refer to those that are backed up by official records, senior testimony or multiple independent sources:

I'm not saying there are no police at Holbeck who are not involved in corruption, in fact I know of one member but we've made him pay in money he stole and return cell phones. – Inspector, Shifts (Kerensa)

A colleague of mine who I trained with has been arrested for house robbery at this station. I'm still shocked. I didn't expect such things from the guy. I thought he was a good policeman but unfortunately I was wrong. – Constable, Detectives (Sizakele)

The members attended a complaint where one of the community had sold *dagga*³¹ and an informer reported him. They found the suspect and brought him to the station. It went to the detective, then to a student who didn't know what to do. [The student] asked the detective for help and the detective released the suspect. Then the student admitted that he and the detective took money to release [the suspect]. – Constable, Shifts (Holbeck)

Almost all the respondents made reference to rumours or knowledge of violations during the interviews, including those who did not believe corruption was a problem at their stations. Despite these mythologies, few respondents knew the outcomes of action taken against members, suggesting little formal communication of resolved cases. The following lists represent the most common anecdotes and allegations populating the corruption-myth discourse at each station. Where formal disciplinary action was mentioned, this is represented in brackets:

Kerensa

- Sale of dockets
- Extortion of money from motorists at roadblocks
- Acceptance of money or sex instead of arresting suspects

Accounts corroborated by multiple respondents and/or senior managers:

- Theft of money (two members were transferred)
- Theft of firearms and cash from the SAP13 in two separate incidents (one civilian was transferred)

- Arrest of a student for taking *tjou-tjou* on patrol (the student was dismissed)
- Theft of alcohol, money, cell phones and cigarettes from suspects and public drinkers
- Discovery of docketts in the possession of civilians outside of the SAPS
- Extortion or theft of money from immigrants

Sizakele

- Rape of a suspect in the cells
- Sex with a minor while off duty
- Sale of operational-planning information
- Claims by 'thugs' of the theft of their money
- Acceptance of money by detectives to issue warnings
- Offer of bribes by the community (but not accepted)
- Extortion of money at roadblocks and from suspects driving stolen vehicles
- Theft of tyres from state vehicles
- Theft of cash from the SAP13
- Sale of docketts by detectives
- Failure to open cases or record serious crimes in less serious categories

Accounts corroborated by multiple respondents and/or senior managers:

- Arrest for the theft of a computer from the station
- Arrest for housebreaking
- Involvement of a reservist in crime
- Acceptance by shift members of money for affidavits
- Involvement of senior managers in sexual relationships with reservists in exchange for gifts

Holbeck

- Offer of bribes by immigrants, drunk drivers and suspects in custody (but not accepted)
- Extortion from immigrants
- Extortion at roadblocks
- Inappropriate closing of cases (suspected foul play)
- Collaboration with drug dealers
- Demand of money from illegal shebeens³²
- Acceptance of bribes from suspects arrested for being drunk in public
- Keeping portions of money allocated to the payment of informants

Accounts corroborated by multiple respondents and/or senior managers:

- Selling of blank (stamped and signed) affidavits to [alleged] illegal immigrants and supply of police radios to civilians by five members
- Improper instruction to a student by his senior to release a suspect arrested for possession of drugs
- Arrangement by a detective, caught red-handed, to have a suspect's case withdrawn

Interference with crime statistics

Two respondents at Kerensa and one at Sizakele claimed that they and others at their stations had interfered with the collection and capture of crime statistics. This information was not solicited through specific questions but was volunteered. The respondents at Kerensa were a senior commissioned officer and an inspector involved in the management of crime data, while the respondent at Sizakele was a detective. These claims were very similar to those that emerged in the media in June 2009 relating to the alleged manipulation of crime statistics. These included altering the category of a crime when it is registered on the Crime Administration System (CAS) to reflect a lesser offence, turning complainants away or persuading them not to open docketts, and intentionally failing to capture docketts on the CAS. This situation was put as follows by a respondent:

You are being assessed on numbers, not on what you do, on numbers. So what it caused was people starting to manipulate numbers, the feeling for people is gone, as long as my numbers are alright, then I will get a positive feedback ... I mean ... children are not even treated like that. So most managers start to manipulate. They won't tell you it's happening but it's a fact. In some of the news articles you will see that cases are registered differently. It's because of the numbers, so the real thing of service delivery to people is gone. – Senior officer (Kerensa)

This statement illustrates the dangerous repercussions of a performance-measurement system and management approach that place too much emphasis on the reduction of reported crime. Unless this approach changes, meddling with crime figures is likely to continue.³³

Summary

When the respondents were asked whether they believed that corruption was a problem at their stations, 10 of 22 at Kerensa, 15 of 28 at Holbeck and 9 of 27 at Sizakele strongly believed that it was. When respondents who were fairly certain or confident that corruption was taking place at their stations are included, these totals rise to 15 of 22 at Kerensa, 21 of

28 at Holbeck and 18 of 27 at Sizakele. Perceptions were forged by the station mythologies outlined previously. Apart from testimonies classified as factually informed or listed as corroborated by multiple sources, this information is not evidence of widespread corruption. However, these allegations should be acknowledged for what they are: important contributions to and products of the stations' discourses and cultures.

The lists presented in the previous section are an amalgamation of claims of and references to violations extracted from the interviews. Very few respondents volunteered more than two or three examples of violations or corruption that they knew or believed had occurred at their stations. As a result, it cannot be assumed that all or most of the respondents were familiar with many of these allegations at each station. Nevertheless, the detail and variety of these mythologies are concerning. This, together with the fact that almost all the respondents made some reference to an alleged criminal or corrupt act committed by a colleague, suggests station cultures familiar with such violations, even if only in discourse. Some of the respondents not immediately recalling anecdotes of violations until prompted by the researcher (having heard a particular claim from a prior respondent) suggests a possible normalisation of violations to the extent that they do not stand out as shameful events not to be repeated.

These discourses threaten to promote suspicion among colleagues, reduce morale or further erode cultural integrity. However, they also provide important information that management can use to act against corruption, as was the case with many of the factually informed claims. The greatest concern, however, is the widespread perceptions at all three stations that, beyond the veil of everyday activity, integrity violations may be relatively common.

PERCEPTIONS OF CORRUPTION IN THE BROADER SAPS

The 2008 Afrobarometer survey found that 46 per cent of a nationally representative sample believed that 'all' or 'most' police members in the country were corrupt.³⁴ This reflects an insignificant change since 2006, when 48 per cent of respondents believed that most police were corrupt, while 50 per cent had little to no trust in the police.³⁵

The 2003 and 2007 National Victim of Crime surveys asked respondents whether they thought that the police were doing a 'good job' or a 'bad job' in their area (this question was not directly linked to trust or corruption). Between 2003 and 2007, the percentage of respondents answering 'bad job' decreased by 7 per cent (from

45 per cent to 38 per cent). This apparent improvement in public perception, however, was offset by a 3 per cent decrease in respondents answering that the police were doing a 'good job' (from 52 per cent to 49 per cent) and a 10 per cent increase in respondents answering 'don't know' (from 3 per cent to 13 per cent). Of the 38 per cent who felt that the police were doing a bad job in 2007, 56 per cent based their view on the perception that the police 'don't respond in time'. This was followed by 'are lazy' (26 per cent), 'don't come to my area' (23 per cent), 'are corrupt' (22 per cent), 'release criminals early' (17 per cent) and 'cooperate with criminals' (13 per cent). These five categories, with the possible exception of 'are lazy', all suggest some lack of trust in the police, while the last three suggest perceived deviance.

When asked about their perceptions of corruption in the SAPS, the respondents at Kerensa, Holbeck and Sizakele shared this public scepticism, largely perceiving the organisation to be widely corrupt. Only one respondent at Kerensa did not think that corruption was a serious problem facing the SAPS. Altogether 20 of the 28 respondents at Holbeck and 24 of the 27 at Sizakele believed that corruption was a serious problem. While some were undecided, only one respondent at Holbeck and three at Sizakele believed that corruption was not a problem in the SAPS. Three of the five respondents who felt that corruption was not a problem still qualified their answers with reference to alleged corruption that they knew about. Media coverage of alleged police corruption was the primary qualification given by those perceiving the organisation as corrupt.

Table 1 Factors influencing belief in widespread corruption in the SAPS

	Kerensa	Holbeck	Sizakele
Prevalence of stories in the media, including allegations of criminal activity against the former national commissioner, Jackie Selebi	11	13	10
Frequency of public complaints, station rumours and first-hand experience	5	8	9
Hard-working members not being promoted	3	–	–
Crime not being reduced, therefore the police must be corrupt	2	3	1

The following are examples of these discourses:

Nowadays I think corruption is indeed a problem, compared to those days when I joined. At the time two years could pass without hearing anything about

corruption. But nowadays it happens day after day, week after week. We see it in the media. I feel the image of the service is undermined. – Inspector, Shifts (Kerensa)

If you think that our commissioner is now waiting for his court date, so if it's there then it's everywhere. So how greedy do you want to be when you get over a million a year? – Commissioned officer, Detectives (Sizakele)

There are members, hard-working members, I know them from a long time ago, their last promotion was 1996 ... I know for a fact that ... the list [for promotions] that was compiled was tampered with. So other members were deleted from the list of promotions without any apparent reason. It changes from station to station. I'm referring to the national side, commissioners, etc., there is nepotism. There is no corruption at stations. We hear things in the media but we never experience it, you never see it. – Inspector, Detectives (Kerensa)

We should be curbing crime, if it still continues ... [N]o matter how many people you arrest, some people get off scot-free when they're not supposed to ... [T]hat's because of corruption in most cases. – Commissioned officer, Detectives (Holbeck)

I don't think there's any station that doesn't have a problem. It's not on the surface, only when it's reported you find. Engaging in proactive messages to the community, they come forward ... If I suppress it it doesn't mean there's no corruption, just that I'm not doing anything about it. – Former station commissioner (Holbeck)

Most of these perceptions are relatively easy to challenge. For instance, the majority of media coverage relates to *alleged* police abuse rather than to the outcomes of trials and disciplinary hearings. This includes coverage relating to allegations against the former national commissioner Jackie Selebi, who at the time of research had yet to be found guilty. The discourse emerging from the interviews suggests that the respondents interpreted media allegations as proof of wrongdoing.

With regard to promotions, it is inevitable that most members will reach a promotion ceiling at the rank of inspector (warrant officer) and captain or lieutenant. This is the nature of a hierarchical system and does not in itself indicate corruption. Frustrations linked to promotion are understandable, however, particularly in that remuneration remains largely limited by rank.

While it serves a vital role in the governance of safety and security, the police service alone cannot

reduce crime. Similarly, cases failing in court do not necessarily indicate incompetence or corruption on the part of the police but could be the result of flaws in the broader justice system.

Despite the fallibility of the respondents' views and much like the greater South African public, most of the respondents firmly believed that corruption is prominent and widespread throughout the SAPS.

Summary

While half of respondents at Holbeck and Kerensa and a third at Sizakele strongly felt that corruption was a problem at their stations, almost all the respondents perceived the SAPS as a whole to be widely corrupt. These negative perceptions threaten to damage future organisational integrity and development. If new members are absorbed into a culture that is increasingly distrustful of its members, they become more likely to inherit that distrust and organisational cohesion becomes threatened.

It is important that the organisation challenges the cynical perceptions held by its members. This could partly be achieved through the successful implementation of the Anti-Corruption Strategy (formerly the CFPP) and the introduction of some kind of effective anti-corruption unit as well as through a well-managed communication strategy, all driven by senior SAPS management. If the strategy and unit functioned effectively enough for honest police to trust it to deal with corrupt members and for corrupt members to be sufficiently deterred from pursuing new illicit activities, faith in internal oversight could begin to be restored. The communication strategy could make the arrests and their outcomes known to the broader organisation, provided that this were done in a manner that would not be overtly threatening, while, at the same time, it could communicate messages of recognition and praise for good performance and achievements.³⁶ However, this approach would be significantly weakened if there were not a concerted effort to deal with the everyday forces that make SAPS members vulnerable to corruption and other integrity violations. These are discussed in the next section.

INTEGRITY VIOLATIONS: CAUSES AND SOLUTIONS

When seeking to understand the causal forces behind corruption and other violations, one should bear in mind the basic vulnerabilities of the police organisation touched on at the start of this paper. These include members endowed with immense discretionary power, including the use of force and arrest (especially among juniors). Police members are also often in regular

contact with law-breaking members of the public, with engagements often taking place beyond the gaze of managerial or public oversight. This allows police access to criminal networks with which to collude or from which to extort rewards. It also makes the police vulnerable to propositions from powerful criminals. The fact that police organisations tend to value peer-group solidarity means that knowledge of violations is unlikely to be reported, as members instinctively cover for one another. These generic factors combine with macro-factors, both in respect of the country and its socio-political climate and in respect of the organisation as a whole, and with micro or station-specific factors to forge local cultures. Both the macro and the micro or local context may influence the vulnerability and propensity of members to corruption.

The perceptions of participants in an organisation cannot be overemphasised when it comes to addressing issues of integrity management in the organisation. Although observation and organisational theory add an important dimension to the analysis of a problem, it is those with experiences of the internal workings who are best positioned to make the most relevant observations. These can then be held up to the theory. The respondents in this study were asked what they thought the causes of corruption in the SAPS were. They were also asked what they thought should be done at their stations and in the SAPS as a whole to reduce corruption and to encourage members to behave with more professionalism and integrity. Only one respondent mentioned the police-generic organisational factors above. The other answers focused on the factors discussed in the next sections.

Salaries

Only 30 of the 77 respondents blamed poor remuneration for corruption and dishonesty in the SAPS. However, almost all the respondents made reference to the fact that poor salaries were often *perceived* as the cause of corruption in the organisation.

At Kerensa, most operational respondents gave the impression that they were highly stressed at work, with some suggesting that they were afraid to work outside the station. As one inspector put it, 'That's why most police are corrupt, because we work in dangerous places but don't get paid enough money.' Kerensa is certainly a dangerous place for police (two members were killed in the precinct during the fieldwork period). It was not, however, suggested that money would take this stress or fear away; rather, it would somehow compensate for the negatives of the job.

At Sizakele, the salary discourse centred less on danger and more on career stagnation and on the fact

that salaries are linked to ranks. This is illustrated in the following quote:

Members must get enough remuneration. You've been in one rank for a long time, remuneration goes with promotion. The cost of living increases and in the end you have so little money so that you can't buy yourself clothes. That's when you opt for bribery, extortion and theft. There are exhibits handed in. If somebody hands in money from a cash heist and I'm in the office alone[,] ... when I knock off I take the bag. It's not exhibit money anymore, it is lost and not registered. – Inspector, Support Services (Sizakele)

At Holbeck, almost all the non-commissioned officers named poor salaries as being the main cause of corruption. It is also the only station at which a commissioned officer affirmed the view that salaries are linked to corruption:

Honesty and integrity are linked to salary. They must throw something heavy in our pocket so that maybe we can reduce corruption. – Commissioned officer, Shifts (Holbeck)

The following are examples of the perspectives of two non-commissioned officers:

Increase the salaries of the police, then you can consider corruption serious, if they are being paid enough. You can't expect police officers to live in a shack. – Constable, Shifts (Holbeck)

If you are used to corruption it's hard to shake it. If new recruits see that we are earning a living salary we cannot think of involving ourselves in corruption. – Student constable, Detectives (Holbeck)

This last sentence is particularly concerning. It suggests that the perception that constables earn insufficient salaries may be seen by students as justification for corruption, even before they have completed their probationary service. However, this view was held by only a minority of students, reservists and civilians at Holbeck and, to a lesser extent, at the other two stations. Generally, students (earning between R1 600 and R4 000 a month in 2009), junior civilian staff (earning around R4 000 a month in 2009) and reservists (working without remuneration) did not believe that corruption was caused by low salaries. The perceptions of the reservists are of particular importance because the reservists perform the same tasks and are exposed to the same dangers as permanent members.

Those respondents who blamed poor salaries for corruption were asked what salary a constable (as a baseline from which to extrapolate the other ranks) should start at in order to prevent corruption. Suggestions ranged from between R5 000 and R15 000 after deductions. The suggestions of R5 000 were made by older commissioned officers who were not aware that constables already cleared a minimum of R5 000 after deductions in 2009. Constables, however, were more likely to suggest between R8 000 and R12 000 after deductions.

The majority (47 of 77) of the respondents did not believe that there was a relationship between salary levels and corruption. At all three stations, the respondents spoke out against the argument, suggesting that no amount of money would prevent people from engaging in corruption. This discourse is illustrated in the following excerpts:

It's useless if officers are paid more, you can still pay them more and they will still continue. They must get rid of the bad elements that are doing it. It doesn't mean that if I don't have money today then I must go and be corrupt. – Commissioned officer (Holbeck)

I wouldn't say they must increase salaries because money will never be enough, but most people say it's because of money. Maybe if they improved the working conditions. Lots of police stations are not in a good state[,] ... even the civilians can get frustrated. – Civilian (Sizakele)

Most of the people would say it's low salaries. I don't agree. I don't think anyone can complain about salary anymore. Coming through [39] years in the police force, if I take what I earned when I started, and the money they start with today, it's incomparable. Saying 'I am corrupt because I don't earn enough' is not an excuse. – Inspector, Human Resource Management (Kerensa)

The former station commissioner at Holbeck suggested that salaries should be linked to the cost of living in the city or region in which a member is posted. He drew attention to the fact that members living in Gauteng, for example, are paid the same as members working in the rural Eastern Cape. In addition to the greater cost of living, he mentioned the greater dangers that city-based police members are exposed to.

Some of the respondents who said that poor salaries cause corruption contradicted themselves by saying that salary increases would not reduce corruption. At Holbeck, where the discourse on salary and corruption was most prevalent, 11 of the 28 respondents believed that poor salaries caused corruption but only 4 believed that salary increases would reduce or prevent it. This

disconnect suggests that the insufficient-salary argument may have become an instinctive and emotional justification for, or method of understanding, corruption in the SAPS, but one that falls apart when members stop to challenge the notion.

Other respondents made reference to the argument about salary and corruption only to refute it, stating that salaries are adequate or that no amount of money could change a greedy person.

Stress, recognition and motivation

All three stations are located in areas that generate some of the highest violent crime in the country. This contributes to a high-stress work environment in which dedication, recognition and motivation are required for effective service delivery. It has already been mentioned that many of Kerensa's members who called for salary increases did so based on the premise that they worked in a dangerous environment. The inference was that money would compensate for the risk.

At Sizakele, the discourse around danger and stress manifested slightly differently, less with regard to financial compensation than to emotional support. Both operational members and the head of EAS at the station emphasised a need for help with relaxation and stress management. While similar references were made at the other two stations, their frequency at Sizakele may have been a result of the well-established EAS office there (making members more comfortable talking about their feelings). Should members at Kerensa or Holbeck need to visit EAS, they would have to contact a regional office or neighbouring station. This discourse is evident in the following statements by an EAS member and a detective:

We debrief them and when we hear what they are going through then we see that they are struggling. That's why they end up getting involved in bribery. If you are not in the police you will not understand. – Commissioned officer, Employee Assistance Services (Sizakele)

The social workers are here for us ... [I]f I want to cough something out I can share it with them ... but after all we tell them they don't go to management ... Every day I sit here and talk and my mind becomes weak. I don't have time to talk to my family, I just sleep. Every day it's the same thing. It's not good. All the time we hear of police who shoot themselves ... but if they get freedom of speech, better treatment, I think they will build the organisation. People will enjoy things here. – Inspector, Detectives (Sizakele)

Respondents also felt that stress could be alleviated through basic rewards in recognition of their efforts:

[What we need is] some motivation, more workshops or days that take the people out, go do something, like in the old days, a braai³⁷ or something. – Inspector, Detectives (Holbeck)

We used to have sports and recreation to keep us busy, we still do it. We've opened the league again. That helps keep people happy and honest ... Anyone who's interested can do it. – Civilian (Sizakele)

I think [we need] recognition. Recognise the members who go out of their way to do a good job, embrace them ... [Y]ou will minimise some of the other things because everyone will want to be recognised. That is the most important thing. They don't want to disappoint or be involved in bad things. – Station commissioner (Kerensa)

Morale at Sizakele appeared highest, followed by Kerensa and Holbeck. At Sizakele and Kerensa, there was evidence to suggest that this was a direct result of effective leadership from senior managers. Respondents highlighted the importance of good leadership, both by praising senior managers and by stressing the need for better recognition and motivation.

At Kerensa, both the recently arrived station commissioner and head of detectives were praised for working operationally with members and effecting arrests (rather than issuing orders from behind a desk during office hours). A detective-inspector with 23 years' experience said that he had never met anyone as inspiring as his new supervisor. He emphasised the motivational effect that she had on members when she worked outside at night with them and when, at the end of her first month, she rewarded high performers with a chocolate bar. Sizakele's head of detectives also rewarded his members by giving them Friday afternoons off if they performed well. These quite minor gestures had a significant impact on the morale of members, again indicating the importance of leadership giving recognition where it is due.

An underlying trend emerging out of the interviews at each station relates to (the mismanagement of) affirmative action and promotions. Besides a detective (and union representative) at Holbeck who stated that 'affirmative action is killing the police', the best-articulated argument came from a commissioned officer at Sizakele:

When you appoint people you must appoint people who know what they are doing ... We're talking politics. Affirmative action is good but it must be for the people who will produce. Not affirmative action for the sake of it ... [I]f you want affirmative action you must get people who will lift the organisation ... [If there is a member working beneath me today then] I say 'go wash my car',

he runs, I say 'get me chips', he runs. Then at the end of the day he is [promoted and becomes] my boss ... [T]he organisation goes down. – Commissioned officer, Detective Head (Sizakele)

Both these respondents were black, suggesting that the internal critique of affirmative action has moved beyond the stereotype of disgruntled old white men. Whether related to affirmative action or not, members are clearly frustrated about the lack of promotion as well as what they perceive to be the promotion of incompetent members into positions that they are not qualified for.

Training

The respondents believed that improved and more frequent training would contribute to reduced corruption for two very similar reasons: members would be better informed and equipped with the necessary skills to achieve their mandate without consciously cutting corners; and members would not make 'mistakes' that could be classified as corruption or integrity violations due to an ignorance of rules, orders or procedures.

These perspectives are illustrated in the following quotes:

They must get professionals to teach all the police what corruption is, teach them what they can and can't do. – Inspector, Shifts (Holbeck)

If members adhere to the rules I don't think there will be a problem. To do that they must know about them, then if someone is acting contra to that rule there must be disciplinary steps. But you don't just start with a disciplinary and dismiss them. First you must build them, bring them back. – Commissioned officer, Support Services (Holbeck)

If a person has done wrong [the officer] must approach him correctly, respectfully, then that junior will not repeat the same mistake. Approach is important. You cannot expect someone to do something he doesn't understand. You need to teach him first, step by step ... If they did that I think we would understand but now we are just doing general work. I think that's a problem. – Inspector, Detectives (Sizakele)

Two detectives at Kerensa made reference to the difficulty of working without training, specifically as detectives without having been on a detective's course. An untrained individual working in a high-pressure environment may be more likely to cut corners to close cases. Other testimonies suggest a general lack of confidence in members' abilities to carry out their duties.

These perceptions link to complaints of unreasonable workloads and poor resources. Like inadequate training, these significantly disadvantage members in carrying out their work. An inspector told a story of having been stranded with a puncture and without a spare wheel while on patrol. A member of the community helped him out and, he said, he owed him for it. He said that, if he were called to a domestic dispute and the offender were the man who had helped him with the spare wheel, he would side with him against the victim. Similarly, two senior members at Kerensa reported that the manipulation of crime statistics was a direct result of the unreasonable pressure placed on the station and suggested that, as long as they were faced with insurmountable goals and treated like children by provincial and national managers, unethical behaviour would prevail.

Leadership and communication

At Kerensa and Sizakele, the respondents generally spoke highly of station leadership. At Holbeck, the criticism was harsher and often linked to complaints of poor communication, as illustrated by this student:

If I am a commander I must lead by example ... but sometimes some commanders disappear from work after a few hours. If you are a commander and you come late you can't tell your members not to be late ... so if you do things right, we the followers, we will follow the right way. – Student constable, Crime Prevention (Holbeck)

Similarly, this reservist suggested that better communication would help to improve professionalism and integrity:

I think communication is usually the best [way to make members act professionally and with integrity]. Respect is the best, that's what builds people to work together so when they go out then they know what to do but if there's no respect I will only care about myself and not care what the others are doing. If the station commissioner calls on his children [then] respect them, go outside and work with them, talk about crime, how can we reduce it. – Reserve constable, Shifts (Holbeck)

Summary

Members' suggestions of what should be done at their stations and in the SAPS as a whole in order to improve professionalism and reduce corruption generally focused on four key themes: better remuneration; better leadership and communication (especially at Holbeck); better training and education (in order for them to do

their jobs, and to be informed of right and wrong and of correct procedures); and motivation and reward.

Other suggestions that do not fit into the above four categories still spoke to a need to improve the health of organisational cultures. Members spoke of needing emotional support, guidance, recognition and motivation from their peers and leaders. They expressed a desire to work in an organisation where 'like-minded' people (committed and with good values) are recruited to serve as their colleagues so that they can foster respect and trust for one another. They would like to see a balance of firm discipline, internal oversight and punishment, with upliftment and tolerance of unintentional errors. Calls for improved salaries are also, in essence, a desire for more recognition.

It is perhaps not surprising that, with the exception of one respondent, factors inherent in policing, such as discretionary power and low managerial control outside of the station, were not mentioned. To those functioning within that system, these factors may seem commonsensical. To them, it is the everyday reality of the job, including salaries, motivation, training, communication and rewards, that threatens the integrity of their colleagues and organisation. The former station commissioner at Kerensa suggested the following:

Improve the conditions of the grassroots policeman. Make him understand how important he is. Acknowledge all the good that he's been doing ... [M]oney never buys good will, but there should be some sort of incentive somewhere. But not just money. There was a programme a while back ... where policemen were also given opportunities, for example there was a competition for the guy effecting the most arrests ... [T]hat guy would win a course for advanced drivers. Not just money, but acknowledgement that they mean something. – Former station commissioner (Kerensa)

COMMUNITY POLICING FORUMS (CPFs)

Community policing forums (CPFs) were introduced between 1994 and 1996 as a means for police to forge good working relationships with the communities in which they work and for communities to provide oversight of local police.³⁸ A well-established and functional CPF should be able to hold station-level police members accountable for their actions, assist station managers by exposing certain instances of street-level abuse and report station mismanagement to higher authorities. If a community or CPF is not proactive in its work, it is easy for police to keep the community or CPF selectively informed.

The Kerensa and Holbeck CPFs were both well established, having been functioning for more than a

decade. Sizakele's CPF was founded in 2008, two years after the station first opened.

Based on observation and interviews, all three CPFs appeared to function well. Holbeck and Sizakele's CPFs had their own designated office space, computers and telephones. The offices were staffed in the mornings at Holbeck and throughout the day at Sizakele. At Holbeck, this was made possible through donations from residents in the affluent suburbs, while, at Sizakele, the Gauteng Department of Community Safety provided resources, such as a computer, a telephone, patrol bicycles and reflector vests. Kerensa's CPF chairperson was regularly at the station during the fieldwork period, actively engaging with managers and aware of important incidents in the precinct as they happened. This was despite this CPF not having its own office space.

The chairperson at Kerensa was not aware of any complaints of corruption against the members there or of any disciplinary action taken against members for corrupt or criminal offences. He alleged that the community perceived the police as 'useless' and that it confused corruption with poor service delivery. The chairpersons at Holbeck and Sizakele alleged that complaints of corruption were common at their meetings, although, at Sizakele, these also generally related to service delivery misinterpreted as corruption. At Sizakele, alleged corruption reported at meetings included the sale of operational information to community members, the acceptance of bribes to close cases, the release of drunk drivers for money and the facilitation of the withdrawal of a rape case by having the accused pay the victim R10 000.

Despite these allegations, the Sizakele chairperson did not believe that corruption was a problem at the station. This contradiction mirrors the findings in relation to the disjuncture between members' views that corruption was not a problem at the station and the numerous integrity violations recorded in the disciplinary register. This may suggest an informal culture at the station that was more tolerant of violations than at Kerensa or Holbeck.

Holbeck's chairperson believed that corruption was a problem at the station but that its prevalence had declined significantly under the former station commissioner's watch. He said that corrupt acts and abuse usually occurred in the poor areas of Bush Downs and Oranje, giving, as an example, police refusal to assist complainants unless first paid. Ironically, the most common example of corruption given by the Holbeck respondents – extortion from immigrants – had never been raised at a CPF meeting. The chairperson agreed that this is likely due to fear on the part of these particularly vulnerable victims.

There is some disjuncture between the experiences and perceptions of the CPF chairpersons and

the discourses of corruption at the stations. With the partial exception of Sizakele, the chairpersons were not familiar with the types of mythologies of corruption at each station. This disconnect may be considered normal, considering the illicit nature of the alleged acts and the closed nature of police cultures. It does, however, highlight the potential fallibility of CPFs with regard to the oversight of corruption. Having noted this, CPFs are still well positioned to expose minor integrity violations, such as purposefully inappropriate relations between clients and members.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The State endows the police with far-reaching powers in order to contribute to the governance of safety and security, primarily through systems of surveillance linked to the threat of social sanctions.³⁹ These powers include the use of force and arrest. Police members often operate alone or in small groups and beyond the reach of immediate oversight, which places them in a position that lends itself to the abuse of power.

Degrees of abuse are inevitable in any police organisation but can vary drastically depending on a number of factors. These include the norms, values and structures of the broad or macro-context in which the organisation is located (such as general societal values) and of the local or micro-context in which individual actors operate (such as the socio-economic make-up of the precinct). Violations can be mitigated by macro and micro-level priorities, systems and strategies. In 2009, when this research was conducted, the latest such strategy in the SAPS was the CFPP.

This paper has sought to explore whether the CFPP was being rolled out at three stations in Gauteng and how issues of integrity and corruption were being managed as perceived by those on the ground. Almost none of the respondents were aware of any formal anti-corruption strategies, structures or plans in the SAPS, especially not of the CFPP. Only at Holbeck was there a suggestion that plan-based interventions preceding the CFPP had been implemented under the former station commissioner. Despite this general ignorance of formal anti-corruption structures, the respondents were all able to contribute to an understanding of perceived causes and possible solutions for integrity violations and corruption and of the management of these in the context of the SAPS.

Station-level police culture is often understood as manifesting *in response* to the structure of the larger organisation, itself designed and structured *in response* to both the (political) past and the crime-saturated present of South Africa. Members at priority stations in Gauteng are exposed to considerably greater workloads,

levels of danger, risk and violent crime than most SAPS members.

Policing can be a thankless job at the best of times. In South Africa, particularly in Gauteng, where official discourse has for so long laid the responsibility of crime reduction solely at the door of the SAPS, it is not surprising that, in some instances, the morale and integrity of members are strained.

Despite significant differences in physical location, urban landscape, demographic make-up and income groups, the members at the three stations had similar perceptions of the causes of and the necessary remedies for corruption. This would suggest that the macro-climate – South Africa, Gauteng and the SAPS as an organisation – has a more significant impact on the formation of station cultures than does the micro-climate. However, shared localised factors, such as the fact that all are priority stations, almost definitely add to the formation of these shared perceptions.

Each of the stations has what is referred to in this paper as a station-specific mythology informing its discourse. These mythologies are made up of rumours, anecdotes and first-hand experiences of corruption and other violations. In this paper, these are classified as ‘rumour-informed beliefs’, ‘factual rumour-informed beliefs’ or ‘factually informed beliefs’, depending on verifiability. Each station has a rich mythology founded on these beliefs. These range from the extortion of money from immigrants to rape and robbery. Despite these myth-rich discourses, most of the respondents at each station did not strongly feel that corruption was a serious problem at their station.

There are a number of ways in which this can be interpreted. One is that the respondents’ perceptions of the broader organisation are so negative that the violations occurring in their midst appear comparatively minor. A more concerning possibility is that, although violations may be common at the stations, the discomfort of judging colleagues means that members transfer their condemnation to the broader service while ignoring or tolerating infringements around them. This could be a conscious act as a means of protecting themselves, their colleagues and their work environment, but it could also be an unconscious act. Another possibility is that, when violations are not officially acknowledged by station management, most members hear of them only as rumours. These rumours are then dwarfed by the apparently factual events reported in the media.

Commonalities

Few notable differences among the perceptions, experiences and management approaches at the three stations emerged. The most common interventions

mentioned by the respondents with regard to addressing corruption at the stations were station lectures and awareness raising. These are certainly important aspects of integrity management but are not enough, in themselves, to have a major impact. They should instead be combined with visible action against members who commit violations, among other interventions. In few cases were members aware of disciplinary hearings, even when they had taken place. This could be viewed as a lost chance to emphasise the risks that integrity violations hold to members. Eight of the respondents volunteered that the SAPS anti-corruption hotline existed to curb corruption. Another 46 exhibited knowledge of the hotline when specifically asked. None knew the toll-free hotline number and not many were sure whether this service was located within the SAPS or not.

Almost all the respondents believed that corruption was a serious problem facing the SAPS as a whole. The majority of these perceptions were based on media reports, themselves generating a societal mythology and discourse that, in turn, influenced those within the organisation. Rumours and personal experience of integrity violations or the fact that crime was not being reduced were also interpreted as evidence of widespread corruption. Respondents furthermore made reference to the accusations against Selebi as evidence that corruption extended all the way to the top of the rank hierarchy. The fact that opinions were informed more by Selebi’s having been accused than his having been brought to justice highlights the importance of leaders within the police being of an unquestionable integrity.

Almost all perceptions relating to the causes of corruption and suggestions for how to improve the professionalism and integrity of members and to prevent integrity violations revolved around the issues of organisational culture and morale. These suggested that better leadership and motivation, education and training, and salaries are the primary forces behind violations and the areas requiring improvement in order to prevent further infractions.

Discourse emerging around the theme of *leadership and motivation* emphasised the need for mutual respect among colleagues and across ranks. It also highlighted the importance of members in senior positions leading by example and instilling discipline in juniors. This suggests that good performance should be recognised and possibly rewarded, regardless of how small the reward may be.

Discourse around *education and training* suggested that members are not always comfortable with their competence on the job and that a lack of knowledge and ability lead to actions that contravene codes and laws.

These perceived incompetencies also lead to a lack of respect for colleagues and managers, who are perceived as ignorant of codes, norms and essential skills. This, in turn, damages morale.

Poor remuneration may be perceived as the most commonsensical justification for corruption. It is the reason most often proffered by the public on the occasions when sympathy is shown to police members who break the law for self-enrichment. Some members argued that salary increases are a necessity in times of a rising cost of living; this may be true but is applicable across all professions. Others felt they *deserved* higher salaries due to the nature of their work. Those who disagreed with this discourse believed that it was greed and an inability to manage one's finances that caused members to complain about salaries. All these are important and valid points. When salaries are so often perceived as proportionate to the value of one's contribution to society, it is not surprising that remuneration is so central to the organisational discourse around the causes of corruption. Like the need for support, recognition and reward, members seek recognition of their contributions through monetary compensation and some alleviation of the stresses manifesting between household and work strain believed to be caused by financial strain.

Relative to the average South African, police members earn fair salaries, particularly considering that no post-school qualification is required to enter the service.⁴⁰ However, in that new recruits are often closer in age to 30 than to 18, many enter the service with families to support. While initial salaries may suit the needs of a single young person, they are stretched when families of three or four have to be supported. Additionally, salary progression is slow and linked to rank promotion. Due to the prior poor management of promotions in the early 1990s, an excess of inspectors (warrant officers) has resulted in stagnation for many who were comparatively rapidly promoted in the early stages of their careers. This, combined with perceptions of nepotism and mismanaged affirmative action and promotion, has led to significant damage to the morale of members. This is particularly evident in the high number of inspectors and sergeants formally disciplined at Kerensa and Sizakele.

While, for the most part, the trends across the three stations are the same, there are some differences worth noting:

Kerensa

Morale at Kerensa appeared better than at Holbeck but slightly lower than at Sizakele. Both the station commissioner and the head of detectives at Kerensa were

repeatedly praised by staff and the CPF chairperson, although neither had been there for more than a month. It was reported that they motivated members through rewards and garnered respect by working 'outside' and performing traditional policing duties.

Members at Kerensa referred to having forced a colleague to replace money and cell phones that he had stolen as a means of bringing him to justice without involving formal structures. This action was spoken of openly by respondents at Kerensa, suggesting some acceptance of informal discipline.

Similarly, two senior members admitted to being party to the manipulation of crime statistics. These confessions suggest another informal system of management in which violations are committed in order to realise crime targets.

Kerensa is also the only station where respondents made regular use of the term *tjou-tjou*. The embedding of the term in station discourse may suggest that (petty) corruption may form a greater part of daily conversation at Kerensa than at the other two stations, which, in turn, may suggest a greater presence of corrupt acts. However, this may be incidental.

Kerensa is also the only station where managers reported registering multiple corruption cases against their members with the SAPS Organised Crime unit or Crime Intelligence unit.

Holbeck

Research at Holbeck was significantly more difficult than at the other two stations, largely as a result of the size and busyness of the station.

It is the only station where senior management had, in the past, implemented a formal anti-corruption strategy. The former station commissioner had prioritised the reduction of corruption when taking up his post and the CPF chairperson reported that complaints had declined under his leadership. However, apart from the former commissioner, one commissioned officer and the CPF chairperson, no other respondent was aware of there having been a significant drive against corruption or of any unique interventions.

Morale at Holbeck appeared weak, with numerous complaints levelled against managers, members and the job in general. Respondents were notably more concerned with remuneration than those at the other two stations. Even the former station commissioner expressed his perception that members should be better remunerated in Gauteng.

'Poor communication' stands out as a relatively unique theme at Holbeck when respondents were asked what factors they thought caused corruption. This linked to the more common themes of recognition and

motivation emerging at the other two stations. Despite some praise for the former station commissioner, respondents were far less complimentary of seniors at Holbeck than at Kerensa and Sizakele. This suggests an important link between juniors' perceptions of poor management and lack of communication, and low morale. The proportional preoccupation with remuneration at Holbeck may be a result of these intersecting factors, with respondents seeing money as the simplest compensation for what is otherwise a tiresome job for many.

Other factors unique to Holbeck and likely to influence the low morale are allegations of racism (against white detectives, in particular), the regular change of station commissioners in recent years and the fact that the structure of the physical station was changing and, at the time of the research, was split into multiple disparate sections.

Sizakele

More so than at Kerensa and Holbeck, Sizakele's members were upbeat about their jobs and their station. One may expect this to contradict the evidence that formal disciplinary action was more common at Sizakele than at the other two stations. However, high morale may be a result of this strict structure: if most members are of high integrity, they may approve of a strict disciplinary environment in which members are held to account for their actions. Despite this hard-line approach, managers appeared personable and accessible to members. Sizakele was also the station at which corrective discipline (with referrals to EAS, for example) was most evident.

Extreme integrity violations, including attempted murder and rape, are reported in the disciplinary register and yet fewer members than at the other two stations strongly believed that corruption was a problem at the station. Although the register does not reflect records of technically corrupt acts, respondents referred to (and therefore interpreted) the arrest of members for house robbery and theft as examples of corruption.

Lectures relating to corruption and integrity violations seemed particularly effective at Sizakele. It is not clear why this was, although members stressed the manner in which the station commissioner emphasised the negative effects that corruption had on the community rather than threatening members with any punitive implications. Both this strategy and the focus on corrective discipline suggest a greater interest in the nature of individuals and society rather than in mere punishment.

The most common complaint by respondents at Sizakele was that promotions were not forthcoming or were mismanaged. This may partially explain why

70 per cent of members disciplined at the station were sergeants or inspectors (warrant officers), members most affected by the promotion logjam between inspector or warrant officer and captain.

Serious allegations were made that senior managers at Sizakele were engaged in sexual relationships with reservists. Although the relationships were allegedly consensual, they were based on exchanges of gifts or promises of employment. One very junior respondent whom the station commissioner had allegedly sexually propositioned had felt violated and uncomfortable. These actions represent gross abuse of power by the managers involved.

Conclusion

The perceptions captured by this research may represent the views of respondents who were looking for easy excuses for integrity violations. Regardless, it is clear that at the time of the research some basic organisational factors were weakening the stability of the cultures at these stations and their ability to withstand a potential snowballing of integrity violations.

The SAPS is not ignorant of this. Systems are constantly monitored and revised to improve the working environment of members, with a number of significant developments having taken place since 2009. Danger pay and overtime allowances, for example, have been in effect for years, as has an incentive system. Still, members complained that these were more of a window-dressing than anything substantial.

Most importantly (and known only to those involved in its development at the time of the research), a new payment system was in the pipeline through which salaries would be linked to length of service and competency rather than to promotion alone. Such a measure could significantly improve morale, although there is little evidence that it has done so since this research was conducted. This system will also likely reveal that improved salaries do not prevent corruption and that integrity violations are part of organisational and station cultures more than anything else. The two additional ranks introduced as part of the new military-rank structure in early 2010 could allow for the more rapid promotion of members, further alleviating unhappiness linked to a lack of promotion, but, again, this does not appear to have had a significant impact at the time of writing.

The reason for so few members knowing about the CFPP may not be due to a lack of proper communication (although this certainly seems to be the case), but to the answer to corruption management being less about complex interventions and more about getting the basics right. The testimonies of most respondents

indicated that what they really wanted was a professionally run organisation where promotions were based on merit, where members were recognised when they performed well and where education and training (and recruitment) created a competent workforce able to perform tasks in a high-pressure environment.

For the past few decades, South Africa has experienced a gradual revolution, at the centre of which has been the SAPS. The organisation has had to implement large-scale changes, from amalgamating the South African police force with the homeland police forces, to diversifying and rapidly bolstering the workforce, redressing the race-based power structures of the past and adopting a community-centric, human-rights-based approach – all within an increasingly violent and volatile context. It is not surprising that it has suffered a prolonged culture shock. Corruption and integrity violations appear to be one of the more damaging products of this shock. While this may be the case, issues of leadership, organisational trust and pride need to be dealt with if the SAPS is to prevent the emergence of greater challenges in the future.

NOTES

- 1 'Members' is a term drawn from and formally defined in the South African Police Service Act 1995 (Act 68 of 1995) and refers to individuals appointed under the Act. It does not apply to civilian employees of the SAPS.
- 2 Priority stations are those identified by the SAPS as recording disproportionately high levels of crime compared to other stations. In 2009, there were 169 priority stations in South Africa out of a total of 1 126.
- 3 For an overview of more recent developments in corruption and integrity management in the SAPS, see Gareth Newham and Andrew Faull, *Protector or predator: tackling police corruption in South Africa*, Monograph No. 182, Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria, 2011.
- 4 In this paper, 'race' is treated as a social construct. It is understood as having no biological basis in reality while having a real effect on our lives through the manner in which individuals, groups and societies give meaning to and mobilise around biological features. The same applies to 'gender'.
- 5 In SAPS police-speak, 'outside' refers to anything beyond the parameters of the police station. Logically then, 'inside' refers to anything inside the actual building and grounds. The term 'outside' is referred to at numerous points in this paper.
- 6 A Bouza, Police culture encourages corruption, in Tamara L Roleff (ed), *At issue: police corruption*, San Diego: Greenhaven Press.
- 7 T Newburn, *Understanding and preventing police corruption: lessons from the literature*, Police research series, Policing and Reducing Crime Unit, 1999.
- 8 Maurice Punch, *Police corruption: deviance, accountability and reform in policing*, Devon: Wilan Publishing, 2009.
- 9 The Prevention of Corrupt Activities Act 2004 (Act 12 of 2004) describes this as 'gratification' and includes in its definition 'any service or favour or advantage of any description'.
- 10 Leo Huberts, 1998, in K Lasthuizen, *Leading to integrity: empirical research into the effects of leadership on ethics and integrity*, Amsterdam: VU University, 2008.
- 11 Code of ethics of the South African Police Service, http://www.saps.gov.za/saps_profile/code_of_ethics/code_of_ethics.htm (accessed 18 June 2009).
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- 16 N Fielding, Policing socialisation and police competence, *The British Journal of Sociology* 35(4) (December 1984), 568–590.
- 17 C Fijnaut and L Huberts (eds), *Corruption, integrity and law enforcement*, The Hague, London and New York: Cluver Law International.
- 18 A Altbeker, *The dirty work of democracy*, Cape Town: Jonathan Ball, 2005.
- 19 Although South Africa's entire colonial history has shaped the country into what it is today, it was with the introduction of apartheid in 1948 that the South African Police (SAP) became a truly politicised organisation and was used in conjunction with the military to enforce violent segregationist policies. Following the 1994 democratic elections, the white-dominated SAP merged with the ten pseudo-independent homeland police forces, forming the South African Police Service (SAPS). In one sense, the homeland organisations had previously been the enemies of the SAP and the members of the SAP, many of whose jobs had been to enforce racist laws against non-white residents, found themselves in an organisation that was characterised by a philosophy of racial equality and responsible for enforcing a constitution that essentially contradicted much of what they had previously sought to preserve. Since the merger, the SAPS has battled to develop a professional and effective organisation that is characterised by equality and meritocracy.
- 20 SA Info reporter, *Gauteng province*, <http://www.southafrica.info/about/geography/gauteng.htm> (accessed 20 June 2009).
- 21 In late 2011, the SAPS was due to conduct a feasibility study with a view to reintroducing specialised anti-corruption or integrity management units.
- 22 In April 2010, the SAPS readopted military ranks and began referring to itself as a 'force' once again. This shift was couched in statements suggesting that it would contribute to improved discipline, much like the suggestions of participants in this paper.
- 23 A Sinclair, Approaches to organisational culture and ethics, *Journal of Business Ethics* 12(1) (January 1993), 63–73.

- 24 B M Bass, 1985, in K W Parry and S B Proctor-Thomson, Perceived integrity of transformational leaders in organisational settings, *Journal of Business Ethics* 35(2) (January 2002), 75–96.
- 25 For more on a balanced approach to addressing police corruption in the SAPS, see G Newham and A Faull, *Protector or predator: tackling police corruption in South Africa*, Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, 2011.
- 26 These ratios do not take repeat offenders into account.
- 27 The SAP13 is the register in which exhibits are recorded when seized or recovered. The exhibits are then placed in a safe or safe room referred to as the 'SAP13' after the name of the register.
- 28 A R Cohen, S L Fink, H Gardon et al, *Effective behavior in organisations*, 7th ed, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 2001.
- 29 Department of Public Service and Administration, *Anti-corruption capacity requirements: guidelines for implementing the minimum anti-corruption requirements in departments and organisational components in the public service*, 2006.
- 30 Tjou-tjou is police slang generally referring to 'petty' corruption, such as extorting drinks, cigarettes, food or small amounts of money.
- 31 'Dagga' is a South African term for marijuana.
- 32 A shebeen is house or tavern selling alcohol, often illegally.
- 33 For more on this, see the following: D Bruce, The ones in the pile were going down: the reliability of crime statistics, *South African Crime Quarterly* 31 (2010), 9–17; Andrew Faull, Missing the target: when measuring performance undermines police effectiveness, *South African Crime Quarterly* 31 (2010), 19–25.
- 34 Citizen Surveys, *Afrobarometer: summary of results 2008*, www.afrobarometer.org (accessed 2 March 2010).
- 35 R Mattes, A B Chikwanha and M Sibanyoni, *Afrobarometer: summary of results 2006*, Cape Town: IDASA.
- 36 The CFPP is based on the principles of prevention, detection, investigation and resolution that are recommended by the Department of Public Service and Administration. However, it does not allow for an anti-corruption unit, which could play a deterring role. The CFPP should also be linked to leadership that encourages an organisational culture of integrity and that enables members to work in a satisfying environment.
- 37 'Braai' is a South African term for a barbeque.
- 38 See the South African Police Service Act 1995 (Act 65 of 1995).
- 39 T Newburn and R Reiner, Policing and the police, in Mike Maguire, Rod Morgan and Robert Reiner (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Criminology*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- 40 See, for example, a 2006 comparison of the incomes of teachers, fire-fighters, nurses and police in Andrew Faull, *Corruption and the South African Police Service: a review and its implications*, Occasional Paper No. 150, Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria, September 2007.



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ABOUT THIS PAPER

This paper describes and compares three case studies conducted at Gauteng police stations in 2009. It asks whether and how the Corruption and Fraud Prevention Plan of the South African Police Service (SAPS) was being implemented at these stations. It does so by comparing members' perceptions and experiences of the manner in which corruption, fraud and integrity management manifested within SAPS stations in 2009. It also examines perceptions of police corruption, and the causal factors that may influence the prevalence or control of corruption and integrity violations. The paper then considers these findings within a framework of organisational culture and considers how such a culture contributes towards the prevention of corruption.

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FUNDER

This paper was made possible through the generous funding of the Open Society Foundation for South Africa.

THANKS

The author would like to express his gratitude to the strategic management of the South African Police Service at the national and Gauteng offices and to the management and members at the Kerensa, Holbeck and Sizakele police stations. Without their support, this research would not have been possible. Their support indicates an often unappreciated dedication to change and growth in order for them to serve the South African public better.



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