

Beyond Militarized Conservation: The police labour regime
and its effects in the Kruger National Park

Emile Fredrick Smidt

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**Beyond Militarized Conservation:
The police labour regime and its effects
in the Kruger National Park**

**Verder kijken dan naar gemilitariseerd natuurbehoud:
De effecten van het politiële arbeidsregime
in het Krugerpark**

Thesis

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Emile Fredrick Smidt
born in Cape Town, South Africa

**International
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The logo of Erasmus University Rotterdam, featuring the word 'Erasmus' in a stylized, cursive script.

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For Mama Terry

For my Family



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Acronyms

ANC	African National Congress
Arm Scor	Armaments Corporation of South Africa SOC Ltd
AfRSG	African Rhino Specialist Group
BSP	Biodiversity Social Projects
CCMA	The Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
COIN	Counterinsurgency
CoP	Conference of the Parties
CPA	Criminal Procedures Act
CPZ	Composite Protection Zone
CSI	Chief of Staff Intelligence
CSIR	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research/Technology for Special Operations Research Area
CSVR	Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation
DEA	Department of Environmental Affairs (South Africa)
DEFF	Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (formerly DEA)
DPCI	Directorate of Priority Crime Investigation (HAWKS)
DSM-5	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Health Disorders, Fifth Edition
EDGE	Eco Defence Group
EKZNW	Ezemvelo KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife
EMI	Environmental Management Inspector
FMD	Foot and Mouth Disease
GIS	Geographical Information Systems

GIS	Gesamentlike Inligtingsentrum (Joint Information Centre)
GKEPF	Greater Kruger Environmental Protection Foundation
GLC	Greater Lebombo Conservancy
GLTP	Greater Limpopo Transfrontier Park
GLTFCA	Greater Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Area
GPS	Global Positioning System
GRAA	Game Ranger's Association of Africa
HDVE	Hulpdiens Vegelement (Auxiliary Service Combat Element)
ICCWC	International Consortium to Combat Wildlife Crime
ICDP	Integrated Conservation and Development Project
IFAISA	Institute of Accountability in Southern Africa
IPZ	Intensive Protection Zone
ISD	Internal Stability Division (SAP)
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
JMC	Joint Management Committee
JPZ	Joint Protection Zone
K2C	Kruger to Canyons Biosphere Region
KNP	Kruger National Park
KPA	Key Performance Appraisal
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
LEAP	Law Enforcement and Anti-Poaching Strategy (SADC)
LNP	Limpopo National Park
MAJOC	Mission Area Joint Operations Centre
MOZAIC	Mozambique Assistance and Investment Corporation
NAD	Native Affairs Department
NATJOINTS	National Joint Operational and Intelligence Structure
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPB	Natal Parks Board (present-day EKZNW)
NPB	National Parks Board (present-day SANParks)
NPA	National Prosecuting Authority
ODC	Office of Defence Cooperation (U.S.)

OTGBS	Oos Transvaal Gesamentlike Bestuurs Sentrum (Eastern Transvaal Joint Management Centre)
POP	Public Order Policing (SAPS)
REDD	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
RMG	Rhino Management Group
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADF	South African Defence Force (apartheid era)
SANDF	South African National Defence Force (post-apartheid)
SANParks	South African National Parks
SAP	South African Police (apartheid era)
SAPS	South African Police Service (post-apartheid)
SAPS STF	South African Police Service Special Task Force
SARB	South African Reserve Bank
SAWC	South African Wildlife College
SWA	South West Africa (present day Namibia)
SWAPO	South West Africa People's Organization
TBVC	Transkei, Bophutatswana, Venda and Ciskei (semi-autonomous former homelands or bantustans)
TEBA	The Employment Bureau of Africa
TFCA	Transfrontier Conservation Area
TRAFFIC	Trade Records and Analysis of Flora and Fauna in Commerce/The World Wildlife Trade Monitoring Network
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
TRT	Tactical Response Team (SAPS)
U.K.	United Kingdom
U.S.	United States of America
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
WNLA	Witwatersrand Native Labour Association
WRD	World Ranger Day



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Abstract

Where the restoration of law and order is privileged in response to an intensification of rhino poaching, this thesis invites a more critical look at what political implications this holds for those conservation workers who do conservation policing. It argues that we adopt an expanded conceptualization of police, one that goes beyond the everyday policing functions of field rangers and that the use of force involved in these enforcement duties works in conjunction with forms of power. This thesis proposes to move the debate of violence in conservation beyond that of militarized conservation and focuses our attention to how police, in its wider meaning, shapes the conservation workplace and in what ways it intersects with characterizations of the broader South African workplace, typified by structural features that perpetuate low wages, precarity and racism. This thesis is informed by a twelve-month extended ethnographic study of field ranger anti-poaching practices in the Kruger National Park (KNP), South Africa. It relies mainly on participant observation, informal conversations and semi-structured interviews with close to 200 respondents related to the rhino poaching issue in and around the KNP; event ethnography of key environmental and conservation practitioner summits; observations of criminal proceedings in the Skukuza Periodical Court; a short comparative study of responses to rhino poaching by KwaZulu-Natal provincial conservation authorities; and engaging the services of a co-researcher who spent six months living in households of community members to the south west of the KNP to investigate what impacts militarized conservation holds for those communities. In response to the many institutional obstructions from the KNP in terms of access to data and internal documentation related to the rhino poaching issue and the labour process, this study also relies heavily on archival and open source information to complement the observations made in the Park.

This thesis makes several core interventions. Firstly, at a metatheoretical level, it demonstrates that police is a political technology in the maintenance of order, one that seeks not only to regulate society with

the effect of maintaining class and racial distinctions but that its utility also reaches into the ordering of labour who do violence work. Police, in effect, has very little to do with crime prevention but is more concerned with maintaining asymmetrical social order. Secondly, interrogation of archival sources has opened up many opportunities to trace continuity and change in the KNP and in what ways ideas, practices and people have been recycled from a time when the Park was embedded in the counter revolutionary responses of the apartheid state during the 1980s and in what ways those practices have become reconstituted in its present-day responses to the 'war on poaching' despite somatic and managerial changes. These historical forays also illuminate the ways in which labour was simultaneously produced, erased and controlled in the making of the Kruger landscape and that a distinct mode of racialized paternalism and a cheap labour regime shaped and continues to inform the labour process in the Park.

Thirdly, this thesis found that police structures the conservation workplace and the labour process in distinct ways, giving birth to a new politics of production. Melded with the historical features of the colonial and apartheid workplace regimes, it gives rise to a distinctive form of labour regime, the *police labour regime*, a form of workplace organization that holds particular consequences for field rangers who do violence work. This thesis shows that a historical anxiety over labour value and productivity has shifted from loyalty to privileging violence and aggression in ways that are at times irregular, arbitrary and extrajudicial. It also shows that these transgressions do not occur in a vacuum of voluntarism but that intense political pressure and features in the labour process in the form of significant supplementary income and incentives, together with institutional complicity and the threat of workplace marginalization, structure these irregular practices in field ranger encounters with rhino poachers.

Lastly, it shows that the police labour regime also shapes the institutional life in the KNP in distinct ways. Most notably the Park's proclamations of ranger wellness are not matched in reality and field rangers suffer considerable mental health and moral injuries due to their continued exposure not only to violence and the fear of violence but the irregular nature of that violence. It shows that efforts to mitigate these effects are seen as operational burdens and that institutional whiteness and institutional racism remain as notable, at times hard to detect, features in the workplace. Policing is also turned inwards in instances of mistrust, leading to workplace victimization, torture and animalization of workers. It also shows that financial indebtedness, stimulated by significant irregular income, acts as a new mode of labour control and precarity under the police labour regime.

Keywords: police, power, labour, politics of production, institutional life

VERDER KIJKEN DAN NAAR GEMILITARISEERD NATUURBEHOUD: DE EFFECTEN VAN HET POLITIËLE ARBEIDSREGIME IN HET KRUGERPARK

Samenvatting

Tegen de achtergrond van het herstel van de openbare orde als reactie op een intensivering van de neushoornstroperij biedt dit proefschrift een kritische beschouwing van de politieke implicaties hiervan voor de natuurbeschermers die belast zijn met handhaving. In dit proefschrift wordt gepleit voor een bredere opvatting van politiewerk, die verder gaat dan de alledaagse politietaken van rangers. Volgens deze opvatting gaat het gebruik van geweld bij deze handhavingstaken samen met vormen van macht. Het debat over geweld bij natuurbehoud zou niet beperkt moeten blijven tot gemilitariseerd natuurbehoud. In dit proefschrift wordt belicht hoe de politie, in bredere zin, vormgeeft aan de werkomgeving van het natuurbehoud en hoe deze zich verhoudt tot de Zuid-Afrikaanse werkomgeving in het algemeen, die gekenmerkt wordt door structurele factoren die lage lonen, bestaansonzekerheid en racisme in stand houden.

Voor dit proefschrift is twaalf maanden lang uitgebreid etnografisch onderzoek gedaan naar de bestrijding van stroperij in het Kruger National Park (KNP, Krugerpark), Zuid-Afrika. Als onderzoeksmethode is onder andere gebruikgemaakt van participerende observatie, informele gesprekken en semigestructureerde interviews met bijna 200 respondenten. Deze gesprekken en interviews gingen over het probleem van de neushoornstroperij in en rond het KNP. Verder is gebruikgemaakt van evenementen-etnografie van belangrijke topontmoetingen van milieu- en natuurbeschermingsdeskundigen; observatie van strafzaken in de Skukuza Periodical Court, en een kort vergelijkend onderzoek van de reacties op neushoornstroperij door de provinciale natuurbeschermingsinstanties van KwaZulu-Natal. Daarnaast heeft een collega-onderzoeker zes maanden ingewoond bij leden van gemeenschappen ten zuidwesten van het KNP om onderzoek te doen naar de impact van gemilitariseerd natuurbehoud op

deze gemeenschappen. Gezien de beperkte toegankelijkheid van gegevens en interne documenten van het KNP, is in dit onderzoek ter aanvulling van de observaties in het Krugerpark ook intensief gebruikgemaakt van archiefmateriaal en openbare bronnen over het probleem van de neushoornstroperij en over het arbeidsproces.

Dit onderzoek heeft een aantal belangrijke inzichten opgeleverd. In de eerste plaats wordt op metatheoretisch niveau aangetoond dat de politie functioneert als een politiek middel om de orde te handhaven. Daarbij wordt niet alleen beoogd om het maatschappelijk onderscheid op basis van klasse en ras te handhaven, maar ook bepaald wie er geweld mag gebruiken bij de beroepsuitoefening. De politie doet weinig aan misdaadpreventie, maar houdt zich meer bezig met het in stand houden van de asymmetrische maatschappelijke verhoudingen. Ten tweede was het met archiefonderzoek mogelijk om continuïteit en verandering in het Krugerpark te ontdekken en na te gaan hoe ideeën, werkwijzen en mensen uit de tijd van de contrarevolutionaire aanpak door de apartheidstaat in de jaren tachtig in het park zijn hergebruikt en worden ingezet in de huidige 'oorlog tegen de stroperij', ondanks veranderingen in de organisatie en het management. Uit dit historisch onderzoek komt ook naar voren hoe arbeid tegelijkertijd geproduceerd, verwijderd en onder controle gehouden werd bij het aanleggen van het Krugerpark en dat het arbeidsproces in het park tot op de dag van vandaag gekenmerkt wordt door een uitgesproken vorm van raciaal paternalisme en goedkope arbeid.

Ten derde blijkt uit dit onderzoek dat de politie een duidelijk stempel drukt op de werkomgeving en het arbeidsproces van het natuurbehoud. Hierdoor ontstaat een nieuwe productiepolitiek. In combinatie met de historische koloniale en apartheidskennmerken van de gang van zaken op de werkplek ontstaat er een speciaal soort arbeidsregime: *het politiële arbeidsregime*. Deze organisatievorm heeft specifieke gevolgen voor rangers die geweld mogen gebruiken in hun werk. Uit dit onderzoek blijkt dat een historische bezorgdheid over de waarde van arbeid en productiviteit een verschuiving teweeggebracht heeft van loyaliteit naar het op een soms ongebruikelijke, arbitraire en onrechtmatige wijze bevorderen van geweld en agressie. Ook blijkt dat deze misstanden niet plaatsvinden in een vacuüm van eigenrichting, maar dat dit illegale optreden tegen neushoornstropers ontstaat onder sterke politieke druk en door bepaalde kenmerken van het arbeidsproces. Rangers worden hiertoe aangezet met het vooruitzicht van aanzienlijke bijverdiensten en bonussen en de dreiging van marginalisering op de werkplek. Ook de institutionele medeplichtigheid draagt hieraan bij.

Ten slotte blijkt dat het politieke arbeidsregime ook op verschillende manieren van invloed is op het institutionele klimaat in het KNP. De uitspraken van de leiding van het Krugerpark over het welzijn van de rangers stroken niet met de werkelijkheid en de rangers ondervinden aanzienlijke psychische en morele schade van hun voortdurende blootstelling aan geweld en de angst voor geweld, dat bovendien tegen de regels ingaat. Uit het onderzoek blijkt dat pogingen om deze effecten tegen te gaan als een operationele last worden gezien en dat institutionele witheid en institutioneel racisme typerende, soms moeilijk waarneembare, kenmerken van de werkplek blijven. De ordehandhaving wordt ook naar binnen gericht wanneer er sprake is van wantrouwen, wat leidt tot represailles op de werkplek, foltering en onmenselijke behandeling van werknemers. Ook blijkt dat financiële schulden, in de hand gewerkt door zeer onregelmatige inkomsten, dienen als een nieuwe wijze van arbeidscontrole en arbeidsonzekerheid onder het politieke arbeidsregime.

Trefwoorden: politie, macht, arbeid, productiepolitiek, institutioneel klimaat



Preface

Critiquing Conservation Reason: An Insider's Dilemma

In much the same tradition as Joseph Blum,¹ an apprentice of Michael Burawoy at the University of California Berkeley, it is the world of academia that I find intimidating and unknown. On the other hand, the world that ethnographers in critical conservation seek to enter, the protected areas and national parks of southern and East Africa, is one that I am most familiar with in a way that many other researchers in this field are not. It was in these remote places where I did more than earn a living for close to eighteen years – it was a place where I forged exceptionally close friendships and experienced moments that I suspect would be hard to replicate in other work environments. Working as a section ranger and technical advisor, my daily job included digging holes for fence posts to erect fences that would do more than enclose predators and mega-herbivores as much as it was meant to keep out trespassers – it clearly delineated the philosophical and material divide between nature and society. It was a job that varied from the adventurous and glamourized – chemically immobilizing lions at night and ear notching black rhino from helicopters to the decidedly unspectacular and mundane – fixing broken toilets and dealing with employee disciplinary issues. Some of these work experiences also brought me face to face with the prospect of death – walking away from a light aircraft crash and coming face to face with a charging black rhino bull are but two examples. It was a job where, as a section ranger (with a semi-automatic rifle cradled in my arms), I was *the* authority over the territory I surveyed including the animals and people who entered those spaces. The remote location of the conservation workplace and its separateness from the rest of society did not insulate it from the politics that continues to dominate South African life. Like many black mid-level managers, in a largely white dominated field, overcoming the pejorative label of being seen reductively as nothing more than an affirmative action appointee was real. As with many people of colour, the never-ending struggle to prove that I was capable was ever-present. At the same time, the most

sincere and enduring friendships that I continue to have are with white former colleagues.

It was also a job where the meta-population management and monitoring of black rhino was more than just another administrative requirement or of fleeting personal interest to me. Working with highly skilled field rangers relying only on the spoor and feeding sign to silently locate and approach black rhino on foot after hours of tracking, hand rearing a black rhino calf and the boma management of wild captive black rhino, elevated this species to a place of reverence in my imagination. It was in iMfolozi Game Reserve in South Africa - widely credited with bringing (white) rhino back from the brink of extinction and where rhino monitoring and management was at the centre of its organizational pride and culture - where this reverence for rhino was consolidated. It became the topic of many hours of conversation with friends and colleagues, pouring over the minutiae of individual rhino sightings, shifting home range patterns, group compositions and associations and what these observations may mean for population estimates and management interventions. At other times, it included conducting forensic crime scene investigations at rhino carcasses and cutting open rhino skulls to extract bullet fragments that frustratingly resulted in very little progress in identifying and successfully prosecuting the perpetrators. Talk of black rhino permeated our everyday lives. It was only while conducting my masters research on the purported beneficiation from community based natural resource management interventions that I came to appreciate how pastoralists revered their cattle as much as I did black rhino. Only then did I begin to question who's reverence of what was more legitimate.

Where conservation practice and the very particular social relations that it engendered, living in remote, secluded places (something that I referred to as a 'bubble') has formed such an integral part of my adult life, coming to formulate a critique of conservation reason has been fraught with personal, social and emotional dilemmas. Upon hearing of the death of a trusted field ranger I worked with in iMfolozi Game Reserve and being shaken by the senselessness and violence of his death during an anti-poaching operation, I was acutely aware that many of my close friends still in conservation would have to respond to a radio call when gunshots were heard, not knowing whether they too would have to kill someone in the course of their duties or instead be killed themselves. I could only imagine what ramifications such outcomes would hold for their own lives and the lives of their families. This is the world that I have been part of for more than half of my life and it is this world I now seek to interrogate using critical theory. Blum observed that, "[d]etaching oneself from the field of study is a problem that probably plagues

all ethnographers” and that this dictum was especially true for him as someone who earned a living from the shipyards in the Bay Area (2000: 107). Suffice it to say here that for me an ethnographic investigation of conservation practice is more than reporting on local processes and global forces of militarized conservation - critiquing conservation practice may be construed as a critique of the people who *do* conservation – at times those very people I have built relationships with over the years. Here, however, I am generally concerned with the political roles people play and not necessarily the individuals who play them.² Despite this, those former colleagues and friends may construe my critique of conservation practice as a personal attack, something that may very well be unavoidable - albeit unintended - and that may entail a seemingly inescapable burden of risking an entire social and professional network that I have acquired over my nearly two decades in conservation. Coming to terms with that has not been easy. Being immersed in the insulated world of a PhD process almost entirely devoted to understanding seemingly abstract philosophy and social theory has in many ways alienated me from the people and praxis of conservation.³ In effect, as Sara Ahmed (2012) laments, the research process is one of estrangement. At other times it has helped to make sense of the disturbing phenomena I encountered. I am painfully aware that critique alone is not an end in itself but that it is instead solidarity with an underclass of conservation labour that animates this work – solidarity with those field rangers who taught me so much, not only in teaching me field craft, but for their affection, humour and sincere companionship and to highlight the conditions under which they live and work. My critique here is not because I have conceived of ready-made solutions to the complex and very real threat of wildlife crime but to offer a cautionary note to the costs that the forms of conservation policing described here pose to the very people who do conservation work and the forms of authoritarian governance it gives rise to. It is only through making plain what these costs are, that an alternative, socially just and dignified conservation workplace politics can hope to be conceived.

Cape Town, South Africa, March 2022

Notes

¹ See Blum, J.A. (2000) ‘Degradation Without Deskillling: Twenty-five Years in the San Francisco Shipyards’ in Burawoy, M. et al. (2000) *Global Ethnography: Forces,*

Connections, and Imaginations in a Postmodern World. Berkeley: University of California Press, p.106-136. Blum worked as boilermaker, welder and shipfitter in the shipyards of the Bay Area in San Francisco for 25 years. It was while he was still working in the shipyards that he undertook his PhD candidacy in sociology at UC Berkeley.

² See Marx's reference to "bearers" of economic relations where the focus on roles rather than individuals recognizes the different, even contradictory, positions individuals occupy (Harvey 2010: 47-48).

³ This insight is taken from the author Karla Comejo Villavicencio, a daughter of illegal immigrants. In studying the precarious lives of illegal immigrants, she felt alienated from their daily struggles through her own privileges as a PhD candidate at a prestigious U.S. university. [Online] Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/24/books/review/the-undocumented-americans-karla-cornejo-villavicencio.html?action=click&module=Well&pgtype=Homepage§ion=Book+Review> (Accessed 27 March 2020).

1

Introduction: The Problem with Policing

1.1 Policing the Problem - The Problem with Policing

The image that has perhaps most dramatically captured the public imagination and been at the centre of political discourse that has epitomized the rhino poaching¹ crisis over the last decade has been the gruesome image of a rhino, its horns crudely hacked off, breathing raspily through the gaping wound on its face. This was the scene sketched by an interlocutor,² who was addressing a London based audience on the challenges faced by rangers in a South African game reserve in this so-called ‘war on poaching’. He proceeded to prod his audience to contemplate what could possibly be worse than being confronted by the image of the dying rhino. He went on to relay his personal experience to responding to what amounted to a 36-hour anti-poaching operation resulting in a ‘contact’³ where a suspected poacher⁴ was shot and injured in an ambush conducted by conservation law enforcement personnel. He approached the victim who was still alive, lying on his stomach, his face covered by long, dreadlocked hair. When he turned the victim over and the hair covering his face fell away, he could see that the man had been mortally wounded, his face below the eyeline had been shot off – where his nose, his cheekbones and jaw should have been was gone. There was nothing he could do despite his advanced training in first aid and the man soon succumbed to his injuries before he could be attended to by professional paramedics who were *en route*. He shared with me the macabre sounds and frantic death throes this man made before the life seeped out of his body and the disturbing, almost callous, indifference by rangers involved in the incident, making insensitive jokes. He also understood that it was a mechanism that these rangers employed to shield themselves from the obvious trauma of the disturbing scene unravelling before their eyes. While they sat shivering in the light rain and the pitch dark with only the lights of their headlamps

and torches illuminating the eerie scene, waiting for members of the South African Police Service (SAPS) and paramedics to arrive, what disturbed him most was that the victim could so easily have been himself or one of his own friends or colleagues working on anti-poaching operations that has come to typify contemporary conservation work in a time of intensified rhino poaching.

This vignette offers a small insight into the gruesome reality of the violence at the frontline of some anti-poaching operations. It is one that is hidden in the sanitized and decontextualized media or official accounts we often encounter in reports on ‘the war on poaching’. Indeed, this is not the first instance where the nature of the violence of anti-poaching operations has been made explicit. Barбора also references images of armed police and paramilitary personnel crowding around the emaciated bodies of young men “whose faces have been blown off” in anti-poaching operations in India’s Kaziranga National Park (2017: 1147). When rangers are called on to ‘stop poaching’, the disturbing events encapsulated in this vignette rarely animate the deliberations of species conservation protagonists, be they scientists, conservation policy makers or practitioners in the non-governmental organization (NGO) sector. It is an alienation from the violence of this particular form of labour where the disconnect between the ideal of saving a species is so far removed from its violent operationalization. The violent labour that some ranger encounters with poachers entail, is, in many ways, *essential* and *necessary* to the functioning of a political economy of (rhino) conservation in South Africa. In distancing itself from this violence, conservation protagonists are able to continue to position conservation endeavours as an inherent good, devoid of human costs. In foregrounding the violence depicted in this vignette, its purpose is to show that this violence is not ahistorical or anomalous to the conservation endeavour, particularly in saving charismatic species such as rhino. Where the notion of defending the last ‘bastions of nature’ (see Terborgh 1999) is instilled so deeply in the moral psyche, this thesis invites a more critical examination of what such ostensibly noble and innocuous sounding position statements entail and that the violence with which it is inscribed often holds serious consequences not only for marginalized groups living in or adjacent to

protected areas but also conservation labour at the forefront of anti-poaching operations who can be subjected to problematic workplace practices in pursuit of these conservation ideals.

The imagery that persists, however, is that of the slain rhino – one where “the decimation of wildlife” is equated to “a sort of cultural genocide” (Moore 2015: 45; see also Bunn 1996, Burnett 2018; Büscher 2021, Lunstrum 2014). This symbolic power of wildlife and the manner in which particular animals “congeal the complex meanings and struggles about identity and sovereignty” has driven much of the public clamour – predominantly from a white and economically privileged section of both the South African and international community – to ‘save the rhino’ (Field 2008 in Sodikoff 2012: 7). Where the defence of rhino has become, arguably, constitutive of whiteness⁵ itself (Burnett 2018), this sub-set of public outrage has fuelled the impetus and added credibility to a course of action to strengthen law enforcement in the face of intensified wildlife crime and that being ‘tough on crime’ is the most appropriate and pragmatic response under circumstances that necessitates urgent action.

Where the official and public discourse not only urges, but glamourizes ‘stopping poachers’ in the pursuit to re-establish ‘law and order’, this thesis argues that such normative turns often “depend on aggressive policing” (Schrader 2019: 1) and that aggressive order-maintenance policing is “masked by the regularity of legal processes” (Harcourt 2001: 19). Here it bears reminding that not all policing is conducted by professional police forces. Indeed, this thesis situates the practices of combatting wildlife crime in the Kruger National Park (KNP),⁶ the focal area of this study, as a policing function. It is a preliminary signpost that we should also be alert to the wider concept of police power and the myriad of institutional forms which are also imbued with this power (Neocleous 2014b). There is a growing body of evidence from around the world that points to how this pursuit of security and order spills into acts of police and military misconduct and brutality, acts that are often perpetrated with impunity (Belkin 2016, Belur 2010, IGADF 2020, Jauregui 2013, Williams 2015) and often with a racialized bias (Davis, 2017, Hall et al. 1978, Schrader 2019, Seigel 2018). This is particularly pertinent in the South African context, considering the notoriety of the apartheid security forces who had a particular penchant for racially repressive and brutal tactics, often including gross violations of human rights (Gossmann 2006, Hansen 2006, O’Brien 2001, TRC 1998, Vol. 5, Ch.1). Many of these practices,

such as routine abuse and torture reminiscent of apartheid era policing persist in contemporary South African policing (Kynoch 2016). Acts of deviance by state actors are especially prevalent in elite and specialized police and military units where a dangerous ‘warrior culture’ is allowed to develop unchecked⁷ (see also Belur 2010, IGADF 2020). These units often operate under increasingly blurred sets of rules and norms that ultimately normalizes deviance. In essence, it is a sense of exceptionalism and separateness in the identity formation of these units that permits a wider latitude of action that is seen as *necessary* in times of urgency, and the perpetrators see themselves as above the law.

The KNP has throughout its history projected similar tendencies of exceptionalism and has actively sought to inculcate a warrior culture amongst its field ranger services as this thesis will demonstrate. The simplistic representation of rangers as heroes saving nature (see Büscher 2021, Duffy et al. 2019, Marijnen and Verweijen 2016) obscures acts of deviance, especially so in instances where policing is presented as an unproblematic and legitimate response in the face of intensified wildlife crime. Foucault (1980) reminds us that it is not the legitimacy of the state to restore order that is at stake but its methods of subjugation that should be of concern. Consequently, it is not only the gruesome nature of the violence at the conservation coalface that this thesis brings to attention but that state sanctioned violence in the KNP is not immune to the same abuses of power that besets professional police and military institutions.

These acts of deviance are often attributed to a sub-set of ill-disciplined staff or framed as the actions of a few ‘rotten apples’ within the organization. Yet, it is the institution of policing that repeatedly shields its officers of misdeeds and instead become more insular and defensive in the face of criticism rather than subjecting itself to greater transparency and accountability to the communities they purport to serve (Vitale 2017). Advocates campaigning against police brutality maintain that the use of disproportionate or extrajudicial force by police is not a sign of a broken policing system but that it is eminently designed to work that way,⁸ that attempts to reform the police does not address the underlying rationality of police to structure violence (Seigel 2018). While addressing such forms of deviance are crucial to holding officials accountable and addressing problematic institutional cultures,⁹ focusing solely on prosecution as a corrective measure obscures a wider interrogation of police and its primary role at the centre of modern state formation and that it is “a tool for

managing deeply entrenched inequalities” (Vitale 2017: location 458 single column view). While intersubjective meaning making and perpetrator agency *do* play a role in how field rangers justify their actions, it does not fall within the scope of this work.

Instead, this thesis highlights the workplace pressures, social formations premised on domination and the unequal hierarchies of power that this fraction of labour is subjected to in the Kruger and in what ways police amplify these relations. It emphasizes that police deviancy does not occur in a vacuum of voluntarism but is preconfigured, on the one hand, by a complex set of workplace social relations typified by a brand of historically racialized paternalism and coercion. It is within this context that these problematic relations together with worker precarity in the form of labour migrancy and specific structural features of the labour process, to name but two aspects, are mobilized to order its pool of labour and maximize labour productivity. On the other hand, Kruger also has a long-standing association with the apartheid security apparatus that has shaped not only its securitized worldview but also its martial practices. It is at this intersection of security and labour, specifically how security *configures* labour, that is a central concern of the thesis. In bringing security and labour into focus, this thesis illuminates its effects on the conservation workplace and the institutional life within Kruger. It brings attention to what consequences it holds for low paid, racialized conservation workers at the forefront of anti-poaching operations in the KNP and to contextualize these dynamics in a country that continues to struggle to shed the lingering afterlives of the apartheid workplace.

Following on from the problem statement outlined above, the remainder of this introductory chapter will provide an overview of the contemporary scholarly debate on militarized conservation and its conceptual shortcomings. It then offers an alternative conceptual prism through which we can better understand the responses to rhino poaching in the KNP and its effects on the mode of governance and institutional life in the Park. It then sketches the extent of the rhino poaching problem and its human costs in South Africa and in the KNP in particular. Next, I sketch a short biographical profile of the KNP, paying particular attention to the manner in which its leadership actively carved out an identity for itself as an exceptional space and deploying this exceptionalism to exercise their authority. This also provides a critical contextual groundwork for what is to follow. Next, I sketch the methodology that

guides this research and a detailed account of the methods and fieldwork strategies deployed. I also reflect on doing research in closed contexts; aspirations for respondent confidentiality and ethical dilemmas. Following that, I frame the research objectives, the central research question and sub-questions and end with the layout of the thesis.

1.2 Situating the Academic Debate: From Green Militarization to Green Violence to Community Policing

A surfeit of popular and academic attention – from diverse disciplinary perspectives ranging from anthropology, geography, political ecology, criminology, military studies, conservation science and even queer studies - has critiqued this seemingly novel militarized turn in conservation or pointed out the limits of deploying higher densities of armed field rangers in the context of an upsurge in rhino poaching over the last decade (see Anneck and Masubulele 2016, Barichiev et al. 2017, Burnett and Milani 2017, Büscher and Ramutsindela 2016, Duffy 2014, Hübschle 2016, Humphreys and Smith 2014, Lombard 2012, Lunstrum 2014). The debate has largely centred around Elizabeth Lunstrum’s concept of ‘green militarization’ which critiques the “use of military and paramilitary (military-like) actors, techniques, technologies, and partnerships in the pursuit of conservation” (2014: 817).

Conservation practitioners themselves dismiss the critique of conservation practice through the lens of green militarization and instead contend that conservation has always been ‘militarized’ to one extent or another.¹⁰ This view also corresponds with Neumann’s findings in Tanzanian state conservation agencies that individuals trained by the state in firearms handling and dispensing state sanctioned violence - such as former police, military and prison officials - “have been traditionally the primary source of recruits for game rangers” (2001: 307). Indeed, Lunstrum herself concedes that green militarization is not a new occurrence and that its purpose, as a concept, is “to invite a more sustained, wide-ranging investigation into the militarization of conservation practice” (2014: 828). Despite the consensus that African conservation has been intertwined with military practices since the colonial period, the critique of green militarization continues to rile practitioners in the Kruger. To counter the critique, they prefer to frame

their responses to rhino poaching in the KNP as ‘responsible’ (Hübschle and Jooste 2017, Jooste and Ferreira 2018) or, more explicitly, as ‘responsible green militarization’.¹¹ It is this assertion by Kruger managers, that its responses are ‘responsible’, that this thesis challenges.

A number of scholars also point to the limits of ‘green militarization’ as a sufficiently broad concept, that the focus on militarization in conservation, narrows the focus on only one dynamic to a problem that has much broader relational political economic dynamics. An analysis of violence in conservation cannot only be concerned with the use only of military hardware but needs to be expanded to include an analysis of military doctrine, tactics, informal rules, population-centric strategies and interoperability with other security actors (see Verweijen 2015). Specifically, an analysis of violence in conservation concerned with these aforementioned tenets has to bring counterinsurgency (COIN) into the analysis. Shaw and Rademeyer contend – erroneously so, as this thesis will demonstrate - that to conflate anti-poaching operations in the KNP with COIN “draws heavily and uncritically on external stereotypes of South African (white) military and security sector prowess without any real understanding of the current security establishment” (2016: 2). Other critiques instead see the use of military practices, technologies and partnerships as a “series of ‘intensifications’” after Nealon (2008: 5, see also Büscher and Fletcher 2018, Massé 2019). This implies a historical continuity at differing levels of magnification over time. Indeed, Büscher and Ramutsindela (2016) show such historical continuities in their critique of green militarization and that it is perhaps more fruitful to conceptualize violence in conservation as ‘green violence’. Crucially, green violence emphasizes those structural, unseen forms of violence implicit in contemporary political economy and it is important not to lose sight of these ‘less spectacular’ forms of violence and the concerning consequences they hold for marginalized groups. However, in foregrounding spectacular or direct violence it serves to show that its presence is intrinsically linked to the structural phenomena that shape the labour process and that these two aspects of violence are not mutually exclusive in the KNP. Moreover, by directing our focus at direct violence, it also makes the source of violence less nebulous and disconnected from the institutions that perpetrate these forms of violence (Seigel 2018), and in doing so it offers some prospect for transformation.

Furthermore, many scholars, including political ecologists critiquing militarized conservation, often find themselves in a dilemma at recognizing the dangers poaching and wildlife crime poses to biodiversity. In an attempt to stem its persistence, they have called for forms of law enforcement that are more 'inclusive', one that devolves policing to a community level (Massé et al. 2017b, see also Hübschle and Shearing 2018). This thesis challenges that community policing can be a progressive movement and instead follows Schrader (2016) who posits that the deployment of community in participatory initiatives to bring about security was, and remains, integral to counterinsurgency interventions that seek to pacify populations. Jensen (2010) posits that it is at this nexus of security and development, that security becomes privileged in the absence of radical socio-economic transformation. Furthermore, community is not an antidote to state violence but rather a means through which state violence becomes legitimated, that it devolves responsibility for disorder at the door of the 'community' where it is the community and not the state that has become responsible for ensuring order and that it further causes rifts within communities.¹² Thus, Vitale argues, "community policing does not empower communities in meaningful ways...[i]t expands police power" (2017: location 294, single column view).

Implicit in some of these concerns is a call for the de-militarization of conservation. Alison Howell (2018) argues that the limits in militarization as a concept lies in its presumption that militarization has encroached on a peaceful liberal order. In other words, that there was a peaceful and equitable social order before it was altered through militarization. Such thinking obscures an underlying continuity of oppression – what she calls 'martial politics' - and that de-militarization in itself cannot provide a meaningful solution (ibid.). Schrader also contends that if police were stripped of military-style gear it would *still* be able to enact social control, surveillance and the killing of armed and unarmed people.¹³ The focus on the hardware that characterizes militarization often obscures the underlying problematics of policing in enacting social order.¹⁴ Neocleous (2021) argues that the mainstream literature critiquing the militarization of police creates a blockage in critical thinking about police power. It suggests an uncharacteristic shift in police from the seemingly benign maintenance of order and peace to forms of coercion appropriate to war zones (ibid.). Such a position perpetuates a myth that 'normal' policing is not about violence, that it is distinct from war and that it should be

insulated from the technologies of war (ibid.). However, it overlooks a continuity of oppression elucidated by Howell (2018), a rationality of rule ensconced in the concept of ‘police’, that has been part of and continues to inform conservation governance in the KNP. Kienscherf (2016) also argues that compliance-based community policing does not presume it is devoid of coercive practices. It continues to order and shape the Park’s relations to people living on its borders and, crucially for this thesis, the labour in its employ.

1.3 Advancing the Debate: Expanding our Understanding of Police and the Ways in which it Configures Conservation Labour

It is here that this thesis makes an innovative contribution to the literature on militarized conservation and to move the discussion and analysis beyond militarization. Firstly - at a metatheoretical level - it dispels the notion that we conceptualize policing as an institution separately from police as a form of power (Neocleous 2000). In this expanded conceptualization of police, it illuminates the way in which the constabulary functions of the police and its penchant to use force works in conjunction with state power. Thus, police and the security it seeks is not a benign response to a “universal need for protection from risk or danger but [...] a political technology central to the construction of both the modern state and capitalism” (McMichael 2012: 7). It urges us to question what these short-term security interventions may mean for long term governance, how they expand into seemingly non-traditional policy fields such as conservation and specifically the manner in which police orders conservation labour. Where conservation law enforcement in the context of an upsurge in wildlife crime is conceptualized as a policing function, the critical literature on police emphasizes the ways in which the administration of wage labour, more generally, is subordinated in the pursuit of political economic rationales encoded in capitalism (Neocleous 2000). However, very little attention is paid to how those fractions of labour that *enforce* state sanctioned violence – police officers themselves – are subordinated and ordered in pursuit of these political economic rationales.

Secondly, drawing on the critical literature on the labour process and the manner in which racial, gender and class inequalities are produced and reproduced in the workplace, this thesis brings this work in conversation with the work on the labour process in bordered work spaces such as the factory floor. It leans on the work of Karl von Holdt's (2003) analysis of the *apartheid workplace regime*; Michael Burawoy's (1985) *factory regime* and to bring these insights into conversation with Chris Smith's (2003) *dormitory labour system* or Ngai and Smith's (2007) *dormitory labour regime*. Following these conceptual characterizations of the workplace, this thesis proposes that to understand how social/labour relations are ordered in conservation spaces under the logics of police, it may be fruitful to conceptualize the bordered conservation workplace under the conditions described throughout this thesis as a *police labour regime*.

It can be argued that the Kruger Park is a site of densely concentrated value derived from international tourism and that the visible role played in environmental politics adds a veneer of credibility – and thus value - to the South African state on the international stage (Death 2011). However, labour as source of value is left largely undertheorized in conservation due to the obvious absence of a tangible commodity. Sodikoff (2009) and Ramutsindela (2015) argue that where conservation seems to be the antithesis of production, there is a need to know how labour value in conservation is produced (see also Ekers 2015, Garland 2006, Jacoby 2001, Thakholi 2021). Building on these insights, together with Bunn (1996), this thesis proposes a key avenue for generating labour value under the police labour regime. Where violence has become a central feature in conservation (Neumann 2001); and where a number of scholars have demonstrated that violence is a central feature of the modern state (see Neocleous 2021, Seigel 2018); and capital accumulation (Blomley 2003, Marx [1867]1976); there is a need to know precisely what role the application of violence by conservation labour plays in generating value in conservation in the context of a police labour regime. Here, the thesis leans on the insights of Joseph Pugliese (2013) in how violence is situated as productive. This thesis will demonstrate how the expression of labour value has shifted from loyalty as value (see Bunn 1996) and reconfigured to privilege violence as a measure of field ranger productivity.

Furthermore, this thesis demonstrates that conservation anti-poaching operations in the KNP draw heavily on counterinsurgency (COIN) tactics and doctrine. Where Foucault (1980) implores that we focus our attention

on the methods of subordination employed by the state, we should remain alert to the proficiency of the apartheid state for brutal and irregular practices encoded in its COIN operations (Gossmann 2006, O'Brien 2001) are not forever consigned to the past. A number of critical scholars in conservation have referred to the proliferation of COIN in conservation (see Devine 2014, Dunlap and Fairhead 2014, Minarchek, 2020, Peluso and Vandergeest 2011, Verweijen and Marijnen 2016, Ybarra, 2012). Few have unearthed the genealogy of counterinsurgency, its links to pacification nor its theoretical positioning within the concept of police. Neither has there been an ethnographically thick description of what its use looks like in practice and how the practices enshrined in COIN render that fraction of labour increasingly precarious due its inherent tendency to draw its practitioners into violence, often in ways that are irregular or extrajudicial.

Lastly, this thesis also expands on the preliminary observations of scholars in critical conservation on the consequences militarized conservation holds for conservation law enforcement staff (Duffy et al. 2019). Where the consequences are not described in detail, this contribution provides an ethnographically thick description in what ways the use of violent practices shapes the institutional life and the labour process within the Park and the concerning consequences it holds for low salaried workers.

1.4 The 'War on Poaching': An Overview of the Rhino Killed and the Human Costs

The last decade has seen a dramatic – but hardly unprecedented¹⁵ - surge in rhino poaching in South Africa, with close to 8 000¹⁶ animals killed between 2008 to 2018. Put into perspective, this total number of animals killed in South Africa dwarfs the total population of both white and black rhino in the three next most important rhino range states in Africa, namely Kenya, Namibia and Zimbabwe with a total rhino population of 4 692 animals (Emslie et al. 2016). Approximately 60 percent of those animals have been killed in the KNP and it is here that militarized responses to the poaching threat is considered to be most intensified (see Annecke and Masubulele 2016, Büscher and Ramutsindela 2016, Lunstrum 2014). It is only in 2018 that the number of rhinos killed annually in South Africa have

fallen under 1 000 animals for the first time in five years, leading to, arguably, premature declarations of success. In recent assessments, KNP officials have reported on the effectiveness of what they call the ‘ranger effect’, where despite the high incidences of incursions by poachers, it is the efforts of ranger personnel and the deployment of technology that are attributed to the reduction in animals killed. In effect, that its militarized approaches to poaching are bearing fruit. Detractors suggest that it is the radically reduced population numbers in the Park that make it increasingly difficult for poaching groups to detect and kill rhino. Where rhino poaching data is presented without context in terms of what proportion of the rhino population is killed year on year, it offers little information on whether poaching is indeed decreasing.¹⁷ Such narrowly defined data on rhino poaching also avoids the politically unpalatable, and reputationally damaging topic of the possibility that Kruger’s rhino population numbers could have been significantly overestimated.¹⁸ Despite these criticisms, South African National Parks (SANParks), the parent body of the KNP, continues to insist that it is its law enforcement pillar and the significant expenditure in security that has precluded even worse rhino losses (SANParks 2019). However, it is spurious, Harcourt (2001) argues, to make simplistic correlations between enforcement and crime rates where those correlations tell us nothing about a range of other social factors that impact on criminal activity.

Over the same period, 3 461 suspects have been arrested, injured or killed within the country, with 52 percent of those interdictions made in the KNP. Previously, the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA),¹⁹ which disseminates rhino poaching statistics centrally, used the term ‘neutralized’ to refer to killed, injured and arrested suspects. The use of the term obscures the ability to measure the deadly nature of the law enforcement actions in the KNP. The use of this term also bears a disturbing similarity to the terms and phrases used by apartheid era security operatives where words such as “*neutraliseer* [neutralize], *vernietig* [destroy], *elimineer* [eliminate], *uit te wis* [wipe out] ...became common parlance” (TRC 1998, Vol. 2. Ch.1: 38). The continued use of this language in the present moment also points to another important argument this thesis makes – that discourses and practices learned from its close relations with the apartheid era security forces are deeply embedded in the institutional makeup of the KNP and are recycled in times of urgency. Discursively, political figures and SANParks officials

have repeatedly framed the threat of rhino poaching as a national security threat or a 'war' and that its responses constitute a 'war on poaching' (see Chapter 5). Kynoch (2016) demonstrates that similar discursive constructions were deployed by national leadership in the safety and security ministry in its 'war on crime' in the late 1990s. Much of this political rhetoric, together with the adoption of militarized ranks within police structures, in effect gave political authority for the violent use of force by police, a feature that has become commonplace in South African policing despite early efforts at transformation after the end of apartheid (ibid.). Kynoch (2016) posits, that when police work is defined as a 'war' and criminals as enemies, expectations of restraint from rank-and-file police officers becomes increasingly remote.

Over the last year or two of the period under review, DEA reports on rhino poaching statistics refer only to arrested suspects - to include incidences of death - and still provides no clarity over the number of suspects killed in anti-poaching operations.²⁰ Shaw and Rademeyer (2016) speculate that between 150 to 200 suspected poachers have been killed in KNP towards the midpoint of the period under review (see also Hübschle 2016, Rademeyer 2016). Media sources quote much higher numbers of between 300 and 500 suspects killed.²¹ This research can confirm that 112 suspects have been killed between January 2010 and August 2014,²² 21 suspects killed over a 7-month period in 2015²³ and a further 45 suspects killed between January to November 2016.²⁴ Thus, over a 74-month period a total of 178 suspected poachers are confirmed to have been killed in the KNP with an average of 2.4 people killed per month.²⁵ Compared to the number of deaths recorded during Zimbabwe's war on poaching in the 1980s during 'Operation Stronghold' where shoot-on-sight policies were passed into law to protect rangers from prosecution, 167 suspected poachers were killed over a 108-month period between 1984 to 1992 - an average of 1.54 suspects killed per month (Milliken et al. 1993). In Kaziranga, India's stronghold for the conservation of greater one-horned rhino where similar *de facto* protections are in place to insulate conservation law enforcement staff from prosecutions, 68²⁶ suspects were killed in a 108-month period from 2007 to 2015 (a monthly average of 0.62).

What these numbers suggest – despite the significant gaps in the data²⁷ - is that the lethality of contemporary responses to rhino poaching, in the KNP specifically, is unprecedented. It is evident that the rate of deaths on average per month were even lower under policies that legitimized the

use of deadly force in Zimbabwe and India. While no such policy exists in South Africa, the use of force is legislated under Section 49 of the Criminal Procedure Act 51 of 1977²⁸ which legitimates the use of deadly force only in instances of private defence. Questioning the number and circumstances around the death of suspects in the KNP is becoming increasingly pertinent in the context of ever-increasing reports of torture, disappearances, sexual assault and secret killings in conservation settings in Africa and Asia.²⁹ The killing of people under questionable circumstances in the Kruger also has a historical precedent. During the height of the apartheid state's counter revolutionary efforts, at a time when the Park was increasingly drawn into the embrace of the military in the Cold War politics of the 1980s, unarmed men, women and children were also wounded and killed with impunity (Chapter 6). Consequently, it is not only the sheer number of people killed in the Park that is at stake but the circumstances under which these deaths occur and how these practices gain such institutional footholds.

Despite the rhetoric that poachers are well armed, have military training and are associated with terrorist groups (see White 2014) or organized criminal networks (Gustafson et al. 2018), the deadly confrontation taking place away from the public gaze has highly uneven outcomes. After a decade of intensified rhino poaching in the KNP, the 19th July 2018 marked the first time a field ranger was shot and killed in a firefight or contact with suspected poachers.³⁰ No rangers have been prosecuted or formally reprimanded for the illegal or excessive use of force in the KNP in the period under review. Instead, where any critique of ranger practices is construed as undermining conservation efforts, it is a "necropolitics of heroism"³¹ that takes centre stage. As a counter discursive tactic, it frames rangers as 'conservation heroes', which serves to position the violence as regrettable but 'necessary' and to glorify the 'sacrifice' of rangers in instances where they are killed or injured. All this, however, further obscures the broader political context of uneven workplace power relations; labour practices that vitalize violence; the long-lasting emotional and mental health consequences; low salaries; separation from their families; and long working hours that typifies the working conditions of many black field rangers in the KNP.

1.5 The Republic of Kruger: State Power at the Periphery and the Shaping of its Exceptional Authorities

Jacob Dlamini (2020a) contends that the geographical location of the KNP - what Patrick Harries (1987) called ‘a forgotten corner of the Transvaal’ - situated in the remote, far north-eastern corner of South Africa, was where the nation state met its limits. Further still from the reaches of the nation state is the far north-eastern corner of the KNP itself, at the junction of the international border with Zimbabwe and Mozambique, known as Crooks’ Corner, an epitaph used to describe the scant regard which was applied to the rule of law. Despite its remoteness, these outer reaches of the nation state were not entirely devoid of government, that void was slowly beginning to be filled by another state-like actor, the KNP itself.³² Foucault (1980) dispels the notion that, in the study of state power, we think that its reach is diminished in these far-flung corners. In contrast to Dlamini (2020a), Foucault claims that it is precisely in these peripheral areas - at its extremities - that we look for its effects in its regional and local forms (ibid.). It is here, in its ultimate destination that power surmounts its constraints, and the institutions that embody the legitimacy to control and subordinate, equips itself with ever more violent and “less legal” means of intervention (ibid.: 97).

By the time Stevenson-Hamilton arrived to take up his post as warden in the winter of 1902, his arrival marked the physical expansion of the colonial order, not only over territory and its resources, where it previously had a light footprint, but also the administration of Africans living in the area (Dlamini 2020a). His arrival in effect marked a new social and political order, one premised not only on preserving wildlife but control over African people living in the area (ibid.). In fact, when the National Parks Act was passed unanimously in both houses of parliament in 1926, Jan Smuts, the leader of the opposition, expressed the hope that the Park would extend as far north as central Africa (Carruthers 1995). Such territorial ambitions demonstrate the nascent thinking behind the expansion of protected areas in Africa, one of territorial and resource control, including the control over a vast pool of cheap labour. That the dislocated residents around the KNP viewed and continue to view the Kruger as a state within a state, that “has always exercised a significant degree of judicial and disciplinary power” (Meskell 2009: 91), is hardly surprising. In making claims on the state, the people living on its boundary would direct these claims through the Park (Dlamini 2020a).

This external view of Kruger by the communities that flanked its western boundary was directly attributed to the way in which it conducted itself and the authorities it exercised over the daily lives of people living in its ambit. The Park became the proxy of the state in fulfilling the functions of a number of government departments. This included conducting functions on behalf of the Native Affairs Department in the administration of so-called squatters in terms of the allocation of places of residence, the provision of water, marking out plots for subsistence agriculture and the protection of livestock against depredation;³³ it oversaw the distribution of anti-malarial medication on behalf of the Department of Health;³⁴ it fulfilled the functions of the Department of Agriculture-Technical Services in maintaining and patrolling the foot-and-mouth disease deterrent fence; the functions of the Customs and Excise authority to control the flow of people, goods and contraband;³⁵ and the functions of the South African Police (SAP)³⁶ in enforcing, amongst others, any acts that could pose a threat to national security, the illegal possession of intoxicating alcohol and most importantly the illegal immigration and influx control of migrant labourers. Where it fulfilled the functions of the SAP, it explicitly emphasized its functions in this regard as a national security function.

In terms of the Code List of offences [...] Class A offences and the maintenance of good order are classified in terms of the security of the state. It must therefore be accepted that such a service of public authority be viewed in the most serious light in terms of the rank of importance.³⁷ [own translation]

That the Park was positioning its own role as exceptional by framing its functions of public authority as the highest order of priority in the context of other state functions, was clear. It was not only its role in ensuring the safety of the state in terms of the prevention of capital crimes, especially where the possession of firearms and ammunition by Africans were seen as a threat to national security, influx control was also framed as a national security issue.

This is one of the especially important functions that are carried out by field personnel in the Park. If it is kept in mind that the entire eastern boundary of the Park is also an international border, and that the natives in that neighbouring state ceaselessly try to infiltrate the Transvaal, the prevention of incursion is a task of national interest.³⁸ [own translation]

It even tried to position its most quotidian function, the enforcement of the National Parks Act as being in the national interest

The National Parks Act is in contrast to Provincial Ordinances a national republican law and the enforcement thereof is in the national interest.³⁹ [own translation]

The Park explicitly sought to document the range of functions it conducted on behalf of other government departments in order to justify, *inter alia*, that it should be the rightful recipient of taxes from squatters; to position itself favourably in terms of a more equitable budgetary allocation from the state; to justify its continued access to free labour from illegal immigrants; and most importantly that its very existence and the duties performed by its officers were directly tied to the security of the state itself, that it was, in effect, an indispensable component of the state apparatus. It was through the continuous reiteration in official communications, at times in documents marked ‘Secret’, that it reinforced this view of itself as exceptional and that it continued to be imbued with exceptional authorities. It is no coincidence then that the Park is often referred to as “another country”,⁴⁰ a ‘tenth province’,⁴¹ ‘the last outpost (of conservatism)’,⁴² or, perhaps more universally, as the ‘Republic of Kruger’⁴³ (see also Matelakengisa 2020, Rademeyer 2016, Ramutsindela 2016), a moniker that emphasized its distinct authorities and that it is a space governed by its own rationalities. It points to a deeply held belief that Kruger saw itself akin to a state within a state – or, as Lynn Meskell more pointedly asserts “Kruger *is* the state” (2006: 109, emphasis in original) - at times superseding the authority of the nation state.

The genealogy of how the Kruger came to have such semi-autonomous powers can largely be accredited to its first warden, James Stevenson-Hamilton. Stevenson-Hamilton “did not want an official unconnected with game preservation to have the right to travel in the reserve at his own free will”, including other law enforcement agencies such as the Border Customs Control and the South African Constabulary (Stevenson-Hamilton 1974: 109-110). In eliminating the dual control of multiple law enforcement agencies, the duties of the game reserve officials soon became interchangeable with that of customs and policing work (*ibid.*). A Government Notice No. 2078 gazetted on the 14 November 1930 stipulated the strict conditions of entry into the Park noting that “[d]uring the period from the 15th day of November in every year to the 15th day of

May the following year [...] no person other than a member, officer or servant of the Board shall enter the Park".⁴⁴ Thus, for six months of each year, Stevenson-Hamilton had full control over the wildlife and people within the confines of the reserve.

Stevenson-Hamilton saw to it that both white and native rangers were sworn in as police, "invested within the boundaries of the reserve, with full powers of constables" (Stevenson-Hamilton 1974: 110). However, it is worth noting that the National Parks Board Act only empowered black⁴⁵ field rangers the power to arrest black suspects.⁴⁶ Furthermore, Dlamini (2020a) also points out that these powers were not only confined to the boundaries of the Park but that it extended to one mile beyond the boundary. Stevenson-Hamilton was appointed Sub Native Commissioner, not only within the game reserves which gave him full control of all the natives living on the farms of land companies which were incorporated into the reserve, but also those living immediately beyond the Park's borders (Bunn 2006). He was also appointed as Special Justice of the Peace which gave him the authority not only to adjudicate court hearings but mete out sentences (Stevenson-Hamilton 1974). In the tradition of 19th century colonial administration, magistrates and native commissioners were given "considerable latitude in resolving problems locally...[where] magistrates ruled over Africans in their districts like 'little kings'" (Evans 1997: page unknown). Where Stevenson-Hamilton embodied these dual authorities - authorities akin to that of a sovereign - one can appreciate what forms of expression this mode of direct rule could look like in his efforts to stamp out all forms of resource use within the Park. To enable him to do that, he needed to be acquainted with the minutiae of everyday life, extending his authorities beyond those aspects of daily life that were confined to resource use where any transgressions, no matter how trivial, could not be allowed to go without reprimand in his pursuit to establish a new order.

...in one case native children, two years of age, were prosecuted for starting a fire. Adults were charged with an array of offenses including being drunk, not paying their taxes, being 'deranged', trespassing, poaching and even for their own disappearance. Vague offences are noted...such as 'natives causing trouble'...[and]... 'walking through the park' (Meskell 2012: 223).

These offences hardly constitute the dire threats said to have faced the Park - or the state for that matter - but as Dlamini (2020a) contends, these

authorities empowered Stevenson-Hamilton to employ stiff punishments and ‘exemplary violence’ so that the Africans engaged in even the most benign activities became criminalized. Here one can only surmise that Dlamini’s (2020a) use of the term ‘exemplary’ can only refer to Stevenson-Hamilton’s willingness to use exceptional violence against so-called offenders, no matter how insubstantial their offence, to act as an example and to deter future ‘offenders’. This is not unlike Massé’s contemporary observation on rhino poaching in the border areas of Kruger in Mozambique that its purpose is not only to mete out violence as punishment on the individual but also to make “punishment and violence on the body *visible to others* to demonstrate the power and authority” of conservation law enforcement officials (2017: 171, emphasis added). These forms of exemplary violence also have an earlier historical precedent in contestations over land and resources. During the struggles to reclaim the commons during the enclosures in the English countryside during the late 16th century, these forms of exemplary punishments were particularly brutal and took the form of perhaps 500 to 1 000 executions per year (Hay 1992 in Blomley 2003). However, despite the far-reaching authorities that Stevenson-Hamilton accumulated, he could not entirely stop Mozambican hunters from killing wildlife and fleeing back into Portuguese held territory, leading him to lament that the Transvaal game laws did not allow for the extradition of these perpetrators after they fled across the border (Dlamini 2020a). He yearned for total control of the black body even across national boundaries.

What is clear, is that Stevenson-Hamilton had accumulated considerable punitive powers, - what Jane Carruthers called an “undisputed authority and freedom of action” (1995: 67) - not only over the land and wildlife, but over the daily lives of people living within the landscape. That Stevenson-Hamilton was able to amass these authorities is all the more impressive considering that when the National Parks Board (NPB) was established in 1926, it lay outside the public service and had much less power than a government department, prompting Stevenson Hamilton to describe the KNP as the “Cinderella of Departments” (1926: 226). He was often at the mercy of an indifferent Board who sought to curtail his authority and with whom he had at times a turbulent relationship (Carruthers 1995). Even after Stevenson-Hamilton returned to London and was approached by the Board to consider re-accepting the position of warden after a short hiatus, he agreed to do so only if he had

“a written guarantee [...] to the effect that all internal administration of the Park [...] and in fact all matters outside of financial control and general advertising work shall be left entirely in my hands without interference” (Carruthers 1995: 70).⁴⁷ The Board telegraphed its agreement with the caveat that it could not renege on its obligations under the Act (ibid.). Despite the authority of the Board, mandated by the Act in its oversight powers over Park officials like Stevenson-Hamilton, the fact that they would entertain and accede to such a demand speaks volumes about the influence he was able to exert over high ranking state appointed officials. It was also a spill over feature of British colonial administration that revolved around a near religious faith in the initiative and autonomy of “the man on the spot” (Evans 1997: page unknown). Where the reappointment of Stevenson-Hamilton came with these near absolute powers, one can only surmise what authorities and influence he exerted over African people. Stevenson-Hamilton earned the moniker ‘Skukuza’, meaning destroyer (Dlamini 2020a), “he who scrapes clean” (Carruthers 1995: 92) or “to strip bare” (Meskell 2006: 109), referring to his forceful⁴⁸ reputation of evicting African residents from the Park. The Park headquarters continues to bear the name Skukuza, a stark reminder of the Park’s legacy of violence. In the eyes of many displaced residents, the institution that is Kruger is still conflated with Skukuza (Meskell 2006) and the continued use of the name serves to “keep a certain history alive” (Ahmed 2012: 38). Thus, the politics of the Park and its relations with people is still defined by this “action of stripping all that existed before” (Meskell 2006: 109).

The authorities that Stevenson-Hamilton amassed was not necessarily confined to his person or to his period of tenure, it continued into the 1980s where white section rangers in areas bordering Mozambique were given the authority of immigration officials by the Department of Home Affairs.⁴⁹ They thus had direct control over the flow of labour into and out of the Republic, especially where that labour was applied for its own purposes. Today, this sense of autonomy and authority continue to be evidenced at even the most localised levels within the Park itself.

In KNP you had this idea that what [senior managers] say will be implemented on the ground but there is a lot of resistance from guys like [name omitted] and [name omitted] ... in fact each section is run like an independent park and will only be implemented by a section ranger if they see fit.⁵⁰

Moore (2015) also reported that such levels of resistance and autonomy extended to different organizational levels within the KNP stretching back to the 1950s. With the advent of science-based management, the newly appointed biologist, T.G. Nel “had difficulty in getting rangers and staff to cooperate” (ibid.: 71). Despite these intermittent resistances to science, it was already mobilized selectively to position the practices within its borders as exceptional, that its management interventions were based on a ‘scientific’ approach. During the 1930s, scientific land management was premised on the ability of the Park administration to manage its resident African population in a way that stood in contrast to how African populations outside the Park’s borders were perceived (Bunn 2003). Inside the confines of the reserve, African populations and their cattle ostensibly mirrored the idealized image of rural harmony where Africans in the landscape matched the essentialist views of compliant ‘natives’ that did not offend European sensibilities. Outside the game reserve, in the ‘native reserve’, Africans were seen as unruly, degraders of the environment and increasing in population size that caused alarm. Another central feature of its ‘scientific’ land management was in the artificial provision of water and the centrality the waterhole played, affording the nascent tourist an appreciation of wildlife (ibid.). The waterhole became a literal aperture through which wild Africa could be viewed and appreciated by the tourist. The centrality of water provision was particularly emphasized during the drought of the 1930s, where the supply of artificial water for wildlife came to represent a mode of “enlightened modern management” (ibid.: 217). The notion that the country was ‘drying up’ also formed part of a broader national anxiety (Beinart 2003). Drought was seen as not only as exacerbating rural poverty, its impacts also undermined a broader national rhetoric that saw agricultural development as central to forging a “unified and modern white nation” (ibid.: 237). Through the application of this newly developed field of conservation science, vis-à-vis its management of African peoples and wildlife, the Kruger could position its practices as the epitome of scientific land management and this internalized view of itself has persisted to the present where it continues to see itself as a world leader in the sphere of conservation science (Carruthers 2008, 2017).

Furthermore, the Kruger landscape also held a quasi-religious significance in Afrikaner Christian nationalism⁵¹ as it began to displace the dominant Anglophone narratives of the Park (Bunn 2003). The Kruger

landscape and its originary wilderness narrative together with the heroic struggles of the early Trek Boers forging their way through the South African hinterland held strong religious connotations for the Afrikaner nation and its proximity to god (ibid.). This imagery of the Park, as a pristine landscape, was diametrically opposed to the lived realities of many working-class Afrikaners living under dire conditions in the industrial work regimes that typified the rapidly industrializing and heavily polluted cities of the depression era where their racial distinction in terms of living standards was not that much different to working class African and coloured people (ibid.). The Park thus represented a return to an idealized image of the past - the farm - which represented an image of honest, hardworking pioneers and one of rural harmony (ibid.). This imagery of the farm and its associated racial pride found in the heroics of its trekker past, descriptions of the lowveld⁵² inscribed the landscape “with the exemplary suffering of nineteenth-century trekker parties” (ibid.: 211). This led to a concerted effort in trying to rewrite the history of the Kruger landscape in terms of trekker history and any evidence of the routes that these trekker parties took in the Park was deified and memorialized (see Pienaar 2012). Thus, a return to the Kruger landscape for many urban Afrikaner tourists was akin to a pilgrimage (Bunn 2003), and it is in this light that the landscape continues to be venerated in the imagination of many white South Africans. It is no coincidence that science and religion were simultaneously deployed in the Kruger. It underpinned the colonial encounter, differentiating between humans and the less than human, the colonizer from the colonized and legitimized the subjugation of the latter in service of the colonial political economy (see Mpofo and Steyn 2021).

It is within this context, one of sanctioned autonomy, its sanctity as a symbol of late Afrikaner Christian nationalism and an internal view of itself as a world leader in conservation science, that fomented the notion that it is distinct or exceptional. Even in a time of the greatest threat to the apartheid state, during the height of the anti-apartheid struggles in the mid-1980s, the Park was able to dictate how security was conducted in a manner that did not impinge on the sanctity of the landscape (see Chapter 4). This self-perpetuating logic of exceptionalism instilled in Park administrators a sense of entitlement and positioned its own claims of threats as the highest order of priority where it could insist on exceptional measures in exceptional times. It is this exceptionalism that continues to permit the KNP to dispense its authority in its ‘war on poaching’ over the

people who labour in it or those whose presence is seen as an aberration. However, despite its claims at exceptionalism, the KNP is not legally authorized to operate extra-constitutionally. The violence that characterizes its efforts to save a species is perhaps a yearning not only for a mere return to 'law and order' but a specific typology of order, reminiscent of the image of rural harmony and racial ordering that is already so deeply inscribed in its genealogy and historical geography. In effect, the Kruger embodies not only a social construction of wild nature (Cronon 1995) but remains "tethered to notions of race" (Hays 2019: 142). Its efforts to restore 'law and order' seeks to reaffirm old hierarchies and it is representative of an ongoing process of racial formation and racial ordering (see also Chapter 7).

1.6 Methodology

This thesis draws on twelve months of ethnographic fieldwork from April 2016 to March 2017, including a month-long revisit in August/September 2018, in the Kruger National Park. It leans mainly on participant observation and informal conversations with approximately ninety (90) field ranger staff in six separate ranger teams across the landscape. This ethnographic work reflects on the lived experience and practices of black field rangers under circumstances that have been described as 'militarized' (see Büscher and Ramutsindela 2016, Lunstrum 2014) in a time of intensified rhino poaching. It offers an opportunity, as Sara Ahmed contends, to 'thicken' our description which requires more than describing an action in detail, but to "locate an individual action in terms of its wider meaning" and historical context (2012: 8). Furthermore, some accounts related here are premised on 'fleeting encounters' with individuals and not what many suppose an ethnography normally entails, one consisting solely of lasting interactions (ibid.).

In 'ethnographing' the police, Didier Fassin (2017) suggests that the process entails much more than just an equivalence to participant observation, fieldwork or a qualitative approach. It is a much richer and complex method of scientific research than just being there, requiring, amongst others, a long-term presence, an experience of the social worlds of others and an intimate knowledge of people and places (ibid.). In making sense of this world that encompasses police, it is the process of

method, experience and, crucially, the singular operation of writing that gives meaningful order to the disparate succession of events and disparate facts (ibid.).

Methods

Due to the sheer size of the Park⁵³ and the specific distribution of the rhino population, the highest threat levels, in terms of poaching, are experienced in the southern portions of the Park where rhino population densities are at its greatest. Since threat levels are differentiated across the landscape, the study was able to examine whether everyday practices by anti-poaching staff also differ across the landscape. Subsequently, I interacted with three ranger teams in areas that make up the Intensive and Joint Protection Zones (IPZ and JPZ respectively) where threat levels were at its highest; two ranger teams in the north of the Park making up the Composite Protection Zone (CPZ) where incidences of rhino poaching are very low but was experiencing an increase in elephant poaching;⁵⁴ and the Special Ranger team, a rapid reaction team, who are deployed across the Park (but mostly in the south) who respond specifically to active poaching events.

My interaction with field rangers by and large mirrored that of Didier Fassin's own study of French police officers where "...it was not the rank-and-file officers who obstructed me with secrecy, but rather the hierarchy of the police" (2011: 20). Mat Coleman also notes that interviews with high-ranking police officers are in effect "controlled public relations exercises...which are highly selective on details" (2016: 78). In trying to understand 'state power in blue', ride-alongs allow for opportunities to better understand what police officials say and do (ibid.). I spent close to 470 hours⁵⁵ of participant observation with field ranger staff, in what Coleman calls 'ride-alongs' (see also Steinberg 2008), spending up to 10 hours per day on the back of a pick-up truck with field rangers in pursuit of poachers; sitting and waiting to be picked up after a patrol; going on general foot or vehicle patrols; monitoring radio calls and logging 'real-time' incidents on CMORE; being on 'stand-by' with a reaction force rangers; checking detection zones for poacher footprints; and participating in training exercises. I was also afforded the opportunity to participate in and observe a cross-border operation between SANParks Environmental Crime Investigation (ECI) officers and Mozambican anti-

poaching authorities (both state and private) to apprehend a renowned rhino poacher. The spectacular imagery that such 'cross border operations' elicit contrasted sharply with the mundaneness and waiting around that characterized the week-long operation.

I also lived in field ranger/junior staff accommodation when conducting participant observation with three of the six field ranger teams, which gave me extensive opportunities to have informal conversations, beyond normal working hours to interact with other A and B band (low salaried) workers living in the staff 'villages' (compounds⁵⁶ or *kampong* as they are referred to colloquially). It offered me the opportunity to experience the conditions under which these staff have to live as iterations of migrant labour – experiencing the challenges of communal outdoor cooking and communal bathroom facilities, and hearing what effects the separation from their families have on them and the daily indignities and inconveniences these living modalities produce.

I also participated in in-house or informal training sessions that included re-enactments of a number of anti-poaching scenarios. These included, amongst others, a simulated exercise in the tactical approach and arrest of suspected armed poachers hiding in a thicket; laying down a scent trail for dog handling teams to follow up on; donning a bite suit to re-enact a dog bringing down a suspected poacher; and instruction on using the newly adopted under-barrel 'grenade launcher' to fire smoke or rubberized projectiles.

In order to document these conversations and observations, I made use of extensive contemporaneous fieldnotes (see Emerson et al. 2011, Walford 2009). Most fieldnotes were not made in the presence of respondents except where it was clear they wanted me to note down something that they had said to ensure that it was recorded accurately. I also produced my pocket notebook on regular intervals to note down translations of xiTsonga words and phrases as a deliberate strategy so that respondents became more accustomed to me making notes in their presence. While many field rangers are xiTsonga, and to a lesser extent sePedi, siSwati or tshiVenda speakers, it should be noted that most field rangers spoke either English or Afrikaans as a second or third language and it is through this medium that I was able to communicate with them. Where field rangers could not speak either English or Afrikaans, a colleague would act as interpreter. In most cases fieldnotes were made at the end of the day and in some cases a few days after an event (in the more

extreme cases up to two weeks later) where the content of the conversation was particularly disturbing, in most cases related to the killing of a suspected poacher and the emotions experienced during and after the event by the respondent. These narratives had a marked impact on me and noting down the details required a considerable amount of emotional energy and engaging in the notes right away was often simply too draining emotionally. This did not mean that the substance of the conversation was lost - in most cases delaying the note taking was complemented by the passing of time to reflect on the nature of the narrative as well as situating the conversation in subsequent engagements with the same individual, where these subsequent engagements helped put his or her worldviews and what informed these sometimes violent and extrajudicial actions into perspective. In this way, it negated the propensity to rush and draw conclusions prematurely (Emerson et al. 2011).

In addition, I also conducted semi-structured interviews with approximately forty (40) junior, mid-level, senior and executive staff from different organizational units within KNP. These semi-structured interviews included fifteen of the twenty-one section rangers (there was one section ranger vacancy at the time of the study), four of the five regional ranger incumbents in the KNP and four senior ranger services personnel. Other KNP staff included a pilot from the airwing; armourer, corporate environmental crime investigators; conservation services; scientific services; veterinary services; people and conservation services; special projects; KNP shop steward representatives and the managing executive of the KNP. It also included numerous informal conversations with hut attendants, picnic and camp site cleaners and supervisors; biotechnicians, gate guards, field guides, reservation staff, petrol attendants and temporary staff.

The study relied heavily on archival research most notably the Skukuza archives and the personal archives of Stephen Ellis held at the Africa Study Centre in Leiden which houses an extensive collection of material related to southern African conservation and its links to the apartheid era security forces, totalling over 2 300 archival records. In addition, the University of Johannesburg Library and Information Centre: Archives and Special Collections related to the recruitment of Mozambican migrant labour was also consulted, however, the number of archival records were too numerous to make a thorough study of its contents. However, Dlamini cautions that “we have to read the colonial archive against the grain,

finding in it evidence that was not meant to be there, locating meaning not intended by the archives, and hearing voices not meant to be heard” (2020a: location 989, single column view). To underscore this point, the Skukuza Archive was purged of some its most damning evidence prior to the regime change in 1994⁵⁷ (see also Meskell 2012), hence its account of history is also contingent on what administrators at the time thought was permissible. However, Dlamini (2020b) further argues that many apparatchiks in the South African security police tend to perpetuate the myth of the total obliteration of the historical record and the efficiency of the security services in attaining that goal, but, that its attempts to obliterate the past was far from complete. Belcher and Martin (2013) contend that archives are a public record of specific forms of governmental knowledge and it is through such public records that state institutions can be held to account. That such repositories are a record of *all* governmental activities is contestable but it offers the state the façade that it is performing a foundational duty of liberal statehood, that of transparency and accountability (ibid.). In other words, as Joyce posits, “the archive [is] a technology of liberal governmentality” (1999: 35). Hidden in this performance is the “on-going struggle over what kind of knowledge is produced about state activities, who holds authoritative knowledge, and what is knowable, sayable and open for contestation” (Belcher and Martin 2013: 405). What struck me most about the record in the Skukuza Archive was that the activities, even if it is was an abbreviated record of state activities, was recorded by virtue of its own bureaucratic logics – the writing of memoranda and reports were part and parcel of the logic of officialdom. It is through these dispatches that we are still able to reconstruct – despite its absences - an idea of the contestations and activities that took place in the Park. Today, in the ‘war on poaching’ it is uncertain what is being recorded for the public record. Informal, and a perhaps more insightful, record of the Park’s activities is communicated on private digital messaging applications such as WhatsApp or on private Facebook groups. It is on these platforms that the daily, unedited practices and information is dispatched, further undermining the production of the historical record and what is knowable.

In addition, a short comparative study was conducted interviewing Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife (EKZNW) officials, both in the Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park (HiP) and a senior manager tasked specifically with rhino security in the province. The organization also experienced high levels of

rhino poaching and the purpose was to contrast and compare responses to rhino poaching and its concomitant costs for people and praxis from a different part of the country. Semi-structured interviews and informal conversations were also conducted with firearms and field ranger training service providers; senior national law enforcement officials from the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA); prosecutors involved in wildlife crime from the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA); the state veterinarian based in the KNP; the scientific officer of the African Rhino Specialist Group (AfRSG); a former collector (intelligence officer) in the apartheid era SADF; a forensic expert on the rhino DNA indexing system or RhODIS; private rhino owners; a police use of force scholar; a polygraph examiner; a state security analyst; a clinical psychologist and practitioners who manage wildlife crime portfolios in the international conservation NGO and intergovernmental sector totalling a further twenty three (23) semi-structured interviews and untallied informal conversations.

Event ethnography was conducted at the CITES CoP17 conference in September 2016; the Game Ranger's Association of Africa (GRAA) annual general meetings (AGM) in 2016 and in 2018; the KNP Ranger Services AGM in November 2016; a senior field ranger workshop; a poisoning workshop for KNP section rangers and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Rhino Management Group (RMG) meeting held in Skukuza in March 2017.

The study also incorporated observing court proceedings - spending approximately thirty-four (34) hours, over an eight week period, in the periodical court in Skukuza (which sat every Wednesday of the week except public holidays) – to better understand the manner in which 'justice' is operationalized, the multiple contentions around the 'facts' of the case and to match what was absent from formal court narratives and what was observed in practice; the glacial pace at which 'justice' was dispensed; the social relations between court officials, prosecutors, the police and conservation law enforcement staff (see Chapter 6); and putting a human face to these poachers, who are often framed as highly trained, heavily armed ex-combatants from the civil war in Mozambique (Gustafson et al. 2018). This latter narrative did not at all materialize in the charges against suspects in the Skukuza Court. The most lasting impression for me, was sitting behind an 18-year-old, first time offender standing in the accused box, my attention focused on his shivering legs as

he stood before the intimidating authority of the magistrate for illegally fishing in the Park.⁵⁸ Dressed in ragged shorts and plastic flip flops held together by stitches of string emphasized not only the spectre of poverty that looms over his life which likely compelled him to fish in the Park, but also how it is people like him, who are so starkly excluded from the social and economic centre, who bear the brunt of the awesome power of the state for such minor infractions. It reminds of Foucault's notion of discipline, where the "slightest departure of correct behaviour [is] subject to punishment...so that, if necessary, everything might serve to punish the slightest thing" (Foucault 1977: 178).

A co-researcher⁵⁹ was engaged to investigate what consequences militarized responses to rhino poaching had on people and families living in villages adjacent to the south western portions of the KNP, the areas most affected by rhino poaching for a period totalling six months. He conducted (at times I participated in these interviews) in the region of forty-three (43) semi-structured interviews and countless informal conversations with people living adjacent to the Park. He was, at times, able to live in households of those families directly affected by violent practices of Park and police officials, most notably living in a household of a family (for close to two months) whose unarmed son was killed in the Park while fishing (see below). This strategy gave us the ability to access people living in those communities with a range of experiences associated with living adjacent to a securitized space such as the KNP – teachers, small business owners, Traditional Authority officials, unemployed youth, small scale farmers on the Sabie River, protest organisers,⁶⁰ community activists who were prominent during the anti-apartheid movement, people employed both in KNP and private conservation areas adjacent to the KNP – including those who have been dismissed and/or tortured on suspicion of theft or poaching - and religious leaders. He was able to gain these levels of access despite the high levels of suspicion in those communities as a result of either police/KNP informants or provocateurs involved in illegal activities.⁶¹ However, it is important to note that access was not unfettered due to a climate of mistrust and fear that pervaded amongst people living in these communities and at times, particularly initially, which placed him in situations of considerable risk, to the point where we considered abandoning the strategy out of fear for his safety. It is a testament to his determination and ability to engage with people with authenticity despite these initial risks and suspicions to the extent that he

was able to have a number of cordial interactions with the very individuals who threatened him on his first visit to a community that was protesting the actions of the Park in the wake of the killing of a fisherman. His character traits, especially the deep empathy and respect for the people he engaged with far exceeded his language abilities (although as an isiZulu speaker he was still challenged by the xiTsonga which is widely spoken in the area). In engaging a co-researcher, a number of methodological issues rear its head, foremost whether ethnographic data collection can indeed be delegated (see Fassin 2017) and issues related to dilemmas of translation, power dynamics and the positionality of the translator (see Bujra 2006, Stone and West 2012). However, it is his personal traits that so enriched the co-production of knowledge and the manner people perceived him - from my perspective as young and urbane, his dreadlocked hair offering him a semblance of credibility. To others, his outward appearance created the impression that he was a womaniser and liberally used intoxicating substances. When these individuals discovered that these assumptions were unfounded, it cemented his position as a trusted interlocutor. This was most starkly revealed when he confided in me a romantic interest in him by one of his interlocutors. I encouraged it, saying that it is often in the context of work that people forge relationships. He on the other hand thought it was inappropriate and unethical, particularly in the context of researching the impact trauma and violence have on people's lives.

Doing Fieldwork in Closed Contexts

The range of methodological tools and multi-sited engagements deployed above was largely in response to the range of closures and obstructions encountered within the Park. These multi-sited engagements were also an attempt to follow in what ways ideas, people, practices and relationships are diffused across the conservation space (see Falzon 2009). This 'multi-sitedness' also extended across time, to trace the historical trajectories of people, technologies and practices and in what ways they are (re)deployed in the present moment. Being granted a formal research permit by SANParks to conduct my research in Kruger did not imply unfettered access and misses the "performative, embodied and affective ways" in which Park officials mediated access to information, people, places and practices (Belcher and Martin 2013: 408). While, conducting research in

spaces of closure is often and uncritically characterized as illiberal or authoritarian, Koch (2013) proposes that such spaces of closure can also occur in spaces that are considered liberal democracies. Her example of U.S. detention facilities for illegal migrants and the U.S. military are two such examples and that we instead consider adopting “the term ‘closed contexts’ as a means to focus on the nature of closure and coercion itself” (ibid.: 390). However, closure was not absolute, there was fluidity between closure and opportunity (Beban and Schoenberger 2019) and that openness and closure are woven together as part of a governmental technology in some instances or bureaucratic incompetency in other instances (Belcher and Martin 2013). What was open and what was closed was also determined by spatiality, being *in* the Park did not mean I had access to the people and practices related to anti-poaching operations in the various ranger sections. Those spaces remained closed until such time I was granted explicit access.

At other times, the candid admissions by field rangers and section rangers of their own extrajudicial actions; criticisms of senior management and politicians; the incompetence of the military and the police; and the shortcomings of the various security technologies costing millions of Rand, marked a stark openness. The closures themselves were also subject to a typology where requests for information were not always explicitly denied out of hand and often included delays for long periods of time. It ranged from unanswered phone calls to key gatekeepers (in one instance it included multiple phone calls per week over a four-month period to one individual), passing requests for information from person to person or committee to committee or simply not acknowledging emails. Other forms of closures, some bordering on the intangible, included the feeling of constant surveillance (see Ryan and Tynen 2020) and an atmosphere of distrust and suspicion. At other times these obstructions were more overt including firm emails to correct claims – often those critical of practices in the Park - before research proposals/extensions could be approved and patronizing discussions around scientific rigor and questioning the validity of qualitative methods.

Most notably, these obstructions took the form of the outright denial for request to (all) information after a delay of close to two-and-a-half years (including non-security related information), renegeing on the conditions set out in our formal research agreement, and writing a letter of complaint to my academic supervisor in an attempt to discredit or

muzzle the preliminary research findings related to the arbitrary and irregular use of force and institutional complicity. The former compelled me to search for and interrogate other sources of information that could complement the narratives and observations made while in the Park. The latter, carried with it a veiled threat that I could become responsible for hindering future critical research into militarized responses to rhino poaching in the Park; sowed self-doubt in the findings of my research; impacted on my writing output; and resulted in censure to write opinion pieces on the rhino poaching issue in the public sphere before the findings of my research could be peer reviewed. Where the knowledge produced during the course of this research first needed academic credibility, the academy itself also presented another form of closure. Despite the democratic and radical positionality of the critical sciences, including political ecology, what knowledge can be produced, when and by whom is also subject to discipline.

While there are consequences these obstructions have in terms of the production of knowledge, such closures also open up alternative paths to understanding the context. Beban and Schoenberger (2019) posit that the problem is often ‘networked’ and it is through this lens that I turned my attention to archival (despite its limitations – see above) and open source records to understand the problem of labour and security in the Park. It has offered a crucial insight into the historical formations of these two phenomena in particular and how the ‘network of history’ continues to, with differences, shape labour and security practices in the Park. Without these obstructions, it is unlikely that I would have interrogated the archival records in as much detail.

Deductive Disclosure and Ethical Dilemmas

Maintaining respondent confidentiality (see Appendix 1) was a central aspiration in the research design where rich descriptions of participant’s surroundings and personal traits could make them identifiable to superiors and colleagues (Kaiser 2009). This ‘deductive disclosure’ (ibid.) can cause rifts in small, closed communities such as the KNP. More importantly, it can hold serious repercussions for certain staff and lead to their systematic marginalization and victimization. However, maintaining the identity of all respondents was not always possible. Büscher and Ramutsindela (2016) posit that in the scholarly work on violence in conservation, very little

attention is paid to the continuity of such violence and how that violence is often perpetuated by the same actors. To demonstrate this continuity between the past and the present in the Kruger it was not possible to maintain the confidentiality of one such respondent, Colonel G.P. 'Otch' Otto (see Chapter 4). Our encounters were limited to two brief events – once in the Skukuza rest camp for approximately ten minutes in February 2017 and again in a telephonic conversation in March 2021 for approximately forty minutes. This is not the first time Otto is named in scholarly work related to the Park and its martial practices (see Austin et al. 1992, Ellis 1994, Massé 2017, Meskell 2012). Here, in naming Otto, its purpose is to show his central role in the conceptualization of counterinsurgency doctrine in the 1980s as Head of Security in the Kruger and how many of these doctrinal concepts, infused with racial bias, have been reiterated in the 'war on poaching' in his capacity as Mission Area Manager in the Park.

Similarly, key role players like retired Major General Johan Jooste who was appointed in 2012 to head Kruger's anti-poaching response was widely reported on in the media and has been referred to by name in much of the literature related to green militarization in the Park (see Duffy 2016, Hübschle and Jooste 2017, Humphreys and Smith 2014, Lunstrum 2014, Shaw and Rademeyer 2016). Where much of what is understood in the public domain about the rhino poaching issue in the KNP comes from publicly available comments made by certain officials, many snatches of conversation and stories are also repeated and circulated in the socially confined world that is Kruger. One example is a quote I presented to a senior manager without disclosing the identity or place of work of a respondent but he was still able to correctly identify the speaker. I tried to overcome deductive disclosure by only referring to the speaker as a 'senior KNP manager' or 'KNP field ranger' but it will not in every instance shield the identity of the respondent especially where the incident described and the individuals involved in the incident are widely known in the Park or where an individual occupies a specific job portfolio. However, I do take special care to not to compromise junior staff who are already subjected to uneven power relations. Furthermore, while I conceal the precise localities of the field ranger teams I worked with, it will be widely known to those working in the Park where I conducted participant observation. The designation of a specific group of rapid reaction field rangers, the Special Rangers, is also a designation that I chose not to

conceal because its continued use also has historical resonances (see Chapter 5). However, any specific quotations from field rangers in this group (as is the case with other field rangers) continue to be guarded by research confidentiality. In this thesis, only those comments that have been made in the public domain reveal the identity of the speaker and comments made during the course of this research remain guarded by research confidentiality, with the exception of Otto.

Hearing the accounts of both perpetrators and victims of violence had a profound impact on my emotional wellbeing (and that of the co-researcher) and gave rise to seemingly intractable ethical dilemmas in how to deal with these accounts. One such dilemma – and by far the most fraught – was the killing of an unarmed fisherman, Sibusiso Dlamini.⁶² I worked very closely with a co-researcher who lived in the home of Dlamini's mother for close to two months. With time, he started meeting the friends of Dlamini who were with him on that fateful day. In his conversations with them, he heard their traumatised narratives and witnessed their tears as they recounted the unbearable sight of seeing Dlamini shot as they ran for safety and what they felt was an unforgivable act of continuing to run as he lay dying on the river bank. During the course of this research, we made the acquaintance of a senior prosecutor from the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) who, ostensibly, was also concerned about the secrecy and irregular practices by KNP officials in entrapment operations (see Chapter 6). She was eager to interview these witnesses (the police docket made no mention of witnesses or co-conspirators). In an email to a close friend, I spelled out the nature of my dilemma.

...about the meeting with the NPA and these witnesses...I have decided against my better judgment to go ahead with the meeting. Hiding behind the veil of academic distance is a cop out. My intention was always from the outset to bring about a discussion of transformation and social justice (whatever that means). Absolutely nothing will happen to shine a light on these injustices if I don't take this step...I am involved. The consequence is that someone might be arrested and charged with murder. The other consequence is that [the] family will never get justice. Fuck.⁶³

Both the co-researcher and I had a healthy scepticism of the prosecutor and was aware of a culture of collusion that exists between officers of the court and law enforcement officials (Bruce 2011, Vitale 2017). It is a close-knit social world, one that I had also witnessed first-hand in the

Skukuza Periodical Court (see Chapter 6). We were concerned that these witnesses would be arrested and somehow implicated in Dlamini's murder or prosecuted or victimized on a manufactured charge. Here, not even the legal system and its officers, offered a meaningful avenue for redress for people like Dlamini's family and friends (see Beban and Schoenberger, 2019). Instead, the criminal justice system seemed to be implicated into the broader system that was culpable in his death. The motivation of this prosecutor, in this instance, seemed entirely punitive, to make discoveries so as to determine whether there was sufficient evidence to prosecute the field ranger involved in the shooting. We were also concerned by this approach, being aware of the workplace pressures that field rangers are subjected to that predicate such violent actions (see Chapter 5 and 6). It was a position between two undesirable choices where the narrow outcomes seemed, to us, devoid of any justice at all. In the end we left it to the family and the witnesses to pursue interviews with the prosecutor and a newly appointed investigating officer (after we raised the potential dangers of doing so), which some of them did. To date no person or institution has been held to account for the death of Sibusiso Phiri Dlamini.

1.7 The Research Objectives

The objectives of this research project are as follows: -

1. To open up opportunities for reflection and rethinking conservation practice, one premised on non-violence and one that is disentangled from the neoliberal economic logics that frame the value of nature and people in economic terms.
2. To seek opportunities for re-aligning conservation priorities, premised on care, inclusion and dignity for people who live and work within and adjacent to protected areas.

1.8 The Research Question

Proceeding from the problem statement outlined above, the central research question is as follows:

How does turning to police as a response to restore law and order in the face of an upsurge in wildlife crime in the Kruger National Park (KNP) shape the conservation workplace and the institutional life in KNP and what consequences does it hold for conservation labour?

To supplement this overarching research question, supplementary questions that arise are:

1. What are the historical and relational dynamics that foreshadow the effects of police in the KNP vis-à-vis its treatment of labour and its securitized practices?
2. In what ways are the anxieties over labour productivity in KNP (re)configured under the police labour regime?
3. If police is indeed incapable of preventing crime, to what extent does it need to lean on irregular practices and what do these practices look like in the KNP?
4. In what ways does the police labour regime (re)shape institutional life in the KNP and what consequences does it hold for workers at the forefront of anti-poaching operations?

1.9 Layout of the Thesis

Following on from this introductory chapter, **Chapter 2** situates this thesis theoretically, drawing on an expanded definition of police, its links to theories of the state and the administration of waged labour and the ways these insights into police intersect with theories of structural racism, labour value and the labour process in shaping institutional life in conservation. **Chapter 3** outlines how labour was historically simultaneously produced and erased in the making of an exceptional landscape. It also shows how African labour in the Park was ordered through a combination of racialized paternalism and coercion and how these factors, together with the particularities of an enclaved space, shaped a particular brand of structural domination in the Park. It also sketches the central role the KNP played not only in the steady supply of cheap labour for the exploitative labour regimes that characterized South African capitalism but that it had a distinct predilection for precarious migrant labour from Mozambique. Lastly it describes the manner in which the

KNP matched – and in some ways exceeded - the cheap and coercive labour regimes that was so commonplace elsewhere in the South African workplace through its own use of a compound system, rations and low wages.

Chapter 4 frames the deep historical collaboration between the KNP and the apartheid security apparatus and that it was entrenched in the security architecture of the apartheid state through its membership and participation in the apartheid era National Management Security System (NMSS). It shows that the Park played a central role in the state's manhunting operations of insurgents; how the same actors are recycled from the mid-1980s to the present and what tactical and ideological precepts they bring with them; and the manner the ranger uniform as a key cultural artefact reinforces its martial identity and shapes ranger practices. **Chapter 5** is focused on contemporary conservation labour. It builds on historical and relational processes to extract labour value and how those anxieties over labour productivity have been reconfigured under a police labour regime. Firstly, it shows how an environment of intense and unrelenting political pressure shaped its contemporary responses to rhino poaching and that its militarized responses did not evolve in an institutional vacuum. By invoking the figure of the warrior, this reconfiguration of field rangers profoundly shifted its measure and expression of labour value which historically lay in the notion of loyalty into using violence as an accounting metric of labour productivity.

Straddling Chapters 5 and 6 is an ethnographic interlude. Its purpose is to ethnographically sketch the working day of field rangers in the KNP and the manner these daily repetitions foment frustrations and fear and how these factors offer a starting point to understanding how rangers themselves justify their actions as a counter point to the structural features that shape their work. **Chapter 6** follows on from this ethnographic description of everyday practices to expand on the notion of the warrior and the manner in which its incantation together with historically situated counterinsurgency practices reshape contemporary conservation policing practices. It focuses on two key conservation policing practices, namely the use of deadly force or what practitioners like to call the rules of engagement and the manner they become (re)interpreted in the KNP; and the centrality of counterintelligence gathering operations and their violent and perverse transformation. **Chapter 7** sketches in what ways the police labour regime shapes institutional life in the Kruger and the consequences

it holds for employees despite its proclamations of care through its ranger wellness programme. In conclusion, **Chapter 8** traces continuity and change in the Kruger and how the police labour regime re-emphasizes many of the old hierarchies and problematic practices that marked the apartheid era. It addresses questions around solutions and also points to areas for potential future research inquiries to complement this and other scholarly work in this field.

Notes

¹ The words ‘poaching’, ‘poachers’ and ‘illegal or illicit’ are used repeatedly in this thesis. I use these words cognizant of how marginalized groups of people in particular are framed and cognizant that through marginalization, livelihood strategies have become criminalized. The use of wildlife was and is still very much a part of a livelihood strategy of resource dependent groups as a source of protein or exchange. Hunting for meat was criminalized to create a labour force for the emerging gold mines on the Witwatersrand in the South African interior (Carruthers, 1995 - see also Jost Robinson and Remis 2014, Mavhunga 2014, Ramutsindela, 2002 for additional examples elsewhere in Africa where criminalization and protected area zoning impacted heavily on the bushmeat economy of hunters). References to the differences between subsistence or commercial poaching (see Duffy 2000) - where subsistence poaching is seen as hunting for food as a livelihood strategy and that their activities did not impact as greatly on wildlife populations as did the activities of commercial poachers – overlooks the possibility that so-called commercial forms of poaching by individual hunters also form part of a livelihood strategy in return for cash. This transaction does not make their motivations substantially different from the motivations of so-called subsistence poachers. Following McClanahan and Wall (2016), I also agree that the terms ‘poaching’ and ‘wildlife crime’ are viewed critically and that their use is inherently political in nature and serves to normalise the notion of Africans as criminals despite the history of violence and dispossession. Dlamini (2020a) also provides a comprehensive list of scholarly work pertaining to the social history of hunting, who decides when a hunter is a poacher and the links between hunting, criminalization and racialization (see Dlamini 2020a, Footnote 28, location 832, single column view). In spite of this, I will use the terms poaching and poachers to refer to activities and people shooting rhino to mirror the generalized characterization of the killing of rhino in the KNP.

² Informal conversation with conservation practitioner, June 2016.

³ A contact is a military term to denote an engagement with enemy combatants often including an exchange of gun fire. In the KNP a contact is defined similarly but may also include a sighting of a poaching group, gun shots heard or the discovery of fresh poacher spoor/tracks or camps.

⁴ My interlocutor could not confirm whether the suspect was armed or unarmed.

⁵ Büscher (2021), following Hartnack (2014), emphasizes that ‘white publics’ should not be construed as homogenous and undifferentiated and that while remaining alert to such nuances, the public outcry around rhino poaching has been predominantly white. Indeed, he posits that an ‘attack’ on Kruger is construed as an attack on both white belonging and white capital, the latter referring to the overwhelming dominance of white ownership in the conservation industry. Jane Carruthers (1995) also notes that as the question of conservation was slowly injected into mainstream South African politics at the time of the proclamation of the KNP in 1926, that the politics of the time were distinctly white and that the socio-political culture of national parks were shaped by white interests.

⁶ In this thesis the abbreviation KNP or the shortened form of ‘the Kruger Park’, or ‘Kruger’, or simply ‘the Park’ will be used interchangeably to refer to the Kruger National Park. I am also cognizant that the framing of ‘the Park’ is based on distinct colonial-era race-thinking, where the notion of ‘the Park’ embodies an historical and ongoing process of racial formation (Hays 2019). I use it here also to demonstrate how the Kruger was and continues to be called by its residents and adherents, and it matches the way it is referred to in Afrikaans as ‘*die Wildtuin*’, meaning literally ‘the wild garden’. This notion that it is ‘wild’ obscures that reality that the Kruger is at once wild and produced.

⁷ See the damning report of war crimes and unlawful killings by Australian special operations task group soldiers in Afghanistan [Online] Available at: https://web.facebook.com/60Minutes9/videos/afghanistan-war-crimes-inquiry-report/864544834300802/?_rdc=1&_rdr (Accessed 30 November 2020).

⁸ ‘Policing is not broken. Its “literally designed to work in this way”’, *New York Times*, 28 April 2020 [Online] Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/28/opinion/police-reform-america.html?action=click&module=Opinion&pgtype=Homepage&showTranscript=1> (Accessed 28 April 2021)

⁹ Military ethicists and mental health experts also argue that the prosecution and setting clear limits of conduct *aid* compliance and can contribute to the reversal of problematic institutional cultures. Reconciliation on the other hand can be seen as a licence to continue to violate rules and that it ensures that defective oversight mechanisms in the organizational and justice systems remain in place. See [Online] Available at:

<https://twitter.com/davidwhetham/status/1329410521343418370?s=20>
(Accessed 24 November 2020).

¹⁰ Multiple informal conversations and semi-structured interviews with KNP managers April 2016 to March 2017. The response of a senior KNP manager, in a semi-structured interview in February 2017, encapsulates the general view of the historical continuity of militarized practices within conservation, stating that “...the literature is talking about the militarization or green militarization and its their view but er [that] is nothing new in conservation we have been always [using] firearms. We have always following [sic] the paramilitary training [...] I was trained as a field ranger [...] and again we were drilling and marching and doing the salute and all those things that was paramilitary. And conservation has, if you look at the founders of conservation in South Africa, most of them come from the military, I’m thinking of Stevenson-Hamilton [indistinct] from Natal. I mean most of [these] guys... I think Ian Player was...he came from the war and most of the guys here in Kruger National Park they have served in [the] military [...] I mean there is this element of military if you look at firearms that we are using, where are we getting our firearms when [the] military upgrade[s] their weapons? Where do they take their firearms? Either to [the] police or to us. Most of our firearms that we use are coming from the military”.

¹¹ See ‘Responsible Green Militarisation: A Necessary Intervention’, talk by Maj. Gen. Johan Jooste, 3 October 2017 [Online] Available at: <https://web.facebook.com/events/royal-geographical-society-with-ibg/responsible-green-militarisation-a-necessary-intervention/127273461240263/> (Accessed 1 June 2021). Semi-structured interview with senior SANParks manager, February 2017.

¹² Schrader, S. (2016) ‘Against the Romance of Community Policing’, *For a World Without Police*, 7 September 2016 [Online] Available at: <http://aworldwithoutpolice.org/2016/09/07/against-the-romance-of-community-policing/> (Accessed 11 August 2021).

¹³ ‘An Empire of Patrolmen’, *Jacobin*, 18 October 2019 [Online] Available at: <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2019/10/badges-without-borders-stuart-schrader-imperialism-policing-cold-war> (Accessed 7 January 2020).

¹⁴ Schrader, S. (2016) ‘Against the Romance of Community Policing’, *For a World Without Police*, 7 September 2016 [Online] Available at: <http://aworldwithoutpolice.org/2016/09/07/against-the-romance-of-community-policing/> (Accessed 11 August 2021).

¹⁵ African countries are purported to have suffered significant losses to their rhino population numbers over the last century culminating in the ‘poaching wars’ of 1980s. Where black rhino numbers across the continent were estimated to be in

the region of several hundred thousand in the 19th century; reduced to 100 000 by the mid 20th century; 65 000 animals in 1970; 12 000 to 15 000 by 1980 and approximately 3 500 by the late 1980s (Archival Papers of Stephen Ellis, Africa Study Centre Leiden University, Cumming 1987, Emslie and Brooks 1999, Leader-Williams and Albon 1988, Stelfox et al. 1979, Tatham and Taylor 1989). There is evidence that the number of purported live animals do not match the carcass count of poaching events (see Cunningham and Berger 1997) or that such early estimations of rhino numbers were grossly exaggerated (Milliken et al. 1993) on the one hand or underestimated at other times to pursue politically motivated agendas (Brooks 2001, Rookmaaker 2000). It is crucial that these population estimates be read critically within the political context of the emergence of African nationalism and decolonialisation across the continent. Such politically contingent events require a robust interrogation of rhino population data (see Rookmaaker 2000). Problematic methodologies of the past (and by inference the concomitant 'precipitous decline' of rhino populations across the continent) continue to be presented as fact in position papers, academic literature, population modelling exercises and international conferences such as CITES and provides a starting point for almost all analyses of a species under threat. Unfortunately, the primary focus of this thesis does not allow for a detailed deconstruction of the historical rhino population literature and how it is used to politically mobilize land enclosure in the name of conservation and the resultant conflicts over land that is so often a feature of society/nature dilemmas in many parts of Africa and the world.

¹⁶ Officially, 7 899 rhino have been reported to be killed in South Africa between 2008 and 2018, with 4 755 animals (60,19 percent) killed in the KNP. It is important to bear in mind that even these official figures do not include a measure accuracy or precision to determine its confidence interval (CI) as carcass detection does not make use of a standardized, statistically sound methodology but rather on direct counts. KNP scientists speculate that approximately 30 percent of carcasses are not accounted for (informal conversation with KNP special scientist, 2016; EKZNW rhino coordinator, Rhino Management Group meeting February 2017). Official records therefore are open to contestation as it is a challenge to encounter all carcasses in the field, especially considering the sheer size and the physical characteristics such as dense vegetation in the KNP, the limited patrol area of field rangers and the actions of scavengers and carrion feeders. Field rangers and managers rely on a number of methods to quantify or enumerate the number of rhino killed, ranging from ad hoc aerial flights over hotspot areas, reports from visitors and trail rangers and vulture and other scavenger activity, amongst others. Ranger patrols are largely confined to patrolling detection zones where poachers are known to enter or exit the KNP or a section, thus excluding significant proportions of their patrol areas through foot patrols. Field rangers do follow up on tracks of poaching teams but due to

the sheer number of incursions, are unable to do so with every set of tracks that are detected. Those tracks that are fresh and hold a high likelihood of encountering suspects are prioritised. In other low risk areas, pre-designated patrol routes that dissect blocks are mapped out and rangers confine themselves to these patrol routes in the hope of detecting poacher tracks. Some of these patrol routes have not changed since 2003 in one of the sections that I conducted participant observation in. Field rangers are so skilled in navigation and route finding that on successive patrols on the same pre-designated patrol route, the subsequent patrol route was within metres of a GPS track plotted of the previous patrol (Fieldnotes, January 2017). In this way, complete area coverage is not achieved with a result that carcasses can easily be overlooked, particularly in dense vegetation that is characteristic of the mopani veld (plant community) of the northern and central sections of the Park or the tall grass stands in areas in the Pretoriuskop section in the south. Vulture activity seems to be the primary means of detecting carcasses from my conversations and participant observation with field rangers and section rangers, a method that is not without its shortcomings. This was also an approach relied upon during the 1980s and 1990s which proved highly unreliable, even to detect mass die-offs of herds of buffalo affected by anthrax outbreaks (see Skukuza Archives/Ranger Diaries/Shongoni/December 1991; Pretoriuskop May 1986).

¹⁷ I acknowledge Dr. Cleo Graf for bringing this observation to my attention.

¹⁸ Historical rhino population estimations in Africa have consistently emphasized that there were high numbers of black rhino, estimated to number several hundred thousand across the African continent in the early 20th century and reduced to 65 000 animals in 1970 (Emslie and Brooks 1999, Tatham and Taylor 1989). Conversely, southern white rhino numbers were fewer than 100 animals in the early 1900s (see Ripple et al. 2015) and even as low as 20 to 50 individuals, reduced to a single population in what is today the Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park in KZN, South Africa (Emslie and Brooks 1999, 2002). There seems to have been a distinct disparity between rhino population estimates of both species between South Africa and the rest of the continent. This is a discrepancy that requires greater interrogation and critical analysis and is outside of the purview of this thesis.

¹⁹ The national Department of Environmental Affairs was renamed the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF) in June 2019 incorporating the forestry and fisheries functions from the previous Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

²⁰ Minister Edna Molewa Highlights Progress on the Implementation of the Integrated Strategic Management of Rhinoceros' [Online] Available at: https://www.environment.gov.za/mediarelease/molewa_highlightsprogressonim

[plementationofintegratedstrategicmanagementofrhinoceros](#) (Accessed 27 March 2018).

²¹ See Macleod and Valoi (2013) who make reference to 363 suspects killed between 2008 and March 2014 as well as ‘Thousands of rhino, 500 poachers; grim toll in the hunt for prized horns’, *The Guardian*, 18 October 2015 [Online] Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/oct/18/rhino-horn-boom-impooverished-african-poachers> (Accessed 27 October 2015) which makes reference to over 500 suspected poachers killed between 2010 and October 2015; Former Mozambican President Joaquim Chissano also accused South African authorities of killing over 500 Mozambicans causing more hardships for the families they leave behind ‘Nearly 500 Mozambican poachers killed in S. Africa’s Kruger since 2010 - former leader’ [Online] Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/mozambique-poachers/nearly-500-mozambican-poachers-killed-in-s-africas-kruger-since-2010-former-leader-idUSL5N11R2OP20150921> (Accessed 28 March 2017).

²² Email correspondence with senior SANParks official, 8 June 2015.

²³ ‘Presentation to Portfolio Committee on Police Rhino Threat’, Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation, 9 September 2015. [Online] http://pmg-assets.s3-website-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/150909DPCI_KNP.pdf (Accessed 6 December 2018).

²⁴ Informal conversation with senior prosecutor, National Prosecuting Authority (NPA), November 2016.

²⁵ In a parliamentary question to the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, the South African National Force (SANDF) reported killing 27 and arresting 110 suspects between 2010 and 2018 - see ‘Question NW940 to the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans’, 20 April 2018 [Online] Available At: <https://pmg.org.za/committee-question/8604/> (Accessed 12 October 2018).

²⁶ ‘Horns of a Dilemma’, *Hindustan Times* (undated) [Online] Available at: <http://www.hindustantimes.com/static/kaziranga-rhino-poaching/> (Accessed 11 September 2017); ‘How poaching was curbed in Kaziranga, and what it would take to step up conservation’, 2 April 2018, *The Indian Express*, [Online] Available at: <http://indianexpress.com/article/explained/kaziranga-rhinoceros-census-2018-how-poaching-was-curbed-and-what-it-would-take-to-step-up-conservation-5119865/> (Accessed 2 April 2018).

²⁷ As part of my approved research proposal to KNP, a request was made to KNP management, for access to various data including arrest data and fatal shootings, amongst others. This list was first submitted in November 2016 and then resubmitted after discussions to rework the request in August 2018. The second request excluded any obvious controversial issues such as fatal shootings and focused on generic, policy responses to poaching, field ranger overtime and

other information related to standard operating procedures, salaries, accommodation, etc. It was only in March 2019 that I received written confirmation that my request for data, even non-security related data, was denied, a process that took close to two and a half years to reach that conclusion. I have received no information (except for three [3] unsolicited documents) from KNP management despite their concerns over research rigour and the importance of triangulation. Even parliamentary inquiries into the human cost of anti-poaching operations have been stymied. In reply to Parliamentary Question No.1447 Internal Question Paper No.15 NW1723E (Ref: 02/1/5/2) to the Minister of Environmental Affairs dated 1 June 2012, regarding the date, time of day, names, nationality, village of origin and whether post mortem inquests were conducted in respect to the killing of suspected rhino poachers for the period 2011 to June 2012, the Minister deferred the question stating the complexity of collating the data. See [Online] Available at: https://pmg.org.za/question_reply/417/ (Accessed 12 October 2018). In October 2012, the Minister replied that “[u]nfortunately, the requested information cannot be provided as no statistics could be obtained from the South African Police Service (SAPS). In their response, the SAPS stated that statistics were only released once a year” [Online] Available at: https://pmg.org.za/question_reply/378/ (Accessed 12 October 2018). Under the Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000, the department has granted 39 out of 62 requests between January 2011 and May 2013 [Online] Available at: https://pmg.org.za/question_reply/458/ (Accessed 12 October 2018).

²⁸ Section 49 of the Criminal Procedure Act No. 51 of 1977 was initially amended in 1998, with the most recent amendment being Act No.9 of 2012. Section 49 is that section of the act that outlines the use of force in effecting an arrest and the use of deadly force.

²⁹ WWF’s Secret War: WWF Funds Guards who have Tortured and Killed People’, *Buzzfeed News*, 4 March 2019 [Online] Available at: <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/tomwarren/wwf-world-wide-fund-nature-parks-torture-death> (Accessed 3 May 2019). See also ‘Death in the Wilderness: Secret Killings, Enforced disappearances by the KWS, KFS Officers’, *Standard Digital*, undated [Online] Available at: <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/special-report/death-in-the-wilderness/?fbclid=IwAR1RZPeU8RpkSF80THiAait7qBQ-SxKjVS-S7Cn3uMEKbJm-OgVqokSBCys> (Accessed 12 May 2019).

³⁰ On 19 July 2018 a field ranger from Crocodile Bridge section in the south of the KNP, Respect Mathebula, was shot and killed, marking the first time a ranger was shot and killed in a direct confrontation with suspected poachers in nearly a decade of the ‘war on poaching’ [Online] Available at:

<https://lowvelder.co.za/443135/update-deceased-field-ranger-identified/> (Accessed 18 February 2019). By the end of my fieldwork period in March 2017, all fatalities of rangers were as a result of ‘friendly-fire’ or ‘blue-on-green’ shooting incidents by police and military personnel. A ranger and SAPS member were shot and killed in a single incident where the ranger shot the SAPS member and a SANDF member returned fire killing the ranger on the 28 April 2012 in the Tshokwane section. This incident raises concerning questions about the ability of the various security personnel to adequately identify their targets - a key prerequisite in the use of deadly force - before opening fire. [Online] Available at: <https://www.sanparks.org/about/news/?id=1873> (Accessed 19 February 2019); in September 2012 a trainee ranger was shot and killed in a firearms training exercise by a fellow trainee; in March 2017 in Lower Sabie section when a SAPS member was inspecting a confiscated rifle accidentally discharged the rifle, shooting and killing a field ranger, George Mdaka, who was seated in the doorway to the office [Online] Available at: <https://www.netwerk24.com/Nuus/Algemeen/veldwagter-sterf-in-ongeluk-met-stroper-se-wapen-20170322> (Accessed 19 February 2019). The only other incident where a ranger was shot in a direct confrontation with suspected poachers was in March 2016 when one field ranger was shot and injured in the arm (a second field ranger was injured in the same incident when the same bullet passed through his backpack and he injured his back in the resulting fall – semi-structured interview, August 2016). Other non-deadly shooting incidents are: one section ranger shot (five times in the back) and severely injured in a shooting incident involving a member of the specialized Battle Field Surveillance (BFS) unit of the SANDF in May 2013 (semi-structured interview, March 2017). Again, this raises concerning questions about assessing the threat, identifying your target and the use of proportionate force to neutralize the threat as stipulated in the Act (see Chapter 6). One field ranger shot himself in the foot on a follow up in March 2017 (see also Rademeyer 2018).

³¹ Lesutis, G. and Las Heras, J. (2020) ‘The Necropolitics of Heroism’, *International Viewpoint IV Online Magazine*, [Online] Available at: <http://internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article6632> (Accessed 29 May 2020).

³² The area that constitutes the KNP as we know it today did not come into being in one fell swoop. The Sabie Game Reserve (SGR), which largely corresponds with the southern portion of the present-day extent of the KNP, was proclaimed on 26 March 1898. It extended from the Crocodile River in the south, the Sabie River in the north, the Nsikazi River in the west and the Mozambican border to the east. During the South African War 1899-1902, the proclamation of the SGR was nullified. After the war, the land was re-proclaimed, including additional lands between the Sabie and Olifants rivers. Stevenson-Hamilton was appointed in 1902 - a position he held up to 1946. The Shingwitsi Game Reserve was proclaimed in

1903 to include the areas between the Olifants and Limpopo rivers. In 1916, the two reserves were consolidated to form what became known as the Transvaal Game Reserve. These areas were made up of both government-owned lands as well as privately-owned farms and in 1923, 152 farms or portions thereof to the west were excised prior to the proclamation of the Park on 2 September 1926 (see Carruthers 1989, SANParks 2018).

³³ Skukuza Archives NK/9/7 Bantoesake Mosambiek Bantoes ‘Funksies Verrig Namens die Departement Bantoeadministrasie’ [Functions conducted on behalf of the Native Affairs Department, undated circa 1959].

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Skukuza Archives NK/9/7 Bantoesake Mosambiek Bantoes: ‘Instelling van Paspoortbeheer tussen die Republiek van Suid Afrika en Mosambiek’ [Implementation of Passport control between the Republic of South Africa and Mozambique].

³⁶ Skukuza Archives NK/9/7 Bantoesake Mosambiek Bantoes: ‘Funksies verrig namens die Suid-Afrikaanse Polisie’ [Functions executed on behalf of the South African Police].

³⁷ Ibid. “Volgens die Kodelys van Misdrywe [...] word as Klas A misdrywe die veiligheid van die staat en die handhawing van goeie orde geklassifiseer. Dit moet dan aangeneem word dat hierdie diens ook ’n voorkeuroorde van owerheidsweë as van die grootste belang beskou word”.

³⁸ Ibid. “Hierdie is een van die besonder belangrike funksies wat deur veldpersoneel van die Wildtuin vervul word. As in gedagte gehou word dat die hele oosgrens van die Wildtuin ook ’n internasionale grens is, en at die bantoes in daardie buurstaat opophoudelik probeer om die Transvaal binne te dring, word die voorkoming van instroming ’n taak van nasionale belang”.

³⁹ Ibid. “Die Wet op Nasionale Parke is in teenstelling met Provinsiale Ordinansies ’n nasionale republikeinse wet en die uitvoering daarvan is van nasionale belang”.

⁴⁰ Former KNP field ranger, November 2016.

⁴¹ Fieldnotes, informal conversation with respondent living in Hoedspruit, bordering the KNP and staff members inside the KNP, 2016.

⁴² Andrew Venter, CEO Africa Foundation [Online] Available at: <https://www.andbeyond.com/fireside-chats/podcasts/> (Accessed 15 March 2021).

⁴³ Fieldnotes, informal conversation with respondent living in Hoedspruit, bordering the KNP and staff members inside the KNP, 2016.

⁴⁴ University of Johannesburg Library: Archives and Special Collections 46B/1 Pad 1.

⁴⁵ Here this thesis follows Jacob Dlamini (2020a) in recuperating a critical political tradition inspired by Steve Biko's writings on black consciousness that has been lost in South Africa, one where the category black or blackness is conceptualized as a political category, denoting distance from power and not one of ethnicity or related to the colour of one's skin.

⁴⁶ The power of arrest by black field rangers was limited to the arrest of black suspects. Black field rangers could therefore not arrest white suspects. See Skukuza Archives NK/9/18 Bantoesake/Veldwagters 1945-1974 [Native Affairs/Field Rangers]. "Die landswette bepaal dat blankes nie deur nie-blankes gearresteer mag word nie. (Blankes mag nie gearresteer word nie)." [The national law determines that whites may not be arrested by non-whites. (Whites are not be arrested)].

⁴⁷ It bears a striking semblance to Jean Bodin's treatise *On Sovereignty*, where a new sovereign, upon being installed as king, would utter the words "...the whole kingdom must be entrusted to me and put in my hands" ([1530-1596]1992: 8).

⁴⁸ Some xiTsonga speaking interlocutors in communities neighbouring KNP interpret 'Skukuza' to refer to the violent force of a flash flood that 'scrapes' a river bed, uprooting trees and shifting boulders (Fieldnotes 2016). This interpretation speaks of a violent and sudden event.

⁴⁹ Skukuza Archives NK/9/7 Bantoesake: Mosambiekers 1971-1995 [Native Affairs: Mozambicans]. Letter from Director-General Department Home Affairs to Jack Valance Greeff, Section Ranger, N'wanetsi Section, 28 June 1989.

⁵⁰ Informal conversation with KNP employee, February 2017.

⁵¹ The historiography of Afrikaner Christian nationalism is complex and often shrouded in the myth that Afrikaners saw themselves as a "chosen and covenanted people" (Du Toit, 1983: 920). There is no evidence that the theological theses of Afrikaner settlers of the late 17th and early 18th centuries subscribed to one similar to the Puritans of New England, "deliberately founding new societies in accordance with their religious beliefs" (ibid.: 922). It was only in the late 19th century that an offshoot of Afrikaners, called the Doppers, "saw themselves as a unique people in Africa whose strength lay in isolation with freedom to practice apartheid with respect to both English and Africans" (Giliomee, 1983: 84). The Doppers were also greatly influenced by the poetry of Totius whose work dignified the suffering of war and they saw their own suffering and hardships in southern Africa as religious rite (ibid.). It is this grouping who had great influence over the early National Party in formulating ideas around racial segregation that became a signature policy under D.F. Malan known as apartheid (ibid.). It is from this iteration of late Afrikaner nationalism that Bunn conceivably draws his inferences.

⁵² A low altitude subtropical zone falling within the savanna biome in the north-eastern corner of South Africa between 150 to 600 metres above sea level. The

KNP falls within this subtropical, low-lying savanna, typified by high mean summer temperatures; mild generally frost-free winters; a rainfall gradient of 750mm in the south west to 350mm in the north east; and endemic incidences of flooding and droughts (see SANParks 2019).

⁵³ The KNP covers an area of 19, 485km². In comparison Israel is slightly larger and covers a surface area of 22, 070km² (See World Bank Data – Surface Area [Online] Available at: <http://www.data.worldbank.org/indicator/AG.SRF.TOTL.K2> (Accessed 12 September 2015). The total surface area of the GLTP is 37, 572km² (approximately the size of the Netherlands) and the GLTFCA is approximately 100, 000km².

⁵⁴ In 2016 46 and up to June 2017 30 elephant killed, mostly in the Composite Protection Zone (CPZ) of the KNP. See ‘Minister Molewe Highlights Progress on Integrated Strategic Management of Rhinoceros’ [Online] Available at: https://www.environment.gov.za/mediarelease/molewa_progression_integrated_strategic_managementofrhinoceros_rhinopoaching (Accessed 8 September 2017).

⁵⁵ A total of 469,5 hours was spent conducting participation observation with KNP ranger services staff - with 56 hours spent with crime investigation staff; 382 hours with field ranger and section ranger staff; and 31,5 hours with control room operators.

⁵⁶ The compound system was a particular technology of labour control developed under the labour intensive mining industry in South Africa with the discovery of diamonds in the late 1860s. The barracks-like, single sex accommodation allowed for the rigorous searching of African workers, which fostered much resentment. While the compounds on the diamond mines were primarily to control the theft of diamonds, the gold mines on the Witwatersrand was specifically designed to ensure labour discipline and restrict worker movements due to the high number of desertions as a result of the poor health conditions and low wages (see Van Onselen 1976). The managerial dream of labour control has been and is very much replicated in various forms in the KNP, as movement was and still is highly regulated, especially so under the current state of securitization. The effects of such forms of labour control and its impacts on social reproduction has been well documented in the mining industry and has been central to what led to the workers strike prior to the Marikana massacre. Labour control through technologies of housing have not been fully described in conservation to better understand its rationale and its costs on such forms of labour.

⁵⁷ Informal conversation with Skukuza archivist, 2016.

⁵⁸ Fieldnotes April 2016.

⁵⁹ Here I use the term co-researcher deliberately in our distinct roles in unravelling the costs of militarized conservation. My focus was with field ranger staff within the Park and his area of focus was in the communities living adjacent to the Park.

The use of the term co-researcher is also a deliberate means to demonstrate that the respective knowledges we produced was weighed equally. The most tangible way that I could demonstrate this equality between us, aside from our friendship, was in the equality in wages. His salary amounted to 45 percent of the total fieldwork costs that included fuel, telephone/internet charges and accommodation and the gap in our respective salaries (there was approximately a ninety Euro difference in our monthly salaries) was negated by covering the cost of food from my living allowance budget. This also meant that his gross salary equated to his nett salary. Any costs incurred, related to the project, was covered by the project budget or my own personal savings.

⁶⁰ In response to the shooting and killing of Sibusiso Dlamini (see below), members of the Cork community blocked the main access road, the R536, between Hazyview town and Paul Kruger gate for three days. These actions forced KNP management to interact with community leaders and protest organizers to hear their grievances. However, the KNP's initial response on a local radio show in explaining the protests was that the road blockades were as a result of service delivery protests. This was a direct attempt to undermine and minimize the grievances of the Cork and Belfast communities, indicating the disdain with which the Park often deals with its neighbours. The Cork community demanded a settlement of ZAR 10 million for the family to force KNP to address the issue. Instead, the Park authorities nullified these demands by paying the family for 'funeral expenses' to the amount of ZAR 25 000 and purchasing groceries for the funeral (informal conversations with the Dlamini family, August/September 2016 and letters of correspondence between the family and KNP management).

⁶¹ Due to the nature of counterinsurgency (COIN) practices, at times these provocateurs were themselves law enforcement officials or police agents looking to entrap would-be poachers (who would otherwise have been not been implicated in rhino poaching if they were not enticed). Such pseudo-operational tactics are but one of the array of practices characteristic of COIN practiced by the apartheid era security police and reiterated in contemporary conservation.

⁶² Sibusiso Phiri Dlamini was shot and killed on the 3 August 2016 (ironically on the day of the local municipal elections, marking the procession of democracy in South Africa) while fishing in the KNP, in an area that is highly contested and where public access to the Sabie River is condoned to allow access to the many users ranging from small scale farmers who have water pumps on the inside of the Park fence to pump water to their fields on the northern bank of the river; as well as to ordinary community members to bathe, wash their clothes and to fish. Technically fishers require a permit from the provincial conservation authorities, not SANParks, if they fish from the northern bank (see below). This latter activity is largely condoned and Dlamini and his friends have been fishing in this area

entering through one of the many (unlocked) gates for about two years. As an unemployed youth in a district with chronic unemployment, he caught fish to sell so that he could purchase basic everyday necessities – at other times it was to have just enough money to buy alcohol and socialize with his friends on Friday evenings. Dlamini was shot in the chest with an exit wound on his back and the SAPS docket (CAS 04/08/2016) contained no crime scene photos, no statement from the field ranger who shot and killed him or any of the witnesses accompanying the field ranger (there were two ‘white’ men - contractors inspecting one of the security infrastructure used in that section of the Park - who was with the field ranger) or indeed the friends of Dlamini who was with him on the day. Essentially the statement by the section ranger responsible for the area merely stated that he ‘saw the deceased lying in a pool of blood’ (Informal conversation with senior prosecutor, NPA, December 2016). That Dlamini was unarmed would also have been apparent to the field ranger because he was only dressed in his underwear (BVD’s- satin undershorts as they are called locally) while standing in the river. The co-researcher also accompanied Dlamini’s mother to the mortuary where his body was examined in the hope of gaining access to his post mortem report. The authorities refused to release the report to her. Dlamini left behind a five-year-old son, his mother, brother and sister. See also ‘Family bids farewell to fisherman allegedly killed by Kruger rangers’, 13 August 2016 [Online] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VTZE6xQHtuk> (Accessed 23 December 2021). Along the stretch of fence from Paul Kruger Gate along the R536 arterial road toward Hazyview, there are approximately fifty-six (56) gates over a distance of approximately 30km of fence line. The fence is not managed by KNP management but maintained by the State Veterinary Services. Some of these gates or turnstiles were installed by the State Veterinary Services while other gates were ‘illegally’ installed by community members to suit their access needs (semi-structured interview with State Veterinarian, 2016). The boundary of the Park in this area is also highly contested. In terms of the Act, where “a river ... constitutes the boundary of any piece of land, that piece of land shall be deemed to extend to the middle of the river” (Act No. 8 of 1997: Land Survey Act, 1997, 33[1]a). There are a number of exceptions to this rule and the one most pertinent would most likely be an alleged agreement (purportedly signed in 1996) between the relevant Traditional Authority (TA) and SANParks to erect a fence on the northern bank of the river to allow mega herbivores access the river without causing a fence breakage and endangering the lives and crops of community members. Part of this agreement, as told to us by the TA and community members, was that community members would be allowed access to the river evidenced by the many gates and the number of water pumps on the inside (ie. in the Park) of the fence. Unfortunately, the TA could not provide us with the relevant agreement and any inquiries to SANParks were met with no response.

⁶³ Email to friend, December 2016.

2

Theoretical Building Blocks: Police, Productive Labour in Conservation, Race and Workplace Regimes

2.1 Introduction

What is clear from the body of critical scholarship investigating violence in conservation - ranging from Nancy Peluso's (1993) 'coercive conservation' nearly three decades ago; Peluso and Watts' (2001) 'violent environments' and their critique of environmental security at the turn of the millennium; Elizabeth Lunstrum's seminal conceptualization of 'green militarization' (2014); Büscher and Ramutsindela's subsequent expansion into 'green violence' (2016); culminating in Bram Büscher and Robert Fletcher's 'political ecologies of green wars', which brings together notions of "green grabbing, green militarization/violence, green economy, neoliberal conservation and biopower, amongst others" (2018: 106) – is that a wide-ranging and complex suite of theoretical and empirical scrutiny has been brought to bear to better understand violence in conservation and its links to forms of social control and the neoliberalization of conservation. What Büscher and Fletcher (2018) concede, however, is that they can only provide building blocks to a larger overarching conceptual framework that points to an understanding of "the centrality of violence and conflict both to the neoliberal political economy and to environmental conservation and their integrated socio-ecological manifestations and effects" (ibid.: 106).

This elusiveness is further magnified by the near hegemony of the notion of security (Rigakos 2011). Where security has attached itself to an innumerable range of social relations – be it social security, job security, environmental security, food security, the security of our children – it has increasingly come to be associated with a greater good (ibid.). The danger, Rigakos contends is that it repositions the analysis "not as a critique of governmentality but as an instrumental, pragmatic method of projecting

liberal discourse”, one that presupposes a rational governmental discourse but masking underlying techniques of domination (ibid.: 59). Jackson (2013) also argues that the discourse of security depoliticises an issue, renders critical scholarship ineffective and creates an analytical and political blockage to interrogate state violence.

So too, has the issue of rhino poaching become a security concern, one that can only be ameliorated by reasserting ‘law and order’. It is a default position that denotes a semblance of good, orderly and civilised government. The poaching of rhino threatens to drive an iconic species to extinction and its impending demise threatens not only one of the underlying pillars of the South African economy, wildlife tourism, but also wildlife as an ostensible vehicle for social upliftment in a country that ranks as the most unequal in the world in terms of income polarization. It thus becomes nearly heretical to be against security when it is framed as a vehicle to not only save a species but also where the security of rhino is conflated with social upliftment.

This chapter proposes to arrange a conceptual framework that critically analyses this concept of security through the lens of police. Firstly, it seeks to fashion a means to grasp continuity and change through the course of history. It posits that in our pursuit to understand the present we cannot disassociate present-day events in isolation from the past, that seemingly isolated phenomena are relational to other phenomena. Leaning on Marx’s dialectical method, it shows how old processes find their way back in reconstituted forms despite proclamations of change. What follows, provides a conceptual framework that will show that security, through the lens of police, is historically conceived to order society and in bringing about that order, it seeks to consolidate unequal relations of power and wealth. Furthermore, it will show that where the *raison d’être* of police is to bring about order, that, historically speaking, order was nothing more than a brutish and violent statist project linked to setting new conditions of exploitative waged labour. Today, however, police meld these brutish forms of repression with milder forms of order maintenance policing but that the salience of brutality has not lost its utility, including in the enforcement of conservation law. Where the concept of police goes beyond critiquing its institutional form as a repressive agency, these theoretical insights position police in its much broader sense, that it is inseparable from state power. It also links the concept of police in ordering a class of labour with the scholarly insights of labour value and

productivity and features of the South African labour process that remains infused with racialized domination. In so doing, it provides a conceptual framework – the *police labour regime* – to formulate a critique of what effects policing practices in response to intensified wildlife crime have on the conservation workplace and in what ways it shapes the labour process and the institutional life in the Kruger National Park (KNP).

2.2 Continuity and Change: Thinking about History, Progression and Change

Bertell Ollman contends that “at the heart of every science is a search for relations”, especially those that are not immediately obvious (2003: 2). Making it possible to uncover these relations, what others might consign to as separate, unrelated phenomena, is Marx’s dialectical method which enables us to observe elements of change and interaction (ibid.). To grasp what is going on in the world, it is necessary to not only bring together the component parts of a system but also “the interlocking nature of past, present, and future” (ibid.: 3). Marx’s version of dialectics was informed not only in his philosophical engagements with thinkers such as Hegel, but also his lived experience of capitalism. It is the specific characteristics of this particular class society, not only in the way in which social life is dominated by the law of value and the power of money but the ways in which it actively seeks to deny and obscure these relations (ibid.). Where these relations of interactions are obscured and disassociated from one another, one is only able to observe a fragment of existence, one that is partial and one-sided, and consequently we risk overlooking the patterns that emerge from these relations, especially those relations that are not immediately apparent (ibid.).

Thus, focusing on what is apparent - or solely, by extension on appearances - we limit our understanding of reality, relying only on those phenomena that are readily observable (ibid.). If our understanding of the world is based on what we see, hear or bump into, we forgo investigating how those phenomena arose and what lies beyond our immediate grasp (ibid.). For this thesis, however, it is not sufficient to merely recognize these interactions but to employ dialectics as a way to think adequately about history and the systemic connections that make up our social worlds. Dialectics offers a way of thinking of phenomena, the processes

through which it arose and the broader context in which it is found. It urges us to think about phenomena as processes and its relations to other phenomena.

In making these systemic connections to not only the social worlds under analysis but also the past, Foucault contends that “histories are not only histories of the past but also a critical analyses of power configurations persisting in the present... ‘a history of the present’” (Hoy 1986 in Sathyamala 2016: 15). In this critical and systemic analysis of the past, the purpose is thus not to question the validity of the past but as Foucault urges, “to interrogate the rationality of the ‘present’” (Gordon 1980 in Sathyamala 2016: 15-16). In the study of any particular event or institutional form, history needs to be interwoven into the inquiry rather than be seen as separate sphere in which we can locate cause or drivers of change (Ollman 2003). The passage of time does not denote change in and of itself. To better understand the persistence of inequality, repression and racialized subordination, it would also be imprecise to state that nothing has changed. Here, Arsel and Büscher (2012) argue that global capitalism is continually responding to, and seeking to overcome either ecological limits or limits more generally and it is this dialectic of change and limits that requires renewed attention. In the context of this thesis, state and private actors are responding to, and thriving on the prospect of limits, be that the extinction of a species or the ways in which intensified wildlife crime is framed as a security threat, limiting the potential for economic growth. It is thus necessary, Arsel and Büscher (2012) argue, to analyse how these organizational and institutional forms are operationalized at specific spatial and temporal moments. This conjunctural moment, the intensification of rhino poaching, arguably presents a moment for old processes and hierarchies to merely be reconstituted despite political revisions, changes in the somatic makeup of institutions and techniques of management (see Hamann and Bertels 2017, Orton et al. 2001). Furthermore, in tracing the continuity of practices and actors, Jonny Steinberg posits that “old instruments generally survive only when agents in the present find a use for them” (2014: 191). Those instruments that have no use become obsolete (*ibid.*). To understand what has survived from the past, Steinberg argues, that “one’s analytical eye must focus on the present” (*ibid.*: 191).

This lays a foundation to understand change and the persistence of injustices within conservation. The following sections uses the critical

concept of police to understand the persistence of injustices under the logics of order maintenance and the administration of waged labour despite political revisions. It brings this concept of police into conversation with the scholarly work on labour productivity, the labour process, workplace regimes, racialized social systems and resistance to conceptualize how conservation labour, specifically those fractions of labour that enforce the law, is ordered, structured and controlled in new ways despite these political revisions.

2.3 Police: A Theory of Good Order, the State and the Administration of Labour

2.3.1 Expanding our Understanding of Police

Seigel argues that the popular concept of police has been “relegated to the backwaters of police studies’, stuck in criminology”, that there is no urgency to make sense of the concept itself (2018: 4). It has encouraged a view, “that policing, like criminal law of which it is supposedly part, is no more and no less than a set of instruments to manage something called crime” (ibid.: 4). He argues that ‘police’ is one of the “least theorized, most neglected concepts” in modern lexicon which precludes a critical understanding of what police actually is; what is police power; and why it is granted such latitude in social life (ibid.: xx). From a criminology and international relations perspective, policing is strongly associated with a domestic constabulary function, that it is merely a modern institution for law enforcement (Holmqvist et al. 2015). This narrow focus on the study of police officers and criminology, excludes a vast area of policing where the concept of police was central to the fabrication of social order and by extension central to state power and integral to civilized life (Neocleous 2000). In *Policing the Crisis*, Hall et al. (1978) brought a critical lens to the moral panic around crime and sought to dispel the common-sense assumption that links police to safety. In effect, there is an absence of relationship between policing and crime reduction (Seigel 2018). Harcourt (2001) reinforces this assertion and also demonstrates the lack of an empirical relationship between policing and crime reduction.

This section follows Mark Neocleous (2000) in his political project to place the concept of police at the centre of an inquiry into bourgeois society. He argues that police should be one of the *supreme* concepts to

better understand the exercise of power. Our understanding of police should transcend the police institution and its role merely as a repressive agency but rather should place police as central to the “*fabrication of order*” (ibid.: xii, emphasis in original). In other words, “the police mandate was to fabricate an order of wage labour and administer the class of poverty” (ibid.: xii). Where security creates an analytic and political blockage to unravel how and through what means society is ordered (see Jackson 2013, Rigakos 2011), this section proposes to use the concept of police as a critical concept to understand violence in conservation and its effects on the administration of conservation labour.

The Origins of Police

Michel Foucault (2009), in his lectures on *Security, Territory, Population*, traces the genealogy of police as integral to a new radical heterodox way of rethinking the role of God and the governing of subjects through the apparatus of already established institutions – the king, the church, territory and the judiciary as part of a range of constituted bodies to name but a few (ibid.). Most striking is how at the beginning of the 17th century, the idea of police power came to be distinguished in its exercise of royal power to that of judicial power. Foucault (2009) identifies this distinction clearly where police power “remains clearly separated from justice...[where] police is in no way thought of as a sort of instrument in the hands of judicial power” (ibid.: 339). The police were thus not an extension of the sovereign “acting through his apparatus of justice” (ibid.: 339) but rather “the king acting directly on his subjects” (ibid.: 339). In other words, police is the permanent *coup d’Etat* – meaning literally the ‘blow’ of the state or the sovereign – in exercising royal power over his subjects. This *coup d’Etat* functions in terms of its own *rationality* “without having to mould or model itself on the otherwise given rules of justice” (ibid.: 339). Not surprisingly then, Foucault emphasises that “[p]olice is not justice” (ibid.: 339).

Harcourt (2008) makes fascinating forays into another dimension of policing where police played a central role in the *ancien régime*, most importantly in the regulation of the market and having the authority to set market prices. In the open-air grain markets of 17th and 18th century France, the role of police was literally to weigh bread and impose fines on those merchants whose bread was lighter in weight than the advertised

label, even in cases where the discrepancy was as little as one ounce, or where the price exceeded the market regulated price (ibid.). In recounting the daily routines of police in 18th century Paris, documented by de Freminville in his *Dictionnaire ou traité de la police générale*, the notion of ‘police’ was so closely associated with that of the ‘market’ that in his dictionary entry for markets he merely referred his readers by cross reference to another entry that read “Markets. See Police” (ibid.: 10-11). Foucault is equally explicit about the centrality of police to the market.

Let’s say, in short that police is essentially urban and market based, or to put things more brutally, it is an institution of the market” (Foucault 2009: 335).

Both Foucault (2009) and Harcourt (2008) trace a shift, where previously police was so closely associated with the regulation of the market to the birth of a new form of governmentality, one founded on economic and scientific rationality.

This birth of new governmental reason was to limit state intervention and thus to facilitate and to bring about conditions of *laissez faire* (Foucault 2009). In other words, police were no longer required to manage or control through regulations but rather to create regulations that would ensure the ‘natural’¹ regulation of the market (ibid.). To do this, mechanisms of security or state intervention were necessary with the “essential function of ensuring the security of the natural phenomena of economic processes” (ibid.: 353). In this way the right to private economic interest and thus the freedom of individuals to secure their interests became a condition of the rationality of this new form of government. Failing to respect that freedom was not only a dereliction of the rights of individuals under law but was “above all, ignorance of how to govern properly”, undermining the ‘natural’ tendency of the market to regulate itself (Foucault 2009: 353). This ‘naturalness’ has a deep resonance in European political thought, where the absolute authority of the sovereign to reign and mete out punishment was one willed by God (Bodin [1530-1596]1992). In its reconstituted form, under this new form of government reason, a signifier of a good, well-ordered government was one marked by the ‘naturalness’ of the market (Foucault 2009). In both forms of government, this ‘naturalness’ was inviolable. It points to the extent that law, administration, police and state power “present themselves as natural – ‘the way things are’ – and thus beyond critique” (Neocleous 2000: xv). These intersections of police as *coup d’Etat* acting with its own rationality

and independently of justice on the one hand and the efficient functioning of the market as a 'natural' process but paradoxically requiring enforcement on the other, are inseparable. It gives some insight into why responses to rhino poaching are predicated on a policing logic and why it is characterised by such violence. Firstly, it is related to this deeply held notion that the securing of property (of individuals or the state) is 'natural' and a signifier of good and civilised government. Furthermore, the use of disproportionate or exemplary violence stems from the fact that the authority of police lay outside the 'given rules of justice'. The history of police is thus the history of state power (Neocleous 2000). The following section seeks to make these linkages between police and state power more explicit.

The Inseparability of State Power and Police Power

To fully understand the allure of police, we have to bring into the analysis the notion of the regularity of the law where the maintenance of law is foundational to modernist forms of liberal statecraft (see Arnold 2007, Harcourt 2001). Here the function of the modern state was made visible through authorised administrative practices such as taxation, conscription, social and legal services and, importantly, the rights and responsibilities of citizenship in which the notion of the social contract was inscribed (Comaroff and Comaroff 2016). The state acquired the authority to make law and legitimately use force through modes of policing its citizenry or waging war on other nation states (Comaroff and Comaroff 2016). Any violation of order, inscribed in law, was seen as pathology and a dysfunction of the modern state and in restoring order, coercive actions by the state would thus be deemed beyond the realms of incrimination (ibid.). Inviolable amongst these laws of the liberal polity was the notion of private property being analogous to the rights of private citizens. A violation of private property was akin to violating the rights of the citizen where theft and assault, even if these were minor infractions against property or person, carried the threat of capital punishment (ibid.). Elucidating this point, Seigel (2018) posits that it is the supremacy of maintaining 'order', where order is inseparable from the modernist conception of the state and its ability to 'govern properly' (see also Foucault 2009, Harcourt 2008). Holmqvist et al. (2015) further argue that this appeal lies at the heart of the liberal framework where these

cosmopolitan norms and ideals related to private property and the protection of *these* rights imbue the term and practice of police as one that should be celebrated. Where the markers of a well-ordered government are conflated with maintaining the rights to private property, it implies that police ultimately serve to ensure the maintenance of asymmetrical conditions of private interests and individual freedoms – freedoms and rights that only certain class and racial formations within populations enjoy. In essence, police do not protect all people equally (Seigel 2018). Marx, in his critique of rights and the right to security in particular, argues that it is a central aspect of bourgeois society, that the invocation of security guarantees the preservation of private property (Neocleous 2021). It is this right to securing private property that underpins the idea of police (ibid.). Where securing private property is foundational to societies where wealth is asymmetrically apportioned, liberty is suspended in times of emergency (ibid.). It is the poor then that are seen as a threat to freedom and it is the poor who become the target of security, in effect, the target of police (ibid.). This then becomes the fundamental concern of capitalist society – the maintenance of a secure and orderly polity in order to secure private property (ibid.). Thus, Neocleous argues,

[t]he fundamental problem for capital turns out to be the fundamental question of the police power (2021: 17).

Furthermore, another central purpose of the police project, Neocleous argues, is “the question of poverty and thus the condition of the class of poverty” (2000: ix). Neocleous posits, that when Marx turned his attention to the issue of crime, he swiftly moved “from the question of specific crimes, such as the ‘theft’ of wood...to the study of law and state power” (2021: 18). Thus, Marx’s analysis of crime quickly shifted to an analysis of political economy, taking us into the realm of what he called “the ‘innermost secret’ of the bourgeois order” (ibid.: 18). In Marx’s *Debates on the Laws of the Thefts of Wood*, the ‘theft’ of wood, previously a customary right, became criminalized with enclosure - effectively an act of privatization – and to stamp out this crime it required enforcement “in the form of a *forest* police managed by the *military*” (1842 in Neocleous 2021: 20, emphasis in original).

During the 16th century it was not only the crime of ‘theft’ that most animated public authorities in their pursuit of order, it was the act of begging and vagrancy (see Neocleous 2021). The process of primitive

accumulation was a seminal event that lay the foundations of deprivation for many peasants. Primitive accumulation not only separated workers from their means of production and ‘freed’ them to sell their labour power, it also inscribed a specific set of social relations in capitalist society (Neocleous 2021). It was a process that involved forcibly driving people from their land and homes and passing a set of ‘bloody legislation’ that legitimated the state to whip, brand and torture any person deemed a vagrant or vagabond and to bend them to the new conditions of wage labour (ibid.). Only the old or incapacitated could receive a beggar’s licence but anyone else over the age of fourteen refusing to work was condemned to either slavery or chattel bondage, branded and publicly whipped at a first ‘offence’ and executed as felons for similar repeat ‘offences’ (ibid.). Thus, the refusal to work was the primary definition of crime and disorder and in bringing about ‘order’, the state employed a range of brutal and repressive techniques. Here the notion of ‘order’ in effect meant that the state was legitimated to use any means necessary in its efforts to create a compliant and cheap working class in the service of capitalist or bourgeois interests. It is a process repeated across four centuries together with the theft of common lands, where the only means to sustain oneself was through waged labour (ibid.). It was thus the police that operationalized and enforced these ‘terroristic’ laws (after Marx in Neocleous 2021) in the establishment of a new order.

In modern state formations, Hall et al. (1978) argue, the function of police is not to eradicate violence and create a peaceful order but police play a central role in structuring and amplifying violence in its efforts to restore ‘law and order’. Thus, our understanding of police cannot simply be limited to entail constabulary functions, its role is so much broader – the establishment of domestic order (Holmqvist et al. 2015). Thus, taking a critical perspective on police is at odds with the plethora of mainstream and dominant scholarship on policing and crime reduction (Seigel 2018). This dominant body of scholarship instead seeks to paint the picture of its “noble origins and ever-improving professionalization” (Seigel 2018: 5). These simplistic narratives of the professionalization of the police, its efforts at rooting out corruption within its ranks and community policing sought to position the police as inherently progressive and “few analytical tools to challenge the idea of police” (Seigel 2018: 5). Even in instances where police abuse results in a public outcry, it does not shift the

definitional role of police in society, that of maintaining the peace and being of service to the community (Seigel 2018, see also Fassin 2017).

Where mainstream analysis of police lay in its constabulary functions, in critical circles, the concept of police shifted focus to view the phenomenon through the lens of power. However, this only gave us a partial understanding of what police is. Part of this ‘fog’ is attributed to the Foucauldian treatment of police as yet another “symptom for ‘power’, ‘discipline’ and ‘governmentality’” (Neocleous 2000: ix). Seen only through this singular lens, barely any mention is made of the police institution itself, the effect being that we begin to see no connection between the concept police and policing at all (ibid.). It diverts our attention from what police actually is and brackets our understanding of police between the uniformed officer and the maintenance of public order (Seigel 2018). Without making these linkages between police and policing our analysis is emptied “of the humiliations administered on...the street...the thud of the truncheon and the gratuitous use of ‘discretionary’ force” (Neocleous 2000: x). Thus, a Foucauldian analysis precludes a more thorough interrogation of the role of police in meting out violence and the centrality of that violence to state power (ibid.).

In order to shift our analysis beyond the visceral acts of violence by police officers or focus only on the sweeping notion of ‘power’, we have to understand that at its core “[p]olice realize – they *make real* – the core of the power of the state” (Seigel 2018: 10, emphasis in original), police are essentially “the human-scale expression of the state” (Seigel 2018: 9). Quintessentially then, what defines police is the power it is imbued with in the actual application of force. The legitimacy to use force distinguishes police work from the work of other state functions. Police work “relies on violence or the threat thereof”, in other words “violence work” (Seigel 2018: 9). When the public legitimizes the ability of the police to use force, in effect it legitimizes the state itself (Seigel 2018). Where the police embody the legitimacy of the state’s means of coercion, police epitomize “sovereignty in action” and police are thus “fundamentally political” (Seigel 2018: 9-10).

Police, therefore, are enforcing exactly what the state and the market need it to do (Seigel 2018: 10). Soss and Weaver demonstrate the dystopian nature that these forms of government under police can take where public authorities “had imposed a ‘predatory system of government’ on poor black communities” (2017: 566). In order to

generate much needed revenue for the municipality, residents, primarily from poor and black communities, “were targeted, arrested and summonsed on civil-ordinance violations, were assessed prohibitive fines and fees, and were subjected to jail if they failed to pay” (ibid.: 566). These initial fines served as a gateway to a continual cycle of debt where the inability to pay one fine led to the imposition of further fines and increasing entanglements with the police and courts (ibid.). This form of extractive policing enabled the city to cover one fifth of its municipal budget (ibid.). This terrain for police was pre-empted by decades of disinvestment and policy retrenchment leading to “searing racialized poverty” and the state of neglect in these communities created a symbolic and political narrative of “‘underclass’ disorder and danger”, posing a threat to broader society (ibid.: 571). Thus, restoring ‘order’ is natural, in fact, in Fassin’s study of French police, the random identity checks of French youth in the ghettos of Paris fell “within the normal order of things” (2011: 6). Thus, “[t]he power to govern *is* the police power: the police refract the power of the state” and since “violence is fundamental to police [it is] because it also lies at the heart of the state” (Seigel 2018: 10, emphasis in original).

2.3.2 Turning to the Institutional Form of Police

Challenging Popular Misconceptions of Police

There has been a widespread criticism of the use of military-type gear and tactics, particularly its use in the management of civil unrest, which has fuelled a debate around the militarization of American police (Kienscherf 2016). It is a debate that surrounds not only the militarization of civilian policing but also the militarization of conservation law enforcement (see Büscher and Ramutsindela 2016, Duffy et al. 2019, 2015, Duffy 2016, 2014, Lunstrum 2014). A first misconception of police is that the use of military tools and militarized techniques against the state’s own citizens is an aberration. It decries the notion of police officers acting like soldiers in blue. It has led to a renewed call to make clear the distinction between police and the military (Kienscherf 2016). However, Neocleous (2021) argues that focusing on aspects of militarization within the police creates an impasse in thinking critically about police power and obscures the rationalities that lay at the heart of the historical formation of police. He

contends that the militarization of police purports the impression of an important *shift* in police, that it implies police *becoming* militarized (ibid.). It suggests a break from 'normal' policing and it entails both an ethical and political claim that police should have no linkages to war (ibid.). This impasse further suggests that 'normal' policing is not about violence but that it is essentially about security, the maintenance of law and order and ensuring peace and tranquillity that creates conditions of prosperity for the state's citizens (ibid.).

It is here that Neocleous argues that this debate perpetuates 'a beautiful fiction', one where war power and police power and their respective institutions are entities that should be separated. It reinforces a mythology at the centre of liberal state formation, one where police power manages the behaviour of citizens domestically through consent and war power confronts foreign enemies through coercion (ibid.). Howell contends that the "concept of militarization falsely presumes a peaceful liberal order that is encroached on by military values" (2018: 117). Militarization as a concept offers the possibility of emancipation under conditions where civilian life has been engulfed by military values and technologies (ibid.). Like Neocleous (2021), Howell argues that the concept obscures the war-like relations of force perpetrated against those sections of populations – along the lines of race, gender, class, indigeneity and disability - that threaten the good order of the state (ibid.). Instead, she offers that 'normal' politics is not usurped by militarization but that an enduring feature of 'normal' politics is its martial character, that it is 'martial politics' and its war-like relations that is at the centre of the rationality of liberal governance (ibid.).

The debate on how to maintain the separation of these institutions further obscures the fact that the tools of repression – such as with the invention of tear gas - used to combat foreign enemies in World War I was initially developed to subdue 'unruly mobs' and 'agitators' by French police, both in the Parisian suburbs as well as in police actions in the colonies (Neocleous 2021). Thus, there is no real distinction between war power and police power, as these institutions have a historical overlap and, at its core, both institutional forms are vehicles to exert *state violence* (ibid.). The historical overlap between war and police is further evidenced in the use of the language and ideas of warfare in civilian policing. The 'war on crime', 'war on drugs', 'war on poverty', 'war on terror' (in its domestic expression as homeland or national security) - and in the context of this

thesis, the ‘war on poaching’ - suggest that the overlap and interlinkages between the two are part of a parallel and permanent campaign to subdue.

A second misplaced notion of the police is that it marks a shift in the nature of state-sanctioned punishment. Jean and John Comaroff, in their book *The Truth About Crime*, map a shift in the archaeology of punishment, and argue that punishment-as-a-spectacle under sovereign power has transformed to a less physical regime of discipline, one “administered in the name of civil authority” (2016: ix). This change in the archaeology of punishment contends that the body began to lose “its salience as a visceral target of penalty” (ibid.: ix). Harcourt (2001) also notes this shift to take on a ‘milder’ form, where order-maintenance interventions are seen as ‘new’ and ‘progressive’, one that is politically more palatable and humane. However, he contends that this thinking is flawed, that it is by no means new and does not “present an *alternative* but rather an *addition* to severe penalties” (ibid.: 6, emphasis in original). Comaroff and Comaroff (2016) thus argue that “torture never really went away...it merely became less open to scrutiny” (ibid.: ix). Drawing on examples of torture and extrajudicial killings from the beating of Rodney King to the killing of unarmed black men in Ferguson and other parts of the United States (U.S.) to mineworkers at Marikana in South Africa, Comaroff and Comaroff emphasize instances where capital punishment is meted out without due process (ibid.). Thus, severe punishment and torture, thought to have disappeared with the unmitigated power of the king, continue as part of police actions.

This brings us to a third feature of police, one where this deeply coded moral association with the maintenance of order, obscures or legitimizes any wrongdoing associated with maintaining order. Harcourt argues that this public demand for “‘get tough’ law enforcement policies” has its origins in “deep-seated political, ideological, and even psychological dynamics” that has shaped modern society (2001: 5). In essence, the need to ‘get tough’, which invariably translates into the proclivity of police officers to break the law, is widely condoned and seen as necessary to return to a state of order. This production of order, inscribed with excesses, is often overlooked in the discourse about policing and it allows for a justification of disproportionate levels of force as ‘reasonable’ (Bachmann et al. 2015) or indeed ‘natural’ (Foucault 2009). It is this deeply ingrained rationality of liberal state power to suspend law that is ensconced in the notion of prerogative power (Arnold 2007). Where prerogative

power or the suspension of law is invoked, the state is legitimated to use extrajudicial force, even domestically, against those whose status is not only criminalized but who are politically excluded, in essence those persons who constitute 'bare life' (ibid.).

Comaroff and Comaroff (2016) emphasize this murkiness between enforcing the law and breaking the law as a feature of crime fighting. They argue that the general preoccupation with lawlessness and disorder has led to an "obsession with mass-mediated crime stories" where accounts of "CSI-style forensics, or epic accounts of supercops" who, "unlike in everyday life" solve every mystery, catch the criminals and restore order (ibid.: xii). However, these fictions clash with the unvarnished reality of crime fighting, in which "criminals are *not* always caught, cops are *not* necessarily clean, and the distinction between...law and its underside, is anything but decisive" (ibid.: xii, emphasis in original). Where the rigidity of rules that guide the actions of police presents an obstacle, it is instead flexibility or rather *irregularity* that facilitates 'effective' policing (Harcourt, 2001). In many instances, the actions of police officers in enforcing the law often involves "taking informal or extralegal steps...things [that] probably would not withstand a legal challenge" (Wilson and Kelling 1982 in Harcourt 2001: 128). Thus, as Harcourt argues, "the desired order depends on a lot of disorder, irregularity and brutality" (ibid.: 127).

It points to a last misconception that we need to bring into our understanding of police. It posits that that these excesses in police action is directly linked to a limitation of police, that police is unable to prevent crime. Instead, police action is geared to stamping out misdemeanour offences. Where these offences would previously be considered offensive or annoying, it becomes reconfigured as positively harmful conduct, conflated with serious crime (Harcourt 2001). In the Kruger, this is evidenced in the large number of criminal cases against fisherman, snare hunters and trespassers who are conflated with armed rhino poachers perpetrating a priority crime.

The institution that is police has therefore developed very specific techniques to operationalize violence. Pertinent to this thesis, the following sections examine the historical roots of counterinsurgency and the technique of manhunting and the ways these facets became central to policing.

Situating Counterinsurgency: Operationalizing Social Order

To best understand the manner in which liberal social control is exercised, Kienscherf (2016) suggests we look beyond repression and instead lean on the concept of pacification. In the critical literature on police, scholars are unequivocal in making this link between liberal social control and pacification explicit (see Harcourt 2001, Kienscherf 2016, Neocleous 2000, 2021, Neocleous and Rigakos 2011, Schrader 2019, Seigel 2018). Kienscherf (2016) argues that it is through uneven processes of pacification, in other words a combination of coercion and consent, that liberal social control is deployed by the state to target specific individuals, groups or populations. However, little is said about this term called pacification (Neocleous and Rigakos 2011). It was a substitute term for what is known as counterinsurgency, a strategic approach used by the United States (U.S.) in its military interventions in Vietnam. The roots of counterinsurgency can be found prior to the Vietnam war, it was part of a near imperial reach of U.S. interest to grow and empower law enforcement or police in those states that were thought to present a threat to U.S. national interests after the Second World War (Schrader 2019). The U.S. developed a didactical training tool for police officers in these developing countries as a means to counter any form of communist agitation and its premise was that any form of subversion could not develop “if a well-trained, professional police nipped agitation – and crime – in the bud” (ibid.: 79). It equated any political agitation, no matter how benign, as potentially having a catalytic effect and thus, it was considered a crime (ibid.). It marked a shift within the U.S. security establishment, wresting counterinsurgency away from the oversight of the military into the Office of Public Safety (OPS), thus creating an institutional space within the state that placed crime prevention as the highest order of priority (ibid.). In effect, its proponents in OPS “transformed counterinsurgency into policing” (ibid.: 80).

Thus, the use of the term pacification is subsumed under a broader approach aimed at achieving security through policing, in other words, “fundamental to pacification is security” (Neocleous and Rigakos 2011: 25). Crucial to the argument of Neocleous and Rigakos (2011), is that security should not be understood as “some kind of universal or transcendental value” but as a “mode of governing or a political technology of liberal-order building” (ibid.: 26). Thus, security is nothing other than a police mechanism, a technique deployed in the fabrication of

social order (ibid.). McMichael, more pointedly asserts that police and the security it seeks is not a benign response to a “universal need for protection from risk or danger but [...] a political technology central to the construction of both the modern state and capitalism” (2012: 7). Neocleous and Rigakos (2011) implore critical theorists to re-appropriate the term pacification to grasp the nature of security politics and deploy it as a critical concept to understand police power. Unlike security that “casts a deep fog over police projects”, pacification requires us to ask who is being pacified, why are people being pacified and what the objectives of pacification are (Rigakos 2011: 63).

In tracing the historical transfer of military know-how gained from abroad to deal with large-scale domestic public riots during the late 1960s in the U.S., Kienscherf also notes that this was more than just anti-riot tactics and gear (ibid.). It also stressed the importance of combining security with development and good governance to win over those reconcilable elements within the population while eradicating the irreconcilable elements (ibid.). Contemporary interventions to conflict in society draw both on militaristic and humanitarian logics, where new justifications for repressive actions, such as indefinite detention, is coupled with ‘best practices’ in establishing the ‘rule of law’ (Holmqvist et al. 2015). Essentially, in establishing ‘the rule of law’, the notions of coercion, governance and order are mutually entangled, “‘war’ and ‘police/policing’ blur and bleed into one another – in the most fundamental way” (ibid.: 3).

Thus, this binary of ‘hard’ versus ‘soft’ policing where the former entails techniques of repression and the latter techniques of social upliftment is a false dichotomy (Neocleous and Rigakos 2011). Community policing, then, is seen as part of a range of tactical elements in a broader campaign of pacification, which does not mark a progressive turn in policing but is part of an “expeditionary counterinsurgency” campaign (Kienscherf 2016: 1188).

The Manhunt: Its Philosophical History and Function as part of the Police Project

While the responses to rhino poaching in the KNP is purported to be varied, including a range of responses from the use of state-of-the-art technological innovations to a ‘whole-of-society’ approach, the foundational anti-poaching response in the Kruger is premised on

detecting the footprints of suspects, tracking those footprints and intercepting suspects. In other words, its primary response to the problem of rhino poaching is manhunting. In tracing the genealogy of manhunting, Foucault in *History of Madness*, points out that the primary role of the *Hôpital Générale* was to “prevent begging and idleness, the sources of all disorder” (2006 in Neocleous 2013: 14). It was forbidden to beg in the streets or on the outskirts of the city of Paris, in churches or at the doors of houses and the punishment for such ‘offences’ was public whipping or branding and for repeated offences, labour in galley ships or even death. To stamp out this disorderly conduct, militia of the *Hôpital Générale* went out hunting for beggars (ibid.). Marx also alludes to the ‘hunting down of rascals’ and Africa as a site ‘to hunt down black skins’ for slave labour (ibid.). Neocleous contends that it was not only the fact that vagrancy was at odds with the established order, manhunts were a decidedly political tool that intensified after periods of rebellion and insurrection. It thus had a more political nature and “searches and roundups constituted the foundation of police power” (ibid.: 15).

Grégoire Chamayou explores the philosophical history of the manhunt, which is not to be understood as a metaphor but that it “refers to concrete historical phenomena in which human beings were tracked down, captured, or killed in accord with forms of the hunt” (2010: 1). He posits that in ancient Greece “the manhunt [is] a very literal practice connected to the institution of slavery” (ibid.: 4-5). Here Chamayou traces the purpose of battles and military raids in order to acquire slave labour as fundamental to the economic life of the Greek city state at the time. This form of acquisition of slaves through the art of war was conceived as distinct from piracy, prompting Aristotle to proclaim that this particular art of war – the manhunt - was a ‘natural’ form of acquisition (ibid.). In this way the ancient Greeks conceived of manhunting as an ‘art’ or a technology of governance. Nascent state formation was thus literally founded on the logics of pursuit and Neocleous (2013) extends this logic to how manhunting was also foundational to the formation of a capitalist order. In order to legitimize how humans can be hunted and made slaves and to make a distinction between those who can be hunted and those who cannot, it is essential to deny that certain groups and classes of people belong to humanity – “to reduce them to a bestial animality” (Chamayou 2010: 6). In other words, in legitimizing manhunting, it is necessary to consign the target of these manhunts as a non-sovereign subject, a

stateless person, the 'other' or nothing other than 'bipedal cattle' (ibid.). It naturalized the separation between slave and master that was no different to the separation between humans and animals. It was seen as part of the 'natural' order of things.

McClanahan and Wall (2016) show how former military operators bring the skills learnt in wars fought in Iraq and Afghanistan and transpose them into African conservation to curb the poaching of rhino and elephant. For these 'warrior conservationists', the practice of pursuit or becoming a "poacher hunter" lies at the centre of the pedagogical policing that informed security and policing operations in these theatres of war (ibid.: 129). Thus, "the way to save and preserve African wildlife from poaching is through...the predatory technology of the manhunt" (ibid.: 129). It speaks of the "individuation of warfare" where the "targets are no longer whole areas of cities", but individuals (Smith and Humphreys 2015: 202). The manhunt, thus "represents the most elemental and primal form of group violence" and its use is legitimated in defence of private property (ibid.: 202). Furthermore, McClanahan and Wall (2016) also show that in hunting poachers, the underlying logic is "the separation of local peoples from traditional means of subsistence that exist outside capitalist relations" (2016: 131). Manhunting, thus, lies at the heart of the operationalization of primitive accumulation. In seeking this separation, the purpose is the construction of social order and the concentration of resources in the hands of capital (ibid.).

Technically speaking then, if you want to arrest undesirables you have to go and find them. "Manhunting is a technique of governing by making people feel insecure...living in constant danger of being tracked down" (Chamayou 2010: 141). Where manhunts are a part of this technique of governing, its officers also need to be impelled to conduct these hunts. Police officers then, "have been given numerical targets and are held responsible by their superiors for meeting them" and often it results in the hunt taking on spectacular forms. (ibid.: 142). Manhunts then become central to the organization of police work and is foundational to measuring the productivity of police officers.

These insights into manhunting show that its philosophical and historical origins lay in the legitimate acquisition of slave labour and in subsequent epochs a technique to stamp out vagrancy for the purposes of compelling those former peasants and artisans who suffered alienation from subsistence labour during the processes of primitive accumulation,

into waged labour. In the Kruger, manhunting continues to be a foundational technique to the police project, in not only re-establishing law and order, but that it is central to the organization of work and the structuring, ordering and control of the labour in its employ in very specific ways. The following section seeks to bring this critical concept of police into conversation with theories on labour productivity. It will build a theoretical bridge between police, in attaining its central function in the administration of waged labour, to theories that seek to understand how labour value is generated in capitalist societies.

2.4 Towards a Theory of Productive Labour in Conservation

The preeminent function of having to discipline labour is to realize surplus value. The foregoing section shows that the administration of wage labour is central to the police project. While bending labour to the new conditions of wage labour after the processes of primitive accumulation took on brutal and repressive forms from public whipping and branding to slavery, chattel bondage or even death, these modes of labour discipline are no longer necessarily legitimate. It is crucial, therefore to understand how surplus value continues to be created; in what ways labour is disciplined and what those processes look like in contemporary workplaces and specifically so in the conservation workplace.

Castree and Henderson critically engage with Büscher's (2013) postulation that the *concrete labour* working on and around protected areas is limited simply because "their *non-transformation* is the goal" (2014: 23, emphasis in original). Thus conservation, if it is to be profitable, looks to create value *elsewhere* in places beyond the landscape being maintained. Part of Castree and Henderson's reading of Büscher is that he contends that one arena where the potential for capital accumulation lies in is in 'fictitious capital' and it is here that the value of conservation is increasingly being created and appropriated (ibid.: 23). This is not to say that Büscher (2013) denies the role of concrete labour in conservation but that in contemporary political economy, value is also conceived of through other means and increasingly that seems to lie in the circulation of fictitious capital. While these explorations into the myriad ways value is created in conservation are crucial, this section seeks to bring the focus

back to the role of concrete labour. Indeed, as Harvey posits, there can “be no embodiment of value without concrete labour” (2010: 29).

Genese Sodikoff argues that a “scholarly analysis of conservation labour has been virtually absent” (2009: 445). Maano Ramutsindela also argues that there is “a need to know what happens to labour when capitalism penetrates into conservation areas and infuses new systems of value” (2015: 2260). In effect, it is a question of “how labour is produced, structured and controlled” (ibid.: 2268). To address this gap in the literature, this section revisits Cleaver’s contention of the importance of Marx’s theory of labour value, or, as he likes to conceptualize it, “*a theory of the value of labour to capital*” (2017: 65, emphasis in original). It provides an entry point back to the historical primacy of labour where the imposition of work was central to augment the wealth of nations during the *ancien régime* and continues to form a substantial avenue for realizing surplus value (ibid.). It offers a crucial avenue to answer what Genese Sodikoff (2009) considers a significant question related to the labour process and how conservation labour can be rendered productive. Furthermore, a central concern of the police project in the fabrication of social order is that this “fabrication of social order is organized around the administration of wage labour” (Neocleous 2013: 8). Thus, it brings together - theoretically speaking – the central concern of two critical concepts central to this thesis, namely police and its role in the imposition and administration of labour and the theory of labour value. Both modes are preoccupied with labour productivity and the generation of surplus value and it is crucial to apply those standpoints to the conservation workplace to see its effects. This thesis is concerned with how the former realizes the latter.

The Concept of Labour

The concept of labour itself is also in need of demarcation. It is a concept that can be defined as simple or complex, abstract or concrete, productive or unproductive, material or immaterial, amongst others. These various conceptualizations arise from the notion that Marx conceived of labour as a purely ‘formative activity’, one that is productive, where humans give ‘form’ to materials (Sayer 2007). Critics counter that there are many kinds of work that do not fit this definition and that many forms of work in the post-industrial age, based on services, point to new forms of work that can

be seen as immaterial (ibid.). Sayer counters this critique as superficial and unsatisfactory, because “Marx’s theory of labour as ‘formative’ is not self-evident, nor is it based upon an isolated metaphor” (ibid.: 433). Sayer argues that it is necessary to conceive labour as “not a purely instrumental activity to meet only individual needs; it is always and necessarily a social activity” (2007: 434). In other words, “[i]t involves and sustains relations with others” (ibid.: 434).

Sayer contends that Marx’s conceptualization of labour is founded on a Hegelian philosophy of labour, where Hegel notes that it is not only the material labour that gives rise to form that should be of concern but also the ways in which material labour harnesses those inorganic forms in the overall labour process.

for example, I build a windmill, I have not given form to the air, but I have constructed a form in order to utilize the air... Even the fact that I conserve game may be regarded as a way of imparting form, for it is a mode of conduct calculated to preserve the object in question (Hegel 1991, § 56A: 86 in Sayer 2007: 434-435, emphasis added).

It is this insight by Hegel that is central to this thesis. Labour must be conceptualized not only as an inherently social activity and the role it plays in sustaining relations with others but it is the *mode of conduct* that is derived from the nature of these social relations that is crucial to understanding how labour is structured, ordered and controlled in the conservation workplace.

2.4.1 The Question of Labour and Value Creation in Conservation: The Centrality of Social Relations

Leaning on these insights by Sayer (2007), that labour is not to be conceived only as creating a material product but can be seen in a myriad of ways, including to conserve an object, to change the character of people or transform social relations. Here, the emphasis is on the *kind* of productive activity fostered in a society where people obtain what they want through exchange of value equivalents (Ollman 2003). Marx was thus inherently interested in “[w]hat *kind* of political, cultural, religious, and social life fosters such exchange and is, in turn, fostered by it” (ibid: 29, emphasis in original). By focusing on the relations of production,

Marx's analysis of the capitalist mode of production, is not "an economic treatise but...a work on social praxis" (ibid.: 29).

Michael Burawoy (1985) posits that it is therefore necessary for the process of production to also include political and ideological effects. Where raw materials are converted into manufactured goods through the labour power of workers, simultaneously, this labour process also "reproduce[s] particular social relations as well as an experience of those relations" (ibid.: 7-8). It is here that Burawoy offers a crucial additional building block. Alongside this labour process, "there are distinctive political and ideological *apparatus of production* which regulate production relations...[a] *production regime* or, more specifically, factory regime [which] embraces both these dimensions of production politics" (ibid.: 8, emphasis in original). Karl von Holdt develops Burawoy's apparatus of production – one that takes seriously a particular set of social relations and an experience of those relations – to match what he observed in a South African steel mill. He develops what he calls the *apartheid workplace regime* that provides a useful analytical handle to account for the racial structuring of the labour process in the South African context (Von Holdt 2003) and the role racial subordination plays in the politics of production. Joan Acker posits that it is these "interrelated practices, processes, action and meanings that result in and maintain class, gender, and race inequalities"

It is here that David Bunn (1996) offers a crucial analysis of how labour value on the sugar plantations in the province of Natal and the private game reserves adjacent to the KNP was generated through the particular 'politics of production'. In the 1920s, South African agriculture was experiencing its most intense phase of capitalization (Bunn 1996). In effect, the South African experience was, restating with differences, "the landscape aesthetics and property relations of nineteenth-century Britain" (ibid: 43). It was not only the aesthetics of the farm as a landscape but also game reserves and their associated agrarian labour pool that were being reimagined to match the picturesque English estate and its nineteenth-century village (ibid.). For Bunn the relationship between the production of landscape and the labour required to produce those landscapes, distilled itself in the notion of value. Bunn (1996) posits that the main arenas for extracting use value lay in the destruction of two elements, both having its origin in what was considered 'natural'. One was the exhaustion of "[n]ature as a site of value" under industrialized agriculture and the other the 'destruction' or exploitation of the "natural

bonds of fealty” between peasant labour and their feudal lords that coincided with the commoditization of tropical labour (ibid: 43). Thus, labour value lay in an intense “nostalgia for ‘reserved’ spaces where remnants of archaic value are to be found” (Bunn 2003: 207). It was in these bounded spaces, the nature reserve, that “preserved not only animals, but an older order of labour relation” where the archaic value of African game guards was ensconced in a “ritual mask of obedience” (Bunn 2001: 10).

By the mid-20th century, the creation of private game reserves adjacent to the existing KNP had so altered the eco-social environment of the lowveld that the livelihoods and survival of peasant families in the district were almost entirely tied to their employment in these spaces. It is in this context that a certain typology of labourer was cultivated, one who was at the same time both docile and one who best encapsulated the romanticized notion of the Shangaan or Zulu subject. It was thus a subject who was at once docile and a warrior in the embodiment of a tracker with formidable bush craft nous and an intimate understanding of the landscape and its fearsome wildlife (Bunn 1996). It was in the cultivation of this “appropriate ethnic subject” (ibid.: 46) that value was to be found. Performing this image of a docile subject willing to serve their master and excite the sensibilities of Europeans in navigating their passage through the dangers of the African bush was what was valued in these enclaved spaces. It was these qualities together with their meekness that were interpreted as fealty. Where livelihood survival was so closely linked to employment, Africans understood that they had to reproduce these qualities of labour value. While it brings into the analysis the notion of worker agency in shaping these dialectical relationships, this section wishes to emphasize that labour discipline was directly linked to the processes of primitive accumulation and the concomitant precarious livelihoods that came with the transformation of the landscape into game reserves. In other words, it emphasizes the structural features that gives rise to these modes of conduct.

2.5 The Politics of Production and Shaping the Ideal Worker: Race and the Structural Features of the Labour Process

Thus, following these insights above, our attention should be directed at the *nature* of social relations within the workplace and the manner it shapes *modes of conduct*. These factors give rise to a specific politics of production. David Harvey, in explicating the immaterial yet objective nature of value, contends that “[v]alue is a social relation, and you cannot actually see, touch, or feel social relations directly; yet they have an objective presence” (2010: 33, emphasis in original). Where value cannot always be directly perceived in the form of social relations, an analysis of social relations also has to include an analysis of race.

In tandem with these forms of social domination premised on race, the labour process itself also employs certain techniques to attract industry or eke out productivity from the labour force. Here regulatory concessions, for example leniency in pollution controls or tax incentives for corporate entities; or incentives in the form of supplementary income to low waged workers are mobilized to realize the desired economic activity or worker productivity. However, these workplace regimes premised on domination and unequal relations also foster worker resistance. It is crucial to critically evaluate resistance when it is construed as criminal or deviant. Together, these structural aspects of race and incentives play a crucial role in realizing a mode of conduct central to generating surplus value but that these techniques are also resisted by labour in a myriad of ways.

2.5.1 A Structural Interpretation of Racism and its By-products: Paternalism and Whiteness

Bernhard Magubane (1987) contends that it is in South Africa where the issue of race and class in society, while observable in many societies across the globe, has presented itself in its most pathological form. While this thesis does not wish to perpetuate the myth of South African exceptionalism, it does say something about the salience of race and class in South African society more generally and the South African workplace more specifically.

Here this section leans on Bonilla-Silva’s (1997) seminal contribution of a structural interpretation of racism. He argues that, in the area of race

and ethnic studies, a slew of analysts has abandoned a thorough interrogation and reconceptualization of a phenomenon that is often at the centre of their concern – racism. He argues that for many, the notion of racism is assumed as self-evidentiary and that it is regarded as a purely ideological phenomenon (ibid.). Racism is thus reduced to a set of beliefs, implying that it is primarily through the lens of individual prejudice that racism operates in society and that those who hold racist views are irrational or stupid (ibid.). Marxist perspectives also reduce racism to merely a by-product of class dynamics, but argue that it is ultimately class that is the primary engine of social life (ibid.). In other words, the definition of class is delimited to “one’s position within the relations of production”, divided between the bourgeoisie who own the means of production and those owning labour power, the proletariat (Ekers 2015: 546). However, Ekers argues, that class is but one of a “broader number of relations of difference including ‘race’, gender and sexuality” (ibid.): 546). Institutional perspectives have brought in the notion of power that allow for the dominance at all levels in society. Where racism is viewed through an institutional lens, it posits a system in which whites are able to “raise [their] social position by exploiting, controlling, and keeping down others who are categorized in racial or ethnic terms” (ibid.: 466). Race then acts as an organizing principle central to social relations that “shapes the identity of actors at a micro level and shapes all spheres of social life at the macro level” (ibid.: 466). However, Bonilla-Silva contends that these interpretations consign racism to a racial project of neoconservatives or the far right obscuring the general character of racialized societies. In formulating a framework that centres race as a general characteristic of society, Bonilla-Silva sees the term racism as a means to describe racial ideology, which in itself is only part of a larger *racialized social system* (ibid.). It is this racialized social system that forms the theoretical apparatus for Bonilla-Silva’s analysis of race in society. This apparatus

refers to societies in which economic, political, social, and ideological levels are partially structured by the placement of actors in racial categories or races (Bonilla-Silva 1997: 469).

He thus posits that processes of racialization have ‘pertinent effects’ in social systems, where racial categories placed in “superior position[s]...receive greater economic remuneration and access to better occupations and/or prospects in the labour market, occupies a primary

position in the political system, is granted higher social estimation” (ibid.: 469-470). It is this totality of practices that constitutes a racialized social system. These practices are, however, not static, racism has shifted from eminently overt to indirectly covert (ibid.). Indeed, overt racism is no longer seen as legitimate (Christian 2019). Where races are beneficiaries of social rewards, ensuring these interests are maintained, they are attained collectively as opposed to individually and shaped in the field of real practical struggles. Where the general interests in society might be to eliminate these racial structures, this metamorphosis does not result in race-free societies but in social systems where these relations are merely reconfigured. A situation where not all members of a subordinate group occupy subordinate positions in a social system it in itself is not evidence of a non-racialized social system (Bonilla-Silva 1997).

However, Christian argues that Bonilla-Silva “omitted two essential components (or levels) from his racialized social systems approach: historical formations and global linkages” (2019: 172). In retooling Bonilla-Silva’s racialized social systems, Christian (2019) seeks to make colonialism global which “re-centres racialized hierarchies in the making of the modern world” (ibid.: 172). Her analytical lens – a global critical race and racism (GCRR) framework – proposes, in part, that

national histories shape contemporary racial practices and mechanisms, materiality is the foundation, racism is defined structurally and ideologically, and global white supremacy is produced and rearticulated in new deeply rooted and malleable forms (Christian 2019: 172, emphasis added).

Furthermore, Vincent also argues that social relations are influenced by a myriad of forces beyond the factory gate and that “specific manifestations of the labour process are socially unique...[that] struggle at the point of production is socially complex and not the same as class struggle within the broader social formation” (2015: 2). Therefore, we should look for what specific forms these social relations take on in the Kruger.

These racialized social systems are also evidenced in policing where racial bias is embedded in the regularity of the law (see (Hall et al. 1978, Harcourt 2001, Seigel 2018). In the U.S., it was most notable in the vagrancy laws based on legal and cultural restrictions on racial integration where people of colour were automatic signifiers of threat in white neighbourhoods (Schrader 2019). In the light of the unconstitutionality

of these vagrancy laws and in response to widespread civil unrest in response to these racial signifiers in police actions, criminologists in the 1960s were compelled to undergo a re-articulation, alluded to by Christian (2019) above, of what categories constituted a threat (ibid.). In conceptualizing order maintenance policing and its ostensible move away from overt racial categorization of threat, it only served to *rework* the salience of race where the “prognostic criteria for police intervention [was] drained of racial meaning” (Schrader 2019: 257). However, racialization in policing continues despite these ostensibly “non-racial forms of ascription of risk”, where formal categorizations were previously founded explicitly on colour, police officers are now “compelled to use other proxies, like reputable or disreputable” (ibid.: 257). In reality, the U.S. political economy has not been relieved of the historical inequities that shaped the terrain of policing (ibid.). Its purpose is merely to achieve political legitimacy and suggest an image of police professionalization and neutrality and it is still people of colour who are in the main, the object of policing.

Intersecting with this analysis of structural racism at a macro-level, social relations at a workplace level are also characterised by racialized paternalism (see Du Toit 1993, Orton et al. 2001, Smith 2003, Van Onselen 1997) and whiteness (see Alcoff 1996, Ahmed 2012, Burnett 2018, Pugliese 2005, Wekker 2016). The former refers to a set of social relations that has characterised employment relations defining not only women’s subordination to men but the subordinate position of blacks vis-à-vis white managers and supervisors (Orton et al. 2001). These paternalistic relations are often associated with what Smith (2003) characterizes as a dormitory labour regime (see below). In the Japanese context, paternalism is based on the preference of the employer to ‘give’ or make concessions to workers as opposed to ceding those concessions as a result of worker’s demands (ibid.). Such ‘giving’ denotes a power imbalance between workers and employers and it was also founded on discriminatory and differentiating politics (ibid.). Paternalism mirrored feudal bonds of reciprocity and dependence and within an industrial workplace setting its purpose was “to deny or reduce conflict through the exercise of power by employers, in exchange for obedience, deference and diligence by workers” (ibid.: 334). Paternalism is foundational to the ‘politics of production’ alluded to by Burawoy (1985) and even though these social relations could not be ‘seen or touched’ (after Harvey 2010),

it “extended the diffuse bonds of exchange between employer and worker beyond the sale or purchase of labour services” (Smith 2003: 334).

Whiteness also provides another crucial conceptual prism through which to analyse the contemporary operation of race and racial inequality (Van Zyl and Boersema 2017). Whiteness should be read “as a configuration of power, privilege and identity consisting of white racialized ideologies and practices, with material and social ramifications” (ibid.: 2017). Here, the manner power and privilege intersect with the social construction of identity is an important handle to help understand how race operates in postcolonial contexts as well as acknowledging the heterogeneity in the ways the politics of whiteness plays out across the African continent (ibid.). How these racial interactions play out at a micro-level then, are subject to the particular context. Firstly, where the symbolic power of nature and wildlife “congeal the complex meanings and struggles about identity and sovereignty” (Field 2008 in Sodikoff 2012: 7), the rhino poaching issue has become constitutive of whiteness and a sense of belonging (Burnett 2018). In a postcolonial and post-apartheid context then, white communities have to constantly negotiate these new political realities to reassert their privileged positions (Van Zyl and Boersema 2017). Nature and the conservation of biodiversity and landscapes has become one such arena in which these white communities are able to reassert their privilege. Rhino poaching marks a perceived threat to that portion of society seeking to protect its privileges and where those privileges are asymmetrically apportioned along racial lines in South Africa, these collective claims of threat emanate predominantly from a white section of South African society. Moreover, where the somatic makeup of institutions is skewed towards whites, not necessarily in sheer numerical numbers but the occupation of critical operational and strategic layers, it shapes institutional epistemologies, cultures and bodies (Pugliese 2005). It creates the illusion of competence and coherence (Ahmed 2012) and imparts the figure of the white male as having a higher order of knowledge (Pugliese 2005). Where whiteness is not considered a racialized or ethnicized positioning, where it is seen as “ordinary, so lacking in characteristics, so normal, so devoid of meaning”, pointing out its presence risks rendering the act equally devoid of meaning (Wekker 2016: 2). It is precisely this invisibility of whiteness that renders pointing out its presence inconclusive, yet it is “the visibility of non-whiteness that marks it as a target and a denigrated particularity” (Alcoff 1996: 8). Crucially,

these phenomena – paternalism and whiteness - should not be reduced to individuals who exhibit racist behaviour but that the observation of racism in individuals is a function of the manner it becomes reproduced in organizations – that individual racisms are a product of institutional racism (Ahmed 2012). Thus, social domination cannot be reduced to “discrete instances of intentional, arbitrary interferences” by individual actors but should be read in the context of the “relational and historical process that structures the position of one group of individuals vis-à-vis others” (Cicerchia 2022: 8).

2.5.2 Structural Features in the Labour Process: Realizing Worker Productivity and Worker Resistance

Racialized social systems premised on paternalism and whiteness alone, however, are not sufficient in itself to produce, structure and control a labour force. While these social relations have material effects they should be seen to operate in tandem with structural features embedded in the labour process. In this section, I lean on the insights of labour process theory – a framework to describe a specific mode of work organization – and the ways in which the structural features of the labour process with respect to incentives or supplementary income shape modes of conduct (Vincent 2015). These insights help to formulate part of a schema to explain that field ranger practices in the KNP, which are at times disproportionate, irregular and/or extrajudicial, do not arise entirely out of a vacuum of voluntarism but through processes of both social domination, outlined above, and features embedded within the labour process. If we see irregular practices entirely through the capacity of an individual to act arbitrarily (as in say the common trope of ‘rotten apples’ within an institution), it precludes an analysis of a key feature within the labour process that structures these workplace practices.

One of the seminal thinkers on the labour process, Harry Braverman (1974 in Vincent 2015), posits that for managers to ensure worker productivity, they are perpetually “trying to reduce the indeterminacy of labour power...they are seeking to control the pace and organization of work” to ensure the realization of surplus value (2015: 1). The primary function then of managers, is to extend their control over work (ibid.). Thus, control was central to Braverman’s thesis and it alluded to “work environments in which there is low trust, coercion, limited worker

responsibility, and a generally directed and regulated working environment” (Smith 2015: 225). However, critics of Braverman contend that he overstated the importance of managerial control of labour, that subsequent thinkers in labour process theory also highlight themes of compliance and consent (ibid.). While rigid control can be expensive and counterproductive, it does not necessarily mean the end of managerial control and can coexist with other forms of work organization (ibid.).

Furthermore, Braverman also overlooked worker agency, their capacity to “game the system” and in so doing manipulating work organization (Vincent 2015: 2). Workers, Vincent argues, are thus “cocreators of the system of control rather than merely subjects of it” (ibid.: 2). However, focusing solely on the diversity of worker agency, proponents of a Marxian analysis of the labour process argue, that it distracts from challenging material issues such as wages and working conditions (see McKinlay 2007, Vincent 2015). In the capitalist mode of production, exploitation is not an unintended or unfortunate lapse, “but inherent in the employment relationship” (McKinlay 2007: 1). Furthermore, despite the critique of Braverman, the continued relevance of his work is evidenced in the fact that managers *do* have various strategies of control to shape organizational practice in their pursuit of efficient forms of organization (Vincent 2015). Managerial forms are thus not neutral, they are able transform the “*potential* productivity latent in labour power into *actual* work and output” (McKinlay 2007: 1, emphasis in original).

Of the multiple forms in which employers are able to organize work, only a handful of key modes of managerial control are highlighted here in terms of its relevance to labour control in the Kruger. One such form of exercising authority over workers during their time at work is what Chris Smith refers to as a *dormitory labour system* (Smith 2003). It is the provision of dormitories by firms, an arrangement where workers live where they work. The benefits are, amongst others, that firms essentially have a labour force ‘on tap’ and the low staff turnover and retention of skilled labour could provide these firms with a competitive advantage (Smith 2003). Part of such an arrangement is that firms are able develop a protracted relationship with workers and their families. Associated with such arrangement of living at work, is its association with paternalism (see Section 2.5.1 above). The widespread use of dormitories – or compounds - in the South African workplace, such as mines, commercial farms and, pertinently, the Kruger, denotes that its use was therefore “more *systemic*

than *contingent*” (Smith 2003: 334, emphasis in original). The dormitory labour system thus creates a systemic environmental constraint which gives employers the advantage of control over workers in order to maximise labour productivity during the working day (ibid.). In this way, managers have additional measures of control over the working lives of workers beyond the market relationship. It helps to suppress wages, extends management authority in terms of lengthening the working day and blurs the customary or employment regulations on overtime and the spatial and emotional separation between work and home (ibid.). Smith (2003) also makes a distinction between the provision of housing for whole families and single-sex workers. In terms of the former, the relations are more ‘paternalistic’ where the ‘care’ of the worker is also geared to care for existing and future generations of workers. Its purpose is thus to ‘secure’ a supply “of *particular* workers for the exclusive use of the *particular* employer” (Smith 2003: 335, emphasis in original). This particularism also differentiates certain workers from others in that it denotes metrics of loyalty, length of service and employee skill profile. It is thus discriminatory and not based on a universal principle of rights with the result that certain workers benefit from particular relationships with employees and can access economic or social inducements such as allowances, social events or education scholarships for children (see Smith 2003). Single-sex dormitories in contrast have no interest in the reproduction of a next generation of workers. Its purpose is maximizing the labour services of temporary, migrant and contract labour (ibid.). In the Kruger, a fusion of these forms of dormitory labour is observable both in the past and the present-day.

A second strategy adopted by Kruger managers that this thesis wants to highlight, is the question of incentives. In order to maximize productivity or stimulate economic activity, the labour process creates incentives for individuals and corporate entities in the form of bonuses, regulatory leniency, subsidies or tax incentives (Cicerchia 2022). McKinlay also notes that, in order to overcome the stubborn opposition of workers, managers have attempted to skirt these resistances through “indirect means, such as the use of ramshackle incentive systems” (2007: 1). For Cleaver (2017), money itself has become a terrain of contestation that affects the ways in which it ruptures the value of work to capital. Money, in effect, subverts worker struggles and resistances and enables greater forms of control over labour. Cleaver argues that money hides and

increases exploitation (ibid.), particularly where it takes the form of significant supplementary or irregular income in the form of overtime or bonuses for meeting certain productivity targets. Where these productivity targets are premised on aggression and violence in the context of field ranger practices explored in this thesis, money can also shape workplace practices in disturbing and perverted ways. Sodikoff (2009) shows the mutually constitutive ways in which conservation agents either through their own actions or through collusion with people in their social worlds perpetuate a degree of forest degradation for subsistence agriculture. Forest clearing is directly correlated to the continued dependence on cheap agrarian labour for integrated conservation and development programmes (ICDPs). It is this structural feature in the labour process – below subsistence wages – that ensures the endurance of both forest clearing and the continued legitimisation of conservation and development programmes that are at the foundation of these dilemmas.

Worker Resistance

At first glance, this section on worker agency and worker resistances to modes of work organization may seem to be in tension with the primacy given to the material or structural features of the labour process raised above. It is a debate – between agency and structure – that continues to raise a lively contestation of ideas in the field of study related to the labour process (Vincent 2015). Michael Burawoy's (1985) seminal work showed that workers can retain agency despite the hostile environments in which they work. This section seeks to show that where worker agency is construed as crime or corruption, that such characterizations to delegitimise worker resistance to hostile work conditions and racialized social systems, require critical analysis.

There exists a power struggle between those actors who seek to preserve the structures that maintain their political and social dominance and access to resources vis-à-vis those who are subordinated in these struggles (Brandt 2016). These tensions vacillate between barely discernible resistances cloaked beneath the routine of cooperation to overt, and at times collective, struggles to challenge the frameworks that structure and embody the power discrepancies and the inequalities associated with them (ibid.). This theoretical thread, derived from James Scott's (1985) seminal work, *Weapons of the Weak*, shows how peasants in

agrarian societies challenge domination by landlords and the state. Phakathi lays out a number of strategies used by workers on the mines under the various workplace regimes to reassert their autonomy, ranging from “desertion, output restriction, go-slows, effort and time bargaining, sabotage, deliberate accidents, feigning sickness, drunkenness and theft” (2012: 284). These forms of workplace resistance to cope with tight management controls, despotic white supervision and hazardous working conditions that typified underground gold mining conditions can easily be assigned categories that are deemed deviant or criminal. This is evidenced in organizational studies where, for example, the misuse of employer’s time and property by an employee is framed as ‘theft’ (Snider 2001).

The question then arises around the issue when worker resistance is framed instead as criminal conduct. In his study of the policing and criminalization of urban black and Latino youth, Rios (2011) proposes the concept *deviant politics* ‘as a way of getting back at the system’ where deviant behaviour is conceived as a response to ubiquitously oppressive forms of social control by police in poor and under resourced neighbourhoods. His interlocutors believed they had gained redress for the punitive social control they had encountered by adopting a subculture of resistance even when it included openly criminal acts. These transgressions served as a resource for feeling empowered and for gaining redress for the humiliation, stigma, and punishment they encountered (ibid.).

The function of deviance is, thus, also deployed to challenge the norm (Little 2016). Anti-apartheid struggles and resistance, while illegal, offered a counterpoint to institutionalized racism and segregation. Where deviance is punished, Emile Durkheim argues, it seeks to reaffirm currently held norms, which in his view, was a positive response beneficial to the good order and functioning of society (ibid.). However, unlike Durkheim, a critical sociology does not see crime as a necessary function of society but rather evidence of inequality (ibid.). Where acts of economic sabotage as listed by Phakathi (2012) and Scott (1985), or in the context of this thesis, the complicity of staff in the poaching of rhino, theft or illegal/unprotected strikes, should be viewed as a direct challenge to social injustice. Little (2016) emphasizes that this analysis

is not meant to excuse or rationalize crime, but to locate its underlying sources at the appropriate level so they can be addressed effectively (ibid.: 306).

From this perspective, crime is not simply seen as functional or neutral. Institutions and criminal justice *are* part of governmental techniques that actively maintain unequal power structures. Who and what activity is labelled as deviant is part of who has the power to assign those labels – often those individuals or groups whose privilege and private property is being challenged (ibid.). Where theft is considered a major category of crime and where vagrants are labelled as deviant, these characterizations demonstrates a deep resonance with the historical rationale in establishing social order – the protection of asymmetrical property rights and the administration of productive work (ibid.). While this analysis does not provide a fully conceptualized theory of deviance as workplace resistance, it does offer a starting point by focusing on the underlying sources stemming, in part, from structural and social domination where we should direct our attention. Framing these acts simply as crime or corruption obfuscates the underlying injustices.

2.6 Concluding Remarks: The Police Labour Regime - bringing together theories on Police, Labour and Race

In summary, the theoretical building blocks of this thesis are premised on 1.) understanding police in its expanded form where violence work is central to state power and its role in the administration of social order and waged labour; 2.) conceiving labour productivity seen not only to be embedded in social relations but reflective of the *nature* of those social relations and the ways in which they *shape modes of conduct*; 3.) conceiving racism as part of a broader racialized social system with material effects; its deep malleability and ability to metamorphize at conjunctural moments – with the intensification of rhino poaching in the KNP seen as one such event; and one that sees national histories not consigned to the past but that they continue to shape contemporary practices and mechanisms; 4.) the structural features of the labour process such as supplementary income in the form of incentives or bonuses/rewards and the spatial working/living modalities of workers shape ranger practices and obscure greater forms of labour exploitation that render workers precarious; 5.) that sabotage should not simply be labelled as a crime or corruption but that we should look to its underlying causes; and 6.) collectively, these features evidenced in the labour process in the KNP are not static but even when there is change, it does not mean a society free, for example,

of racism or labour exploitation, but that these features become reconstituted in ways that are less discernible and obscured by acts of care and consent.

Neocleous (2000) posits that it is wage labour that is at the centre of the police project in fabricating order. However, very little is said about the labour that metes out state violence – police officers themselves – and the manner this class of workers are produced, structured and controlled. Thus, analysing what effect these processes hold for black, low salaried field rangers in the Kruger National Park, this thesis proposes the *police labour regime* as a critical concept to unravel these dynamics. It offers a broader schema that overcomes the narrow emphasis, focused either on securitisation regimes (see McMichael 2012) or production regimes (see Burawoy 1985, Von Holdt 2003). Furthermore, it is this conceptualization of a police labour regime that makes the Kruger distinct from other workplace regimes such as the factory floor, the mine or the white-owned commercial farm where labour is also structured and controlled in different ways.

The empirical chapters that follow will make linkages to these theoretical insights. Chapter 3 will trace the trajectory of how labour was simultaneously produced and erased in the making of the Kruger landscape and, in the production of that landscape how labour was ordered, structured and controlled. It will also show that a specific mode of primitive accumulation, together with material aspects of the labour process such as below subsistence wages, rations and compounded accommodation created a hostile work environment and played a crucial role in labour control. It also highlights that the Kruger melded a particular form of dormitory labour and that it used this form of managerial control together with rations, and low wages to maximize and control the daily reproduction of labour power. It melds these historical insights into the production of labour with a historical insight into the Park's relations with the apartheid security forces and how this relationship shaped its martial practices in Chapter 4. These features that lay the groundwork of how labour was produced and structured together with the particular workplace practices, premised on a policing logic that typify the work of field rangers, are inexorable forces that guide how the productive value of labour within the Park has metamorphized. Chapters 5 and 6 will show that the productive value of labour in its 'war on poaching' lay in the expression of violence. Leaning on the insights of

Pugliese (2013) in how violence is rendered productive, in the context of torture in U.S. detention sites, the 'exchange' value of 'high value information' in exchange for withholding pain is what drives the economy of violence. In the Kruger this calculative economy - while still premised on violence - differs in its inner workings. It shows that concrete labour in conservation continues to be central to the labour process but that it has metamorphized from loyalty and docility to violence and aggression. However, it is the mode of conduct as a marker of labour value, that remains central, it has merely shifted from its historical form of docility interpreted as loyalty to the use of aggression in the contemporary conjunctural moment. It also means that this mode of conduct is not fossilized, it can revert to the former or metamorphize into something completely different (see Christian 2019). Where pacification elicits uncomfortable questions (see above), commentators on the rhino poaching issue in the Kruger and wildlife crime more generally, need reminding that it is merely a substitute for counterinsurgency. Together with manhunting, it is foundational to a very specific mode of governance in the Kruger. It is part of a larger police project in bringing about social order where order is not a benign response to a need to feel safe but a very specific mode of government. Its effects are not only to secure private and state property, secure white belonging and a sense of collective white identity in saving nature, reassert the Park's sanctioned authorities vis-à-vis its black neighbours or punish those who disturb the prevailing order but also to structure the labour within Kruger. Lastly, Chapter 7 shows the cumulative effects these features embedded in the labour process have on the field rangers engaged in anti-poaching operations. It demonstrates how field rangers are locked into the imposition of violent forms of work out of fear of losing significant forms of supplementary income. It is through these significant forms of supplementary income that field rangers become financially indebted through the purchase of affirmational consumer products. Where they either lose this supplementary income or are excluded from it, it may lead those who are indebted or those who seek to acquire aspirational consumer products, to participate in forms of workplace sabotage which, in turn, are framed as corruption.

Notes

¹ This naturalness was encapsulated in the notion that if prices of grain were allowed to rise through a mechanism of naturalness, this rise would stop by itself (Foucault 2009: 349). In other words, "...the price of grain will not continue to rise indefinitely but will settle neither too high nor too low, it will simply settle at a level that is the just level. This is the thesis of the just price" (Foucault 2009: 343).

3

Producing the Kruger Landscape: The Historical Production, Erasure and Control of Labour in the KNP

3.1 Introduction

The proclamation of the Kruger National Park (KNP) in 1926 coincided with the development of a host of national artefacts that sought to reconcile the enmity between English and Afrikaans speakers after the South African War to forge a common “*white* national identity and race solidarity” (Bunn 1996: 38, emphasis added). The representation of nature – in particular images of the bushveld and its wildlife denizens – was deployed at the centre of this emerging national white identity (ibid.). Bunn posits that the setting aside of “enclaved and conserved natural domains” such as nature reserves was in itself reconfigured as an indication of a nation’s budding modernity, not one of backwardness (ibid.: 39). In deploying nature as a marker of the modernity of an emerging South African state, the place of Africans within these rural, idealized natural settings sharply contrasted the white perception of Africans to be found elsewhere (ibid.). It is here that Bunn centres the emergence of the KNP into this contradictory understanding of space and racial identity. The ‘nature reserve’ and its peoples stood in sharp contrast to those found in the ‘native reserve’. The latter was a stark reminder of an “ethnic collective” (Bunn 2001: 11) and an exploitative labour regime that segregated whites and blacks and enforced a system of labour migrancy to and from ‘white’ South Africa. The nature reserve, the newly conceived paragon of modernity, in contrast, did not “remind obviously of exploited labour” (Bunn 1996: 39) and the African people to be found here represented a version of the “improved native” (Bunn 2001: 11).

This chapter unravels the nature of labour relations within the KNP and whether it was indeed a “friend of the native” (Bunn 2001: 19) as the National Parks Board (NPB) liked to proclaim. It explores in what ways

its labour practices bore any semblance, if any, to the brutality of the labour regime found elsewhere in South African capitalism, how it sought to produce and order this labour pool and whether these historical formations of labour in the KNP help to inform our understanding of contemporary labour relations and concomitant ranger practices in the KNP that are explored elsewhere in this thesis.

Firstly, this chapter highlights how African labour was produced through the imposition of rent and taxes on residents still living in the Park which played a central role in the proletarianization of the African peasant. A central technique to ensure dependence on waged labour to pay taxes was to slaughter the herds of livestock that many households maintained. These herds were not only a source of livelihood in everyday life and to protect against unforeseen shocks in a pre-industrial political economy but were also pivotal to the spiritual and cultural aspects of tribal life. Secondly, at the same time as black labour was being produced it was erased in the making of an exceptional landscape and black rangers were relegated to a supporting, almost invisible role despite the great social and personal costs they incurred.

Thirdly, it highlights how the particularities of an enclaved space such as a nature reserve shaped a particular brand of social relations between black workers and their white supervisors that vacillated between a brutal coercion and racialized paternalism. It also highlights the central role the KNP played in a steady and cheap supply of labour to meet the needs of rapidly industrializing and extractive South African economy. It not only played a central role in the supply of labour to other sectors of the economy but that the KNP itself had a predilection for Mozambican labour and that it actively nurtured its relationship with the Portuguese colonial authorities and labour recruiting agencies to position itself favourably in terms of access to not only cheap but precarious and highly exploitable Mozambican labour. Lastly, this chapter demonstrates that labour control within the KNP mirrored the coercive and cheap labour regimes found elsewhere in South African capitalism and indeed exceeded, in some instances, these already exploitative labour practices found elsewhere in terms of its wage structures, housing and rations.

3.2 The Making of an Exceptional Landscape: The Production of Black Labour

The vision of portraying the KNP as an Eden and an untrammelled wilderness pandered to the European ideal of a wild unpeopled Africa where African people living in proximity with wildlife was seen as an abomination. In this Euro centric landscape ideal, the labour foundations that made the KNP was often obscured (Carruthers 1993). Carruthers challenged the popular view that the KNP was populated by eight (white) rangers and

...a small number of black assistants to do the work; build roads, build huts, keep a vigilant eye on the never-ending band of poachers, and patrol a wilderness area larger than the state of Israel (ibid.: 1993: 15).

In reality, the KNP had at times a sizeable African population comprising of resident African communities and temporarily imprisoned illegal migrants from Mozambique who formed the foundation of the labour force. Furthermore, Dlamini (2020a) also argues that black presence in the Park was not only to be found in the form of black labour and black poachers. He contends that the Kruger had a pronounced and sustained history of black presence as tourists and that this was made possible by a history of black mobility in colonial South Africa and a growing black intellectual engagement in travel, tourism and nature appreciation. It was part of the emergence of a small black elite class that sought to position Africans as modern British subjects that had “progressed sufficiently for leisure to become a real option” (ibid.: location 1676, single column view).

Upon being appointed the first warden to the Sabi Game Reserve, James Stevenson-Hamilton mused that he had “... no clear idea of what I was expected to do, except as Sir Godfrey had instructed, to make myself generally disagreeable” (1974: 20) and that his “first difficulty would probably be with the natives, since these and game could not be expected to exist together, and I had already decided in my own mind that, so far as it might be possible, the Reserve would have to be cleared of human inhabitants, if a beginning was to be made at all” (ibid.: 47). Furthermore, the rationale that informed Stevenson-Hamilton’s desire to evict Africans living within the confines of the game reserve was also tethered to his own racist and eugenicist leanings vis-à-vis natives and their propensity to spread malaria or fever (Stevenson-Hamilton 1926).

Fever can only be eliminated either by getting rid of the source of the infection or of the carrier. The former, as is well known, is the blood of practically the whole native population, and I doubt if even the strictest segregation would succeed entirely in expatriating the latter from the Low Veld (Stevenson-Hamilton 1926: 214).

It was not only fever, but also the climatic conditions and atmospheric humidity that were “not conducive to building up of a stalwart white race” and to prosper, white settlers needed intermittent respite to more temperate climates (ibid.: 215). He further opined that the lowveld was “a black man’s and not a white man’s country” in respect to the ability of the former to live under these inhospitable conditions (ibid.: 215). Furthermore, white children should not be brought up under these conditions as the environmental conditions would “sap the body and brain...of vigour” (ibid.: 215). Despite evicting close to 3 000 resident Africans from the Sabi Game Reserve, a number of resident African communities continued to reside within the borders of the Park (Carruthers 1995, Dlamini 2020a). By 1952, there were over 1 000 African residents living throughout the Park, with 216 morgens, or approximately 185 hectares, of land under cultivation for subsistence (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1 Number of African residents in the Park, 1952.¹

Section No.	Total Adults	Total Children	Total	Donkeys	Morgens
Skukuza	8	5	13	-	2
1	145	216	361	141	90
2	37	39	76	8	5
3	110	113	223	10	36
4	81	95	176	10	27
5	11	14	25	-	4
6	3	4	7	5	0.5
7	3	4	7	-	0.5
8	83	110	193	37	50
9	3	1	4	-	1
Total	484	601	1085	211	216

In fact, the eviction of resident African communities was hotly contested between the National Parks Board (NPB) and the Native Affairs Department (under whose authority the Kruger initially fell and of course who had jurisdiction over all affairs related to black South Africans), who often opposed efforts by Park authorities to incorporate new areas into the Park and evict African residents (Carruthers 1993). The clash of mandates between departments also exposed the bureaucratic inconsistencies of the colonial government and that the nascent state was not the efficient Leviathan it is often purported to be but that its different branches were often at odds with each other (Dlamini 2020a). The incorporation of lands further to the north which held a number of resident African communities, led to a more pragmatic approach to people and wildlife and that the reality of evicting thousands to replicate the ideal of a European deer park was simply not feasible (Carruthers 1993).

Taxation, Indenture and Coercion into Waged Labour

Stevenson-Hamilton came to realize the value of these resident communities – disingenuously labelled ‘squatters’ or the more pejorative ‘*buis-kaffir*’² in later years - in terms of informing Park authorities of illegal poaching activities, and more importantly as a source of coercive tenant labour and income from rent and taxes. Crucially, Lynn Meskell draws our attention to this “taxonomic reversal from being inhabitants to interlopers” and that we not forget that people were resident in the Park for many generations prior to the establishment of the Park (2012: 158). Van Onselen reminds us that these forms of taxes were integral to the process of proletarianization of the African peasant where the “purpose of taxing the African peasants and restricting their access to land was to push them from the countryside into white-owned enterprises requiring cheap labour” (1976: 161). In this instance, the purpose was also to push them into waged labour *within* the Park.

The 1925 Tax Act doubled the general tax on African peasants. Dlamini (2020a) notes that Transvaal Africans, including those groups of people living in and adjacent to the KNP, were subject to the heaviest taxes in the country, most likely because of their proximity to the mines on the Witwatersrand. In fact, taxation as a technology to coerce populations into waged labour was also one of a wholly South African origin.³

In an extract from a Board meeting in 1931 entitled *Native Squatters Rents*, the revenue received in the form of rent from communities living in the Park was integral to the financial security of the Park.

The Commissioner for Inland Revenue ruled that as there was nothing in the National Park's Act which authorised the paying over to the Parks Board of the Squatters Rent collected from Natives occupying lands within the Park, these monies should be allocated to the Union Government Funds. The loss of the Revenue involved would mean a serious blow to the Board.⁴

In terms of the budgetary allocations from the Union government, by 1902 the Sabi Game Reserve received an increase in the annual allocation for the running of the Park from £2 150 to £4 000 per annum (Carruthers 1995). In comparison, the allocation to the Native Affairs Department around the same time was in the region of £91 000, demonstrating that conservation remained low on the list of financial priorities to the colonial administration, that it was indeed a 'Cinderella of departments' as Stevenson-Hamilton lamented (Stevenson-Hamilton 1926). The revocation of income from taxes would have had severe financial consequences to the existence of the Park. Where black residents went into arrears with the payment of rent, they were required to pay the Park 'in kind' in the form of thirty day's work for each year.⁵ By 1952, Park management had found that this situation of non-payment of rent and going into arrears for an undetermined period - for what they called 'services', in other words work in lieu of rent - was no longer tenable and that all rent or 'services' were to be rendered within the year in question or face eviction.

Please, therefore, notify all your Squatters that their service must be up-to-date- by the end of 1953, and that thereafter service must be rendered within the calendar year for which it is due. If service has not been rendered ... then the contract must be regarded as having been broken and application must be made to this office for a Trek Pass.⁶

Any non-payment had serious repercussions for defaulters (Lacey 1980). For those African families still living in the KNP, it meant summary eviction from the Park in the form of a Trek Pass or eviction notice. It was a sanction of the most severe order, being evicted from the Park meant not only a loss of a home and a plot to subsist, it represented a complete dislocation and separation from their community and a loss of place-rooted identity (see Cernea 2006). Furthermore, displacement also

meant a separation from the graves of their ancestors and this severance from their spiritual anchors further inhibited the ability to reconstitute their social worlds in any meaningful way (Lubkemann 2002).

Aside from the income through taxation and labour from this resident pool of labour, up to 1 000 migrants would pass through the reserve on an annual basis to find work on the mines in the South African interior or on farms in the Transvaal (Meskell 2012). These illegal immigrants were required to pay a transit fee to cross the Park but the majority who could not afford these fees were indentured to labour in the Park for fourteen days.⁷ Upon completion, these workers were then forwarded to the nearest Native commissioner to get the necessary permits or 'pass'⁸ to become eligible for any further legal employment in the Republic. Many immigrants saw such forms of coercive labour as necessary in exchange for their 'pass' (Carruthers 1993). There was an acknowledgement by Park authorities that such practices circumvented the Immigration Act but that it was done with the knowledge of the South African Police and the Department of Native Affairs. It showed an early propensity the Park had to 'bend' the law to not only meet their own needs but that the foundations of the Park lay in cheap, coercive labour.

However, Park administrators claimed, it was simply a pragmatic circumvention of the law to facilitate the legal influx of workers into the country. That this free labour benefitted the Park in any way was vigorously denied and its interest in these natives was merely administrative and it only did so in the service of the country. In any event, it claimed that the work they provided was of such a short duration that it was rarely of any real benefit. Furthermore, Park authorities also claimed that it was done on humanitarian grounds due to the chronic food shortages in Mozambique and that the facilitation of the passage of labour was done in the spirit of good neighbourliness. It was, in its own estimation, nothing other than a benign benefactor. This practice of indentured labour was purportedly suspended in October/November 1959 because of the ostensibly meagre returns for the Park and that the channelling of these workers into the national labour pool was nothing other than an administrative burden for the Park. A more likely reason is that it was recognized for what it was, a continuation of a coercive and inhumane labour practice and that its continued use was technically illegal.

Table 3.2 Number of illegal immigrants indentured to 14 day's labour in the KNP, 1957-1959.⁹

Year	Northern District	Central District	Southern District	Total
1957	352	486	141	979
1958	242	454	174	870
1959	148	304	99	551

Despite the denials that the Park benefitted in any meaningful way, several hundred workers were engaged on an annual basis (Table 3.2). This system of indentured labour was nothing other than an extension of the coercive conscripted labour, or *chibalo*, a system of national leasing of forced labour to state and private enterprise in Portuguese held Mozambique (see Penvenne 1979), the very system these immigrants sought to flee. Indentured labour was a strategy almost universally adopted by colonial era authorities where peasants, suffering economic hardships through processes of primitive accumulation, were forced into waged labour for a predetermined period of time in exchange for freedom from financial obligations such as the cost of an apprenticeship or in exchange for passage out of a colony. In the Kruger, this period of indenture was fourteen days and in exchange it guaranteed a 'pass' for further employment elsewhere in the country. This requirement of a 'fortnight's labour' resulted in workers from Portuguese East Africa (present day Mozambique) to be labelled with the moniker *Mafortini*. By 1959, newspaper headlines started reporting, with alarm, the large numbers of *Mafortini* slipping into the Republic through the Park to work illegally, estimated to be around 15 000, representing about ninety percent of the labour force in the Eastern Transvaal.¹⁰ Between an old Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (W.N.L.A.) station called Makhuba (the present-day Letaba rest camp in the central part of the KNP) and Massingir in Mozambique, there is a footpath - still visible today - called the 'Mafourteen footpath'¹¹ (see Pienaar 2012). The passage of cheap labour is thus indelibly imprinted on the landscape that is Kruger and that it is still visible today provides some indication of the sheer number of migrants that passed through labour recruiting stations in the KNP. The tenant labour provided by residents living in the Park, together with indentured *Mafortini* labour, provided the KNP with literally

thousands of labourers at very little cost, aside from the meagre rations and spartan accommodation. In this way, the Park authorities were able to continue to construct an exceptional landscape and position itself to generate an income from a burgeoning tourism industry to finance its continued existence.

It must be understood that [...] the Head of the Roads and Transport Section has first call on the service of voluntary labour and squatters rendering their prescribed annual labour.¹²

This form of coerced labour, disingenuously called ‘voluntary’ labour, was used largely to clear the bush for roads, tracks and firebreaks. The privileging of these infrastructure projects was also mirrored in the controlled labour conscription or *chibalo* in Mozambique, where coerced labour was mostly used for labour intensive tasks such as the construction of roads, building of bridges, laying of railway tracks and expanding harbours (Isaacman 1992). Initially the clamour to clear the bush for the construction of roads was largely for the purpose of transporting labour recruits through the Park to the mines and farms to the South African interior. The increasing prevalence in the use of motor vehicles coincided with an increased number of tourist visitations to the KNP. This burgeoning tourism industry, bringing in much needed revenue to the Park’s coffers, meant that the building of access roads for tourists in motor vehicles became a major preoccupation for Park management (Bunn 2003, Carruthers 1995, Meskell 2012). By the 1930s over 1 200 kilometres of road had been constructed using largely manual labour.¹³ Today the KNP has an estimated 2 562 kilometres of tourist roads (Brett 2018) and more than 4 200 kilometres¹⁴ of firebreaks that act as management tracks which has become so central in the detection and manhunting of poaching groups (see Chapter 4).

Cattle Genocide: The Art of Primitive Accumulation in the Kruger

Colonial rule over African peasantry differed in important ways elsewhere in Africa to that in South Africa. In British Africa, colonial administrators mostly sought to boost peasant production in order to stimulate colonial commerce and increase its sources of revenue (Evans 1997). In South Africa, there was a more concerted effort to destroy the basis of peasant accumulation (ibid.). In this way, the African peasantry in South Africa was “stripped on any meaningful capacity to generate a wealthy class of

peasant collaborators with pecuniary interests in the state” (ibid.: page unknown). This often took the form of violent dispossession of land. Roderick Neumann (2001) identified displacement to not only include the loss of land and access to resources but also the destruction of homes, crops and livestock as an inherent feature of state-directed violence in wildlife conservation as a means to discipline peasants. Where cattle were the foundation of a local system of value, or as Comaroff and Comaroff contend, “exchange value on the hoof” the killing of cattle in the KNP further deprived African people from an independent source of livelihood (in Bunn 2003: 20). Besides the utilitarian value of cattle in pre-capitalist economies in South Africa (see MacKinnon 1999), cattle also played a central role in the social-cultural lives of many pastoralists and these livestock entered the realm of reverence in much the same way conservationists revere rhino (see Brooks 2006). Park management were actively petitioned to limit the herd size of Africans living in the Park (Bunn 2003) while at the same giving preferential treatment to white stock farmers living on its boundary.

By 1912 white stock farmers were allowed to graze approximately 9 000 head of sheep in the Pretoriuskop area alone and this concession also included burning to provide green shoots and chasing off or exterminating predators (Brynard 1977). It demonstrates the lengths the Park went to to appease its white constituency, a courtesy not extended to the African residents living in the Park. By 1931, there was a growing discontent amongst whites that African cattle within the Park despoiled the purity and sanctity exemplified in the imagery of the Kruger landscape and that their presence monopolised “waterholes at the expense of wildlife” (Bunn 2003: 214). The presence of African cattle in the Park was a stark reminder of the ‘native reserve’ spilling into the rural ideal of the ‘nature reserve’ (ibid.). The occurrence of a devastating drought in the early 1930s and the detection of foot-and-mouth (FMD) disease during the latter part of that decade perhaps created the ideal alibi for the Hertzog government to appease the objections of its white constituents and reduce the number of cattle held by Africans in the Park. While Stevenson-Hamilton sought to restrict the livelihood opportunities of Africans living in the Park, he at the same time also challenged the killing of all the cloven hooved livestock of residents living in the Park. It was emblematic of a transition in the character of native administration at the time. While the early native administrators like Stevenson-Hamilton positioned their interactions with

Africans as 'sympathetic contact' in which colonial rule was expressed in terms of paternalistic benevolence and enlightened administration, it, at the same time hid the violence on which the colonial encounter was premised, one they were reluctant to concede (see Evans 1997, Harries 1994). As state departments during the interwar years became increasingly 'Afrikanerized' where virtually all state departments, like the veterinary department, were systematically becoming staffed by Afrikaners at all levels, it marked a more brutish and repressive form of native administration leading to apartheid (Evans 1997).

In the Park, no evidence of the prevalence of FMD was detected amongst the cattle of residents living in the Park due to their isolation from other herds outside the Park (Stevenson-Hamilton 2008). In fact, Stevenson-Hamilton's own Friesland cows were the only animals in the Park to show mild symptoms of FMD and this was most probably only because they were handled by veterinary authorities and got infected as a result of sub-standard hygiene protocols (ibid.). Furthermore, Stevenson-Hamilton also noted the 'unscientific' approaches of officials from the veterinary department and their poor grasp of the pathology of the disease which also gave him yet another opportunity to juxtapose the incompetence of other state departments vis-à-vis the lay-expertise and authoritative observations of his own officials (see Stevenson-Hamilton 2008).

The outbreak of epizootic FMD from 1938 to 1939 provided the nascent Afrikaner state a legitimate alibi to authorize the widespread killing of livestock of African people living in and adjacent to the Park. It is here that a new regime of scientific veterinary control intersected with the consolidation of Afrikaner nationalism premised on segregation and the clamour to establish a heritage landscape which demanded that the Pretoriuskop section of the Park be swept clear of Africans and their cattle (Bunn 2006). FMD is a highly infectious and widespread disease that does not cause mortality in cattle and other cloven hooved animals but can lead to loss in milk production and weight loss.¹⁵ The destruction of African herds to save the white controlled cattle and meat industry has a long resonance with the colonial state acting favourably towards European enterprises and served to show its antagonism towards African practices (Neumann 2001). Neither is it the first incidence in which disease control was used as a pretext for the displacement of African populations which ultimately led to creation of game reserves (Neumann 2001). Pienaar

contends that “there were only a few isolated herds of 10-20 animals” (2012: 511), a number that grossly underestimated the number of cattle owned by Africans living in the Park. By December 1938 the disease was purported to be so prevalent - even though inside the Park no cases of infections were reported - that it led to the killing of 1 313 head of cattle as well as 321 sheep and six pigs belonging to African communities living within the Park (Bunn 2006). Stevenson-Hamilton (2008) reported a much higher loss.

Some three thousand native cattle in the park were destroyed, none reported to be infected. For the natives the loss was serious, for besides being used for ploughing among them, cattle to a large extent represented currency (Stevenson-Hamilton 2008: 440).¹⁶

The difference in tallying the total numbers of cattle between Stevenson-Hamilton and Pienaar is stark. It points to a rewriting of the history in Kruger on the part of Pienaar, one that downplayed the presence of African inhabitants and the violence associated with their dispossession. Instead, he sought to emphasize Afrikaner belonging and presence through memorializing any evidence of Trekker routes through the landscape (see Pienaar 2012). In the areas neighbouring the Crocodile River district to the south of the Park, an area occupied mainly by African peasants, nearly 14 000 animals were shot (Bunn 2006). Furthermore, the loss of cattle not only deprived residents of a crucial meat supply, the lack of fresh milk also had deleterious consequences for the health of residents, young children in particular (Stevenson-Hamilton 2008). Fermented milk together with maize meal form a crucial part of African diets in warding off malnutrition, provide key probiotics and enhance and contribute immensely to food security (Chelule et al. 2015). The inability to purchase alternatives and the prohibition on hunting in the Park resulted in a number of households emigrating from the Park (Stevenson-Hamilton 2008) further causing social rupture.

The herds of some tribal chiefs living outside the Park were spared¹⁷ as a part of the colonial government’s strategy of indirect rule to co-opt traditional leaders (see Ntsebeza 2005). This exception was leveraged by white rangers such as Harry Wolhuter – and no doubt many other whites - who left his herd in the care of these tribal chiefs.¹⁸ In this way he was able to secure his own herd and thus his own wealth. Cattle were indiscriminately shot, bearing in mind that these herds showed no

symptoms of disease and, in an attempt, to save ammunition, juveniles and calves had their legs broken and some were buried alive. These explicitly violent acts exposed the abhorrence the Afrikaner authorities had for tribal life and by directing this violence against these symbolic artefacts of tribal identity, its aim was to demonstrate the awesome power of the state - and by extension Kruger management - in subjugating indigenous people. The carcasses were buried in mass graves and these burial mounds, or *xilokosho* in xiTsonga, still pockmark the KNP landscape in places like Pretoriuskop in the south west of the Park. While Pienaar acknowledges that the compensation paid was wholly inadequate and that the loss of cattle equated to an “absolute disaster” (2012: 512) for many people, it fails to capture the full effect these cattle killings had, forever altering a way of life for people living in the Park. These cattle killings, in decimating the wealth of pastoralists, not only laid the foundations of a racialized wealth polarization in the region but that conservation as a form of idealized landscape management for tourism obscured a broader trauma of the people affected by these policies. One of Bunn’s (2006) interlocutors expressed the far-reaching effects these cattle killings held for African households and who they held accountable for these acts.

Once my family was rich, but we lost our birthright when the Boers [Afrikaners] shot our cattle (Bunn 2006: 359).

These cattle killings utterly decimated the accumulated wealth of African pastoralists in and around the Park and their ability to navigate economic and environmental shocks or to pass on that wealth to subsequent generations. Even after the cattle killings, the Park continued to impose a grazing fee on residents for many years and continued to generate an income for its own purposes at the expense of peasants.¹⁹ The latest Park management plan for the period 2018 to 2028, refers to these burial mounds and the eradication of cattle in the Park only in terms of its importance to veterinary control (SANParks 2018). No mention is made of the profound impact these cattle killings had on the livelihood security of African people and the deep cultural reverence they attributed to their cattle. By denying pastoralists a means of subsistence outside of the imposed political economy, amounted to what scholars collectively term as a process of accumulation by dispossession after David Harvey or primitive accumulation after Karl Marx (Arrighi et al. 2010). This technique of primitive accumulation, through recruiting the imperative of science together with the segregationist ideals of a nascent Afrikaner state,

further deepened the dependence of indigenous people living in the Park on income from wage labour (see also Zarwan 1976).²⁰ The genocide also marked a dramatic loss of a sense of collective identity for African people living in the Park and it altered in a significant way their understanding of the world (Bunn 2006). This epistemic shock severed their bonds with other filial groups adjacent to the Park and brought them increasingly under the paternalistic authority of white game rangers (ibid.), a relationship that would prove to be the defining mode of labour control in the Park (this chapter). Furthermore, African field rangers in the KNP also risked being ostracised in the communities where they lived, spent their leisure time or bought supplies when they arrested people in their social networks.²¹ In effect they were becoming increasingly socially isolated and the effect was to further drive them into these paternalistic relations with white rangers. The cattle killing not only shifted allegiances of African families living in the Park into these racialized paternalistic bonds with white rangers, it also signified another epistemic shift, specifically the manner in which African field rangers now came to view the wildlife they protected.

The Kruger Park is my place, I must take care of it. The animals are my cattle that I would give my life for. And as long as I am here, I will not allow anyone to intimidate me because they have got firearms (Corporal Enock Manyike in Hadsberg 2010: page number unknown, emphasis added).

That his reverence for wildlife has come to replace the reverence for cattle, which was held in such high regard only a generation or two before him, speaks of a completeness in the reconstitution of the social worlds of descendants of former residents who lived in the KNP. It is wildlife and not cattle that is now placed at the centre of his cultural identity. It is through this particular art of primitive accumulation that African peasants and their descendants have come to be assimilated into the epistemic community of conservation, despite the fact that it was almost entirely premised on their very subjugation and destruction of a way of life. This is how black field rangers justify and validate their place in this new world, a position they are willing to give their life for in pursuit of the preservationist project. It is here that the productive value of the African field ranger starts to come into view. This process of primitive accumulation in the Park and the production of the black field ranger is not one suspended in history, preserved in some kind of amber that entombs its historical formation, it is an ongoing process (Luxemburg

[1913]2003). Thus, 'primitive' should not be read as a specific historical moment when dispossession occurred but that it is a *permanent* feature of capitalism in its production of waged workers (Neocleous 2013). Here it is not only the 'freeing' up of labour to sell their labour power through the processes of dispossession that is of concern but the concomitant particularism of social relations that shape modes of conduct. In this way, this process continues to produce the desired native subject in the Park's contemporary 'war on poaching', a subject willing to use violence and risk death - acts that have become necessary and essential in the defence of the contemporary political economy of conservation (this thesis).

3.3 The Making of an Exceptional Landscape: The Erasure of Black Labour

In his foreword to book of the famous hunter, Frederick Courtney Selous, titled *African Nature Notes and Reminiscences*, the American President Theodore Roosevelt wrote that the views of trained naturalists should be tested against the competent field observations of those with first hand field experience (Carruthers 1995). It is this romanticized version of the pragmatic (white) game ranger living isolated from society in a paradise wilderness that was beginning to take a foothold in the public imagination. While the cult of the heroic protector of nature was almost entirely reserved for white men (and women in rare instances), the lives of African rangers and their own heroics was often invisible in the public imagination (Carruthers 1993). Pienaar's (2012) tome on the early history of the Kruger National Park gives a glowing account of thirty of the early white game rangers in the Park. Arguably, the most celebrated was Harry Wolhuter who held the position as a ranger for 44 years. Pienaar gives an extensive account detailing his early life; the name of his spouse and children; the names of his dogs and horses; and his exploits as hunter and his proficiency with a firearm. Wolhuter was elevated to the status of a legend in the Park when he killed a lion that had attacked him with a sheath knife. The lion skin and knife, together with a log of the tree he climbed into after the attack, is still displayed in the Stevenson-Hamilton museum at the Park headquarters in Skukuza and three memorial plaques were erected to honour his bravery at the site of the attack named *Lindanda* which, according to Wolhuter, was the xiTsonga praise name given to him by African rangers ostensibly meaning 'impressive man'.

Writing the Black Ranger out of History

When it came to writing about African field rangers, their life histories remain largely unknown, “written out of colonial nature protection” (Carruthers 1993: 12) and they certainly “did not receive the same degree of public acclaim” (ibid.: 16). Mitchell contends that “the purpose of landscape is to make a scene appear unworked, to make it appear fully natural [where] landscape is both a work and an erasure of work” (Mitchell 1996: 6). However, in the making of the Kruger landscape this erasure of work was highly racialized, evidenced in the acclaimed and visible accounts of white rangers such as Wolhuter and the near invisibility of African rangers. Lynn Meskell asserts that “there has been no recognition of the thousands of black workers whose labour created the park” (2006:106). This was true for many black workers but not entirely correct as Stevenson-Hamilton did write of the exploits and character traits of some ‘special rangers’ who stood out in their acts of bravery and their sense of loyalty (see Stevenson-Hamilton 2008). Pienaar also lists the names of “remarkable black field rangers” (2012: 536) who laboured in the Park and while he acknowledges that “the Kruger National Park would never have developed to its full potential without them” (ibid.: 536), he does little beyond naming some notable individuals. The likes of Nombolo Mdhuli, a ranger corporal who served in the KNP between 1919 and 1958, is singled out for saving the life of a white ranger, Harold Trollope, who was attacked by a lion. Mdhuli has the distinction of having the Nombolo Mdhuli Conference Centre in Skukuza named after him which also houses a bronze figure in his image. Other than this, there is little else known about Mdhuli. Other field rangers who have been recognized as exceptional were Mfitshane, Mubi, Charlie ‘Nyembere’ Nkuna,²² his uncle Helfas Nkuna, Willie Nkuna, Philemon Nkuna, Nkayinkayi (Kai-Kai) Mavundla, Daniel Maluleke, Forage Ngomane, Sinias Nyalungwa (Shongwane) and more recently Enoch Manyike (see Hadsberg 2010), amongst others. These field rangers were highly regarded as exceptional trackers who had a profound understanding of the bush and of animal behaviour (see Paton 2007) but were mostly admired for an unflinching brand of loyalty and diligence (Bunn 2001, Carruthers 1993, Pienaar 2012, Stevenson-Hamilton 1974, 2008).

Despite these fleeting references, African field rangers and conservationists were “rarely, if ever [...] heroic actors [...] in their own right (Garland 2006: 17). David Bunn also demonstrates that these field rangers were nothing more than “iconographic subjects of tourist photography” (2006: 365), that the ‘field ranger’ was (and continues to be) without exception African men “who were a crucial part of the early tourist experience” (Bunn 2001: 10). Their function in the Park was therefore one primarily as a photographic object and to enhance the tourist experience of a pre-modern Africa, not in any way linked to an administrative or conservation function (Bunn 2003). In effect, what Stevenson-Hamilton wanted to achieve was not only a protected area that preserved animals but one that preserved “particular kinds of native subject” (ibid.: 11).

The Bloody Business of Landscape Production

Mitchell contends that the production of landscape is “...clearly, [...] a very bloody business” (1992.: 12) and “...that such violence is in fact necessary [...] to the workings of the economic system itself” (ibid.: 16). Thus, the produced landscape that is the Kruger, one that portrays an image of tranquility and purity, obscures an origin founded on the violence inherent in the radical transformation of agrarian livelihoods and landscapes and its pursuit of extractive labour practices (see Dressler et al. 2018).

And so the good earth that is today the Kruger National Park was baptized with the blood of its keepers (Pienaar 2012: 543).

It is here that Pienaar acknowledges the costs to those African men who shaped the Park but in closing the chapter on African field rangers he ends with the Latin postscript “*Labor omnia vincit*” (2012: 543) meaning, steady work overcomes all things. The phrase, from the Greek poet Virgil, implored Romans to become farmers, ostensibly to turn to ‘useful’ and ‘steady’ work in the service of the Empire. It draws a thread back to the primacy of ‘useful work’ and the ‘dignity of work’ and its racist characterization of Africans as ‘lazy’ and that it is only through the dignity of work that Africans are able to lift themselves out of pre-modernity to become fuller human beings in the service of the colonial political economy (see Barchiesi 2016, Magubane 1979). That Pienaar, who Jacob

Dlamini (2020a) contends, was arguably the most influential warden²³ after Stevenson-Hamilton and later the chief director of the National Parks Board (the precursor to SANParks), would employ such a credo speaks of a deep-seated logic that Africans could transcend their pre-modernity through the dignity of work irrespective of the costs.

As the patriarch of the Park, Pienaar's tone is one of fondness and regret but it also speaks to an inevitability, that their 'sacrifice' was a form of collateral damage that is 'necessary', albeit lamentable, in the pursuit of the preservationist project. It is this seeming inevitability of their sacrifice that deflects culpability that the preservationist project had indeed been a very bloody business, where the cost was disproportionately borne by Africans. It is only through their engagement in 'useful work', especially one where conservation is presented as a noble profession, that they could gain some semblance of usefulness. This violent cost to an underclass of labour was not only a feature of the early history of the KNP but it is a cost that persists today in its 'war on poaching'. Where field rangers are discursively portrayed as heroes (see Büscher 2021, Marijnen and Verweijen 2016), the conditions of their work, especially where they are expected to act aggressively - in some instances disproportionately so - continues to endanger not only their physical and mental well-being but also exposes them to the risk of criminal prosecution (see Chapter 7). In this way their precarity is obscured by a technique that valorizes their 'sacrifices' in the pursuit of a project that was entirely premised on their subjugation.

3.4 Between Care and Coercion: Racialized Paternalism and the Spatiality of Labour Relations in the KNP

Jacob Dlamini (2020a) offers a crucial insight into how Stevenson-Hamilton's own experiences as a British army officer in the military expansion of the British Empire in Africa shaped his views on how to navigate social relations between white colonial administrators and Africans in the KNP. Drawing on the ethnographic insights of George Steinmetz, Dlamini contends that Stevenson-Hamilton's experience as an officer in the colonial forces in the Sudan imbued him with what Steinmetz called "ethnographic acuity" - a particular keenness by those in power to 'know the native' in order to execute effective forms of social control

(Steinmetz 2003: 42). Steinmetz contends that the particular character of colonialism that sets it apart from other forms of state formation is that it is founded on the notion that the colonized populace is not just different but “inherently inferior” (ibid.: 43). It is this ‘ethnographic acuity’ and its premise of the inferiority of African people that cannot escape an analysis of the formation of social structures, particularly those relations between white managers and African labour, within the KNP. Furthermore, the epistemic shock experienced by Africans living in the Park after the cattle killings alluded to by Bunn (2006), profoundly shifted their familial allegiances in the direction of their white overseers. In examining racialized paternalism taking shape in the Kruger, we need to pay particular attention to “complex power relations of dependency and control” (Orton et al. 2001: 470).

KNP, during its formative years under Stevenson-Hamilton was wrestling with a rising awareness in the colonial consciousness in reconfiguring relations between white and black as the country was lurching into a period of postcolonial modernization (Bunn 1996). It was not only an awareness to create the purported enlightened race relations that typified modernization, Stevenson-Hamilton knew that he also had to compete for scarce labour in a very competitive labour market. The Park had a distinct disadvantage as an employer in that it could not hope to match the wages paid in the agricultural and mining sectors. It is here that his ethnographic acuity would prove so vital. Stevenson-Hamilton sought to *project* an image of a relationship that, in the context of labour relations at the time, stood in stark contrast to the overt coercive and violent labour practices that typified labour practices on white owned farms. It is this acuity - that coercion had to be tempered with care - that Stevenson-Hamilton was able to position the Park as a signifier of a civilizing mission that positioned it as a “friend of the natives” (Bunn 2001: 19). Yet, this care was also punctuated by the ‘exemplary violence’ that Stevenson-Hamilton was not averse to meting out (Dlamini 2020a). It was a technique not only confined to Stevenson-Hamilton’s era.

I remember I was a trails ranger, [name omitted] had a concern about the noise coming from the staff quarters and he took a sjambok²⁴ [a black plastic whip commonly used by the South African security forces to disperse mass anti-apartheid gatherings and could cause severe lacerations to the skin] to sort out the people who were making a noise.²⁵

The history of labour discipline was often evidenced in the whippings of black labourers on white-owned farms and in the violent coercion of black labourers on the mine compounds (Niehaus 2009). White farmers regularly used this technique to punish trespassers and thieves (ibid.). It was not only on the mines and white owned farms that this exemplary violence and discipling of African labour occurred. It was a practice that found its way into the KNP and the manner white managers sought to exert their control over black labour, a technique used well into the 1990s as the interlocutor above attests to. Yet, it is was the spectre of care that the Park always sought to project.

Next morning, when my servants were packing the donkeys, my friend came to watch operations, and remarked incidentally how quick and competent at their job they all seemed to be. 'I reckon you must "hide" them a lot to make them work like that', he added. When I disclaimed modestly any activity in that direction, he winked at me, and said, 'Well, all I can say is that I knock the hell out of my blighters, as much as I can, and dock their pay too, but I don't seem to do no good; rotten lot they are'. This contrast between theory and practice gave me food for some thought throughout the day's march. Some short time later, I heard this man's name mentioned in connection with some labour troubles, in which I gathered he was a leading protagonist of the Working Man (Stevenson-Hamilton 1974: 184).

Here, in authoring not only his own account of history but also speaking for the lived experiences of African labour in his employ, Stevenson-Hamilton leaves the impression that his treatment of Africans is one of benign benefactor (see also Bunn 2003). This delusion that the Park was anomalous in its treatment of African labour in the region perpetuated itself well into the 1980s. In a communiqué from the KNP park warden Dr. U de V Pienaar to the Chief Director of the National Parks Board (NPB) in March 1982, Pienaar laments the illegal recruitment and mistreatment of Mozambican labourers by farm owners on the borders of the KNP.

...the recruitment of blacks from Mozambique has not stopped, and the gradual illegal employment of large numbers of these people is often accompanied with minimum remuneration under awful and unhygienic living conditions.²⁶ [own translation]

Pienaar overlooks the spartan and segregated living conditions; the strict access and movement control; the separation of families of African

employees in the worker compounds in the Park; the criminalization of family members where the wives and children of male employees within the Park could also be subject to fines and imprisonment without the necessary entry permits; the extreme polarization in wages; and the punitive disciplinary measures taken against African staff living the Park, including the eviction of residents or deportation of Mozambican migrant workers. Bunn (1996), drawing on his work on the sugar cane plantations of Natal and the game reserves of the lowveld cautions that we remain alert to the totalizing control sugar company landlords had over labour, masquerading as landed paternalism. It is precisely this paradox of labour relations in Kruger, where this Gramscian-like coercion and care could coexist side by side that makes identifying the former so hard to pin point with any certainty. Isaacman also asserts that paternalism and coercion are not necessarily incompatible, that they are “integrally connected parts of a larger strategy of social control” (1992: 488). In this regard it is useful to look to Van Onselen’s (1997) analysis of paternalism on the South African maize farm which provides a useful entry point to understand this synchronous apportionment of care and coercion in the Park. Van Onselen (1997) contends that while violence was a feature in the relationship between European landlords and African tenants in the Transvaal and Orange Free State countryside, that the

...harsh racism was sometimes tempered by the adoption of some benevolence of familial figures of authority and that the very intimacy of farm life, combined with the master-servant relationship itself, helped nurture a stunted approximation of the ethic of paternalism (ibid.: 192).

In moderating their racism, Van Onselen, following Helen Bradford, contends that Afrikaner landlords linked individual Africans to their own families – typified in the notion of *ons volk* or ‘our people’ - and in so doing stunted the instigation of any protest or unrest on the farm (ibid.). It is this quasi-kinship relationship that transcends the barriers of class and race and it is in the comparative confines of the farm that these relationships are produced and reproduced (ibid.). Bunn (2006) also demonstrates that the cattle genocide of 1938 to 1939 that so radically disrupted the cultural identity and sense of belonging of Africans living in the Park and their filial bonds with communities living outside the borders of the Park, that this epistemic shock drew them into the authoritarian and paternalistic embrace of white game rangers. While the threat of violence was ever present, it was paternalism that shaped everyday relations (Van Onselen

1997). To understand how paternalism is produced and reproduced on a daily basis in farm life and “should we wish to extend our understanding of the social dynamics of paternalism within the relatively self-enclosed worlds of the estate, farm or plantation”, Van Onselen posits that we draw on two key elements that feature strongly in both Afrikaner and African cultures, namely the figure of the ‘father’ and the reverence shown to age (ibid.: 196). The father figure is one imbued with legal standing without having to seek recourse in law – an implicit authority – and “exercising traditionally sanctioned authority over minors within his ‘family’; that is, over the ‘women and children’ on his property” (ibid.: 196). This figure of the father, when further imbued with the authority of whiteness, as this thesis asserts, as opposed to Van Onselen’s analysis of age, commands additional respect and deference from his ‘children’. Here it is instructive to understand that the category of age operated on two levels. On the one hand elderly black men and women were given a certain degree of deference on white owned farms but chronological age did not always denote respect. This is evidenced in the use of the moniker ‘boy’ to refer to any male of adult age. It relegated those adult males who have not yet attained the age of deference to the same category of children or ‘boys’. In Stevenson-Hamilton’s Kruger, African field rangers occupied this category of ‘police boys’ (see Carruthers 1993) and in the industrial landscapes adult African men who occupied the roles of the ‘eyes and ears’ of white management were seen as ‘*baas* boys’ or boss boys (see Von Holdt 2003).

Where paternalism is influenced by the dynamic of race, it is useful to interrogate the phenomenon of *baas-skap* or ‘mastership’. It refers to the deeply held belief, derived from, amongst others, the colonial enterprise premised on the inherent inferiority of indigenous people (Steinmetz, 2003) and Afrikaner Christian nationalism where the authority of whites over blacks was an edict willed by god (see Heaven 1982). Central to this authoritarianism in *baas-skap* is the figure of the personality, imbued with tropes of an “exaggerated assertion of strength” and other qualities that elevate the position of whites vis-à-vis the cognitive and physical abilities of Africans (after Adorno et al. 1950 in Heaven 1982: 229). Here we should remain alert to how the rugged individualism and romanticized view of the figure of the white game ranger can obscure potentially toxic undercurrents in his relations with black labour. Andries du Toit (1993) highlights how these complex relations between white farm owners and

agricultural workers take shape on South African fruit and wine farms. Agricultural workers depended on the farm for every aspect of their material well-being, which brings with it complex relations of dependence and vulnerability. Du Toit argues that farms are like prisons and “form totalizing symbolic universes, so hermetically sealed off from the outside world that farm workers never come in contact with any competing or alternative definitions of society or self” (1993: 316). Atkinson posits that commercial farms are akin to a “‘micro-welfare system’ that emphasizes farmer’s contribution to worker’s welfare” (in Brandt 2016: 168). It is this interdependency and power inequalities that “smothers any possibility of resistance” (Du Toit 1993: 316). This welfare paternalism is geared towards securing the long-term supply of workers for the exclusive use of a particular firm and is not based on universal principles of workplace rights (Smith 2003). It discriminates or differentiates those workers who reproduce measures of loyalty, length of service or willing to self-exploit to gain favour and receive economic or social inducements (ibid.).

Preliminary evidence of how such ‘totalizing symbolic universes’ congeal with the exaggerated ability of white rangers, emerged in my informal discussions with one particular field ranger corporal with thirty years’ service in the Park. His early and formative years as a field ranger were indelibly shaped by his relationship with white section rangers and in our discussions, on long foot or vehicle patrols, he often expressed admiration for their exceptional bravery, for example in saving people from crocodile infested rivers, arresting poachers bare-handed and stories of near-death experiences in hunting dangerous animals such as lion, buffalo and elephant on foot. These narratives were contrasted by his disparaging remarks of black section rangers who, in later years, would come to supervise him.

a white man always has a good plan and the black man, [sigh of exasperation], he cannot think about the work of a field ranger.²⁷ [own translation]

This short exchange encapsulates the persistent hold the dynamic of race continues to shape the reverence in which white game rangers are still held in the Park. When a regional ranger position became vacated by a black manager, this field ranger corporal said he prayed that Park management would appoint a white ranger in a further demonstration of reverence and the illusion of competence he associated with white game

rangers. Dlamini (2020a) also notes that black residents adjacent to the Park viewed black management as less competent than their former white counterparts and that it is this incompetence that led to the death of twenty grass cutters and four field rangers in a runaway fire in 2001. Furthermore, black field rangers, in some instances, also actively undermine the integrity of black section rangers and in one instance a black section ranger shared that when poaching pressure increased in his section he was put in a position where he had to demand more from his field rangers in terms of patrol effort and in some instances deny days off due to a shortage of staff. Field rangers lodged a grievance against him but they understood that for the grievance to be effective they had to insinuate that he was complicit in rhino poaching. The consequence was that he was not only temporarily transferred but was subjected to open ended surveillance and treated with mistrust.²⁸ In effect, he was arguing that “field rangers treat black section rangers different to white section rangers” and even in verbally chastising undesired behaviour in field rangers, white section rangers are able to say things, if they were said by black section rangers, would elicit very different reactions and hold distinct consequences for black managers.²⁹

In an attempt to articulate these opaque dynamics between white game rangers and African staff, the black section ranger above came closest to identifying what is so readily perceivable but difficult to articulate.

the colonization...the superior/inferior issue in the Kruger National Park...even after 1994, apartheid was still continuing inside [KNP] and most of the field rangers were coming from Mozambique because of war, illiteracy, everything...they were inferior to whites...you still see white people who still want to continue managing field rangers as people who cannot think for themselves...they implanted that to the field rangers.³⁰ [emphasis added]

The intersection of space and the authority of the white game ranger gives rise to very particular forms of labour control in the Park. It is something that has been ‘implanted’ on field rangers – a mode of interpersonal relations that has been shaped over the course of a nearly a century and it points to the preferred modality of work where African staff should not ‘think for themselves’ but uncomplainingly execute their duties. In exchange, black field rangers like the field ranger corporal preceding the quote above, reproduce these desired qualities. In trying to understand how African field rangers in the Park conduct their law

enforcement duties vis-à-vis the use of violence in the current ‘war on poaching’, this dynamic governing social relations in the Park cannot be overlooked. It *shapes* field ranger actions in profound ways and suggests their actions transcend agency. In effect, these social relations give rise to a specific mode of conduct desired by white game rangers (see Chapter 2). Furthermore, historical recruitment practices in the Park also privileged the recruitment of family members of employed staff. This authority to engage prospective employees lay directly with the white game ranger responsible for a given section. Thus, when a black field ranger was nearing retirement, a suitable replacement in the form of his son or extended family member would be identified to replace him. In this way Van Onselen’s (1997) notion of *ons volk* was extended in the conservation workplace, one where the allegiance to the ‘family’ served to mediate a form of labour control. If employed staff members wished to guarantee the future employment of their own kin, in the context of precarious employment opportunities, especially for the families of Mozambican field rangers, such recruitment practices necessitated a degree of obedience to the figure of the father in the guise of the white game ranger. In a landscape where opportunities for waged labour was scarce, the arbitrary judgement of white game rangers was weaponised to cultivate a compliant labour pool. This dynamic prevalent in paternalistic relations, where ‘care’ does not only extend to the worker but also family members, is to secure a ‘supply’ of future generations of workers where a *particular* type of worker, one who reproduces particular measures of productivity, such as loyalty, are reproduced for a *particular* employer (Smith 2003). The persistence of paternalism and the reason why it remains largely unrecorded or remarked upon is because it is so commonly practiced and so easily recognizable. Van Onselen (1997) posits that it is this self-evidence that is often the last features to be commented upon and thus allowed to perpetuate.

3.5 The Foundations of South African Capitalism: A Steady Labour Supply through the KNP

The KNP and its precursors, the Sabi and Shingwitsi game reserves, played a central role in the maintenance of a cheap and stable labour supply in South Africa through the number of labour recruiting centres that were located in the Park.³¹ Even its earliest officials had a background and

expertise in labour recruitment where the first ranger appointed by Stevenson-Hamilton was a Captain E.G. Gray who had a career as a labour recruiting agent before and after his year-long service in the game reserve (Pienaar, 2012). Similarly, H. Ledebouer, who, prior to his appointment as a ranger in 1921, was involved in the illegal recruiting – known as ‘black-birding’ – of African labour from Southern Rhodesia (present day Zimbabwe) and Portuguese East Africa (present day Mozambique) for the gold mines and collieries in South Africa (ibid.). While the term ‘black-birding’ may suggest a quaint form of illegality by a small band of maverick and enterprising white settlers seeking their fortunes outside the strictures of a colonial life, it was in fact nothing other than a crude, criminal and rapacious form of human trafficking to fulfil an urgent and intense demand for cheap African labour on the gold mines of the Witwatersrand in South Africa.³² Many migrants were held at gunpoint by these black-birders and sold at significant profits to licenced recruiting agents “under circumstances that resembled slave auctions” (Murray 1995: 374). This fact is completely overlooked by Pienaar in his historical sketch of the early ‘heroic’ white game rangers. In fact, many of these illicit transactions took place at a trading store run by settlers in the Makuleke controlled territory between the Limpopo and Luvuvhu rivers before it was incorporated into the KNP after the Makuleke people were forcibly removed in 1969 (see Hansen 2008, Murray 1995, Ramutsindela 2002). Murray contends that the recruitment of African labour from outside the borders of South Africa was not a mere sideshow “but an integral part of the historically specific way in which capitalism developed in southern Africa” (1995: 376). More specifically, Murray emphasizes that this ‘labour recruitment’ on which South African capitalism was dependent was not an unproblematic process where the demand for labour was met by a willing labour surplus but was predicated on “particularly crude and extra-legal methods of procuring labour” (ibid.: 377) coinciding with the widespread proletarianization and taxation of peasants throughout the sub-continent (Arrighi et al. 2010, Van Onselen 1976). In essence, the pathway to a cheap and coercive labour regime in the South African economy lay in its passage through the Kruger National Park.

That the precursor to the KNP employed men with an expertise in legal and illicit forms of labour recruitment demonstrates that its earliest preoccupation was invested in the supply and control of labour and not,

as is so often portrayed, purely in the pursuit of landscape and wildlife preservation. In fact, Dlamini (2020a) contends that Stevenson-Hamilton himself was appointed into the role as warden precisely because of his ethnographic acuity and that he had an intimate understanding of the treatment and control of native labour. The control of nature was seen as inseparable from native administration (ibid.). The appointment of men with skills in the enterprise of labour recruiting and control highlighted the need to harness such skills in securing and disciplining labour for the purposes of the development of Kruger itself. If these brutish practices underpinned the South African capital accumulation process more generally and if the creation of the KNP cannot be conceived of outside of the process of accumulation, it will be naïve to think that labour practices in the KNP were entirely insulated from the depredations that were happening in other exploitative labour-intensive industries in South Africa.

In order to stamp out these uncontrolled and illegal labour recruiting activities, the state and mining conglomerates sought to regulate labour recruiting through the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (W.N.L.A. also called 'Wanela')³³ and the Native Recruiting Corporation (N.R.C.). While the N.R.C focused on labour recruitment in Kwa-Zulu Natal (specifically with regard to indentured Indian labour) and the Eastern Cape, the W.N.L.A had a *de facto* monopoly over labour recruitment in Mozambique. The fact that labour recruitment was now centralized put an end to any further competition through wage increases amongst the various mining houses but it did not mean that illegal recruiting was a thing of the past. In fact, the W.N.L.A's district manager at the Soekmeaar depot, Paul Neergaard, was himself suspected by the Mozambican authorities of clandestine recruiting from above the 22 degree line of latitude and a warrant for his arrest was duly issued if he were to enter Mozambican territory. Thus the W.N.L.A. at times, presented a veneer of a civilized and more humane labour recruiting system while one of its most celebrated officials was directly suspected of clandestine recruiting.

*Table 3.3 Number of African migrants passing through the W.N.L.A. recruitment centres in the Park, 1961-1962.*³⁴

Route	1961	1962
Via Pafuri (Punda Milia)	15 405	12 045
Via Letaba	473	346
Via Nwanetsi	4 452	3 462
Total	20 330	15 853

The true number of extra-legal recruits trafficked by black-birders is not known but Penvenne (1979) posits that its number may have equalled that of legal immigration. By August 1922, approximately 7 000 native recruits per annum were passing via the Pafuri, Massingir and Mapulanguene-Acornhoek routes in the Park *en route* to Soekmekaar station. In the early 1960s this number had risen nearly twofold (Table 3.3). At its peak in 1975, 22 000 recruits passed through the Pafuri W.N.L.A recruiting centre alone (Pienaar 2012). The total number of legal immigrants processed by the W.N.L.A in the same year was 118 000 (Penvenne 1979). Where the number of recruits passing through a single recruiting station in the KNP amounted to nearly a fifth of all legal recruits processed by the W.N.L.A., demonstrates the central role the Park played in the supply of migrant labour to the South African economy.

While the fees for these recruits accrued directly to the colonial and later the Mozambican authorities through the office of the Curator, the KNP did benefit from the flow of this mass of labour recruits through the Park, most notably in the form of free labour for the maintenance of the roads on the various official labour routes passing through the Park, the construction of water storage reservoirs, the building of camps which was later turned over for use by the Park and major causeways across the N'wanetsi and Olifants rivers (Pienaar 2012, University of Johannesburg Library: Archives and Special Collections). By at least 1958 there is evidence that the W.N.L.A. contributed an annual monetary grant to supplement the Park's road maintenance programme³⁵ and it was through the provision of this grant that the W.N.L.A. could insist that Kruger management prioritise the maintenance of these routes, an obligation that was not always forthcoming. These roads and access across rivers, particularly when they were in flood, was of course crucial to maintain the steady supply of labour and the condition of the roads was of central

concern in the monthly reports from Soekmekaar as it had the most direct impact on the ‘output’ of recruits to the mines. It also hints to the manner human lives were reduced to commodities.

The expansion in the road infrastructure was central to a burgeoning new form of accumulation for the Park, the advent of self-drive tourism (see Bunn 2003). That it received such monetary grants to maintain roads in the Park, in effect made the Kruger yet another agent or authority in the vast labour recruitment system. The growing importance of labour recruitment through the Park necessitated the development of additional infrastructure to house and service officials posted in the Park. Furthermore, the Park also formed close relations with the W.N.L.A. recruiting agents posted at the various centres in the Park (Pienaar 2012). This reciprocal relationship took the form of Park authorities assisting, for instance, in the supply of piped water to the Pafuri W.N.L.A. post and in return these officials assisted in the combatting of veld fires and transporting mail and other consignments for Park officials. This amicable relationship was evidenced in appointing these authorities as honorary rangers in the KNP, an overt demonstration that these officials were no longer considered as outsiders as Stevenson Hamilton endeavoured to do in the early days of the founding of the Park (see Pienaar 2012). Crucially, it was through cultivating these close relationships that the Park authorities were able to arrange special dispensations - not provided for in the labour Agreement with the Portuguese colonial authorities - to satisfy its predilection for cheap and precarious Mozambican labour.

3.6 The KNP and its Exceptional Labour Needs: A Predilection for Cheap and Precarious Migrant Labour

By 1940, the Union government had entered into a formal agreement with the Portuguese authorities to regulate the irregular and illegal immigration of Mozambican labour.³⁶ The recruitment of labour in the KNP from Mozambique was regulated through the Portuguese South Africa Labour Agreement. It was this agreement that sought “the regularisation of the position of the Portuguese Bantu employed by the National Parks Board at the Kruger National Park”.³⁷ However, as in other spheres, the Board continued to invoke a sense of exceptionalism, prompting the Curator –

the colonial Portuguese authority in charge of all matters related to labour recruitment from Mozambique to South Africa – to affirm that “the matter concerned was an *exceptional case*, unforeseen in the Agreement”³⁸ [emphasis added]. Through the relationships that the KNP management was adept at nurturing, particularly with labour recruiting agents stationed at the W.N.L.A centres inside the Park - who in turn no doubt wielded influence over the Curator - the Curator conceded that the KNP would be allowed to bypass the provision in the Agreement that all Mozambican labour recruitment needed to be authorized through an accredited Portuguese recruitment agency.

Having regard, however, to the unique situation of the park vis-a-vis Mozambique and the fact that ex-Park’s employees of Bantu (usually relatives) recommend [sic] by the Park’s employees are usually engaged at Skukuza this office also has no objection to the continuation of the present procedure. [...] I shall be pleased to learn if you too, agree to such departure from the Agreement.... In view of the fact that the Passport Central Officers at Mhlahambhala and Nwanetsi [passport control posts within the KNP] have the necessary facilities to make endorsements on passports, there is no reason why the passport of any Bantu employed by the Parks Board need to be forwarded to the Bantu Reference Bureau for endorsement.³⁹ [emphasis added]

In terms of the conditions of the Agreement, the passports of Mozambican workers in South Africa could be endorsed for 18 months where after the employee had to return to Mozambique for six months before engaging in further work in the Republic. Where Mozambican workers were permanently employed in the Park, especially as field rangers, as far as the office of the Curator was concerned, there was no objection to such employees continuing in their employment beyond the 18 months that was stipulated in the Agreement. This meant that when a worker has completed his contract of 18 months a further endorsement could be made on his passport by the Board’s own officials who were appointed as Customs officers for a further 18 months and so on. By invoking its unique labour situation, the KNP was able to gain concessions to continue to employ Mozambican labour and bypass the rigors of oversight that other sectors, such as mining and agriculture, had to abide by under the Agreement. Where these other sectors dominated the South African fiscus and despite being the “Cinderella of Departments” as Stevenson-Hamilton (1926: 226) characterized the KNP, it nevertheless

was able to position itself favourably in terms of a continuity in employment of migrant labour, a concession not available to other sectors in the South African economy.

In a detailed evaluation of the native ranger services, dated 1967, the author not only reinforced essentialized and racist tropes around which ethnic group encapsulated the ideal (native) worker (see Acker 2006), it was also cognisant of how the organization could best position itself in a competitive labour market despite the Park's underling status.

The general consensus is that the Shangaan originating out of Mozambique, on average makes a better native ranger than his race equivalent originating from the Republic. This opinion is grounded on the experience that the Mozambique Shangaan is more disciplined, has a better knowledge of the veld and is prepared to work harder for the salary that he receives. Through analysis of this phenomenon, it appears to me that the whole matter revolves around salary and work opportunities. The native remuneration structure and work opportunities in Mozambique is in general relatively low and compares poorly in relation to that of the Park. The need in Mozambique is thus significant [...] [w]ith the current rate of development in the Lowveld, work opportunities are excellent, salaries high and in comparison, the salary structure of the Park is extremely poor. The offer [of employment in the Park] is therefore small and of a poor quality.⁴⁰ [translation by R.A. Smidt]

While they re-emphasize essentialist tropes of the 'ideal native', these Kruger managers again show an acute ethnographic acuity of 'knowing the native', after Steinmetz (2003) that Stevenson-Hamilton was so proficient at. They preferred Mozambican labour not because they 'made on average a better native ranger' related to their ethnicity but precisely because their lived realities were so precarious. Under conditions where Mozambican labour had to have their passports endorsed every 18 months, they were constantly exposed to the danger of deportation. For Burawoy (1976), this powerlessness that migrant workers experienced in their place of employment was a characteristic feature of the coercive political and legal systems under which migrant workers were employed. Finding refuge from a repressive and coercive cotton labour regime, encoded in a controlled labour conscription drive or *chibalo*, for more than two decades around the 1930s (see Isaacman 1992, Rodgers 2008), followed by a fifteen year-long civil war raging in Mozambique, many peasants sought to escape these consecutive eras of repression by crossing through the KNP.

Employment in the KNP offered these workers a means to provide much needed remittances and everyday supplies to their families still in Mozambique (Rodgers 2008). Furthermore, many Mozambican peasants preferred to seek employment in neighbouring territories like South Africa and Rhodesia where salaries were more than double offered under the cotton regime in Mozambique (Isaacman 1992). Kruger administration exploited this precarity to its own advantages. In effect, Lacey (1981) posits, such a migratory labour system served to provide the cheapest and most exploitable form of labour.

KNP management sought an expression of value in the form of a loyal and productive labour force. This essentialism was one perpetuated by both the coloniser and the colonised, with the one becoming a necessary condition of the other (see Bunn 2001). This narrative that Mozambicans were harder working than their South African counterparts was also one perpetuated by Mozambican labour themselves (Rodgers 2008). The Tsonga refugees from Mozambique viewed themselves as more culturally authentic than their South African counterparts and since they came from the 'bushy' or 'uncivilized' places in Mozambique, they embodied the kind of native that was no longer to be found in South Africa (ibid.). They embodied the "raw natives" that so entranced the early nature photographers to the Kruger (Bunn 2003: 213). In effect, these migrants had "given up external political rights for citizenship of the Park" and these essentialised *Shangaan* identities, perpetuated both by Kruger management and migrants, became closely associated with the Kruger Park (Bunn 2001: 18). Perpetuating this essentialism on the part of the colonized was a technique to secure employment and in so doing ameliorate their precarity magnified by the processes of primitive accumulation and coercive wage labour in Mozambique under the colonial authorities. In essence, this representation of Mozambican peasants as preferred speaks to the same dichotomy that Bunn (1996) observed between the 'improved native' from the idealized tribal domain in the nature reserve and the 'ethnic collective' within the South African native reserves.

While the Kruger showed a pronounced predilection for Mozambican labour it was largely out of step with the geopolitical developments that held the attention of the state with regard to the influx of labour. In 1960 the state had already started implementing stricter influx control measures in order to give preferential employment opportunities to black South

Africans.⁴¹ This was because the growing unemployment problem within the homeland or bantustan areas resulted in a marked influx of Africans into (white) South Africa. This influx of Africans from these homelands into the Republic was seen as a significant security threat, especially in the context of the growing unrest and opposition to apartheid that would culminate in the mass uprisings of the 1980s.⁴² The continued employment of Mozambican migrant workers, especially in the rural districts, exacerbated this problem. As a result, no new Mozambican recruits could be employed in the Park except in the case where such employees were already in possession of the required employment contracts. Where their employment service came to end, they had to be replaced by South African labour.

Due to the (mutually) hostile stance between the Frelimo-led government in Mozambique and South Africa, the National Parks Board was approached by the SADF, SAP and officials of the Department of Home Affairs, to halt all recruitment from Mozambique. This increasing pressure from the state resulted in all recruitment from Mozambique for work in the KNP to formally come to an end in 1979.

My Board has already decided during 1979 to not conduct any recruiting from outside our national boundaries. The Alien blacks are, as they resign, retire or die, replaced with local workers.⁴³

The Park could demonstrate that it was slowly shifting to employing workers from within the borders of the country, even though it was from the neighbouring bantustans. By 1985, the Park had 334 Mozambique-born workers out of a total of 2 979 African workers in its employ.⁴⁴ The low turnover of these Mozambican employees was matched against the approximately 72 resignations of South African employees per month, prompting Park management to remark on their exceptional loyalty. Again, this was a misrepresentation, these employees merely re-enacted the forms of labour value that was so sought after by Kruger management. They were compelled to reproduce this notion of labour value for fear of deportation, largely due to the civil war raging in their homeland. The Park could show that ten percent of its labour force was recruited from Venda⁴⁵ alone and that by 1985 only eleven percent⁴⁶ of its permanent labour force was Mozambican. This was significantly less than the approximately thirty six percent (n = 72) of Mozambicans that made up its field ranger corps in 1967.⁴⁷ By 1987 it could demonstrate that over

the preceding eleven years the number of Mozambican workers was reduced from over 1 000 to 325.⁴⁸ However, despite these reassurances that it was systematically replacing Mozambican workers with South African workers, the Park continued to recruit labour from Mozambique, evidenced by an agreement with a labour recruiting agency, L.F. Placements in 1984.⁴⁹

Furthermore, those workers who did legally conform to the requirements for their continued employment in the Park faced the threat of deportation – this time from the state and not the KNP – in that they were now construed as potential enemies of the state because of their citizenship to an enemy Marxist state. This time, Park management tried to position themselves as an institution of care vis-à-vis their labour force and proceeded to vehemently protect those Mozambican workers still in its employ.

My Board is once again confronted with the possibility that these workers face the possibility of deportation...[t]he importance (in national interest) of the maintenance of the Kruger Park by a small group of skilled and highly trustworthy and loyal workers has been clearly spelled out in previous communications by the Park Warden of the Kruger Park...[t]he value of this group of black workers not only to the Kruger National Park but also to national security is indeed so high that...[it has been] indicated to my Board that permanent residence rights for these workers and their families in the RSA be considered essential. To date nothing has materialised and the sword of possible deportation still hangs over their heads. I am convinced, through my many years of association with these workers, that they pose no threat or problem to our country – to the contrary the granting of residence rights to them in the RSA can only hold advantages for all concerned institutions.⁵⁰ [own translation, emphasis added]

Many of these Mozambican workers occupied key or essential posts, mostly as field rangers. Park management made repeated pleas that these workers should be retained, ostensibly, as they were seen as a highly valuable resource to both KNP and the state security apparatus from an intelligence point of view. When these workers returned to their homes in Mozambique on annual leave they could essentially gather information for the state. Without these workers and the valuable information, they could provide, Mozambique - Park officials claimed - would effectively be cloistered behind an 'iron curtain'.⁵¹ While the Park actively tried to convince the state security apparatus that this justification in retaining its

Mozambican labour force had for the security of the state, privately KNP management were more concerned that a mass dismissal of Mozambican workers would pose “catastrophic consequences for the management of the Park”⁵² in the form of poaching – a security concern that does not fall into the ambit of state security. To protect its interests, Kruger management went as far as taking the state to court in an apparent stand of solidarity with their migrant labour force and after consideration, the Attorney General declined to prosecute.⁵³ This purported show of empathy and solidarity by Kruger management for its labour force does not accurately portray the nature of its relationship with its labour force and obscures the self-interest encoded in this legal challenge to the state.

The predilection for Mozambican labour was also directly related to the rare incidences of mass labour unrest in the Park. Where labour unrest did occur, it emanated largely from the pool of South African labour.

These people would less predisposed to political manipulation from members of the radical left since they have already experienced the deprivations of a Marxist system in Mozambique. They would therefore, according to our view, have a significant stabilizing influence over our black worker corps who have not been exposed to such things...[a]fter circumstances have returned to normal or certain projects have reached completion, these workers can be returned to their camps in Gazankulu.⁵⁴ [own translation, emphasis added]

A nationwide state of unrest, particularly in the neighbouring bantustan of Gazankulu, gave rise to a worker’s strike between the 7th and 9th March 1990, the first of its kind in the Park’s nearly 90-year history. Consequently, the Park was reluctant to hire temporary South African labour for a number of urgent infrastructure development projects it had planned. It again sought exemption from the state to employ Mozambican labour because of its purportedly unique situation and that the threat of any future strikes could hold serious financial and political consequences for the Park – and, by extension, the country - if prospective international visitors, saw it as an unsafe destination. The Park therefore did not have an appetite to hire politically radicalized labour from South Africa and instead sought, as it always had, compliant and precarious Mozambican labour. In fact, it positioned these migrant workers as potentially having a calming influence on those fractions of South African labour that were not yet radicalized.

This notion of the obliging native that did not disturb European sensibilities and devoid of a political mind was a fetish long desired by Stevenson-Hamilton in the early days of the Park's existence. In his Warden's Annual Report of 1929, he laments "...whereas our natives are always civil and obliging to Europeans, those living along the Crocodile River especially close outside our borders are just the reverse and seem permeated with political propaganda" (p.4 in Bunn 2001: 11). To avoid any further labour unrest after the 1990 strike, the Park sought permission from the Director General Homeland Affairs to employ 100 Mozambican workers for the construction of Mopani rest camp as a temporary measure and that by employing refugees living in refugee camps in the homeland of Gazankulu, it could also alleviate the burden these refugees placed on the state in terms of emergency food supplies and that by employing Mozambicans, neutralise any security threats they ostensibly posed to the state.

3.7 The Foundations of a Cheap and Coercive Labour Regime: Income Polarization, Rations and Worker Compounds

Marian Lacey (1980) contested the fallacy that segregation in South Africa (later formalized as apartheid policy after the Nationalist Party came to power in 1948) was incompatible with economic growth. In fact, she asserts, segregation was not only compatible, it enabled South Africa to be positioned as one of the fastest growing economies in the world during the late 1970s, rivalled only by Japan and Taiwan, with growth doubling every ten to twelve years (ibid.). The foundation for this exceptional growth was a cheap and coercive labour system (ibid.). The extraction of the country's considerable mineral wealth was made possible by coercing millions of Africans to "work for nothing – for *Baroko* – a 'place to sleep'". (ibid.: xii). While wages were the most important means for mine owners to reduce costs, wage reductions were not the only means to keep operating costs down (Van Onselen 1976). To deflect dissatisfaction to these below subsistence wages, mine bosses and farm owners used a number of techniques, using payments in kind or noncash benefits that took the form of rations, subsidised transport, supplying uniforms, provision of cheap housing and 'sweepings' – taken from the concessions

given to dock workers in industrial England who could lay claim to the coffee beans spilled in the holds of ships which were swept up and either consumed or sold (see Rigakos et al. 2009).

On the farms those concessions given to workers could constitute ‘waste’ or by-products, such as the innards of slaughtered livestock or rotten or bruised fruit, amongst others. In other instances, on the wine farms of the Cape, it took the form of a ‘*dop* [tot] system’, the practice of giving wine to male farm labourers at regular intervals during the working day as a form of partial remuneration (Williams 2016). The labour regime deployed to produce the landscape that is the Kruger did not fall outside these techniques that typified a cheap and coercive labour regime that was characteristic of the rest of the South African economy. The Park not only mirrored these cheap labour practices instituted elsewhere in the country, in some instances it exceeded these already exploitative benchmarks.

Income Polarization

While the salaries on offer in South Africa was in some instances double that of the salaries on offer under the coercive cotton regime in Mozambique (Isaacman 1992), the low wages on offer to African workers in the South African mines still bore the ignominious characterization of being “perhaps the lowest in the capitalist world” (Cohen 1979: 79). The Park’s own salary offer was even lower – characterized as ‘extremely poor’⁵⁵ by its own estimation - than these already low wages on offer in other sectors of the South African economy. It was a remarkably candid assessment. Fatima Meer (1985) documented the pitiful wages and long working hours (of up to fourteen hours a day) of indentured labour in Natal province at the turn of the 20th century. The wage rate for indentured labourers at the time were on par with what Stevenson-Hamilton paid African labourers. African field rangers were paid double this, a rate of £2 a month, but it was still half of the unskilled wage rate on the mines.⁵⁶ Kruger authorities were well aware of the comparative disadvantages it faced in acquiring labour in a competitive labour market and yet it did little to substantially increase salaries for African labour to equal or better salaries elsewhere in the Union.

It could do this precisely because it had positioned itself favourably vis-à-vis its unfettered, technically illegal, access to indentured labour up to

the late 1950s, squatter labour in lieu of rent and its exclusive labour agreement with the Portuguese colonial authorities giving them preferential treatment under which the Park could engage Mozambican labour. It was its ability to leverage the terms of this exclusive agreement that enabled it to reduce the onerous bureaucratic obstacles to employment, particularly its ability to engage workers continuously as opposed to the 18-month periods that other sectors were limited to. This does not mean that the question of wages was not of concern. In an extensive 1967 report analysing the *Native Field Ranger Services* in the KNP, a section was dedicated to the inadequacy of the wage structure. There was widespread acknowledgement by KNP management that field rangers carried extensive responsibilities and that a large part of their work was reliant on self-initiative that could open themselves to greater sanction if they acted incorrectly. The report acknowledged that field rangers work under demanding conditions and long hours including Sundays and public holidays that included laying in ambush in the vicinity of snares set by poachers for many hours and attending to uncontrolled veld fires for which they received no overtime pay.

As a result of the abovementioned facts, the native field ranger is by far not the highest paid group of workers in the Park. Indeed I believe that the salary of the native field ranger corps is far from being in proportion to the responsibilities that they have to carry, or the dangers that they often have to face, or the long hours they often have to work. Their salary structure is also unrealistic in terms of the current times in which we live with a high cost of living, unrealistic in comparison to other organizations (eg. the S.A. Police), where natives do comparable work, and unrealistic in comparison with the average wage structure in a fast-developing Lowveld, from which native rangers are recruited.⁵⁷ [own translation, emphasis added]

Despite the detailed recommendations and the seemingly genuine and well-intentioned concerns, the proposed basic salary of ZAR 193 per native field ranger per annum (excluding other 'benefits' such as food rations, bicycle allowances, housing, uniforms) still did not match salaries elsewhere in its ambit. The low wages it paid African field rangers stood in sharp contrast to the competitive salaries it paid its white employees. White rangers earned up to *fifteen times* that of black field rangers (see Table 3.4). Stevenson-Hamilton's own salary was as much as *seventy times* greater than that of African labourers, where his own salary accounted for over eighteen percent of the annual Park expenses by 1903 (see Carruthers

2001). This disparity in incomes between African and white rangers remained stubbornly stable for more than half a century (Table 3.4).

Table 3.4 Income Gap in Annual Incomes - 1903, 1967 and 2013/2014.

Year	African Rangers	White Rangers	Income Gap*
1903 ^a	£24	£360	15
1967 ^b	ZAR 193	ZAR 2 895 ^c	15

Year	A Band	E Band	Income Gap*
2013/2014 ^d	ZAR 70 318	ZAR 1 065 295	15

^a Source Carruthers (2001) and Stevenson-Hamilton (1974).

^b Source Skukuza Archives NK/9/18.

^c This figure represents the average annual salary of three positions for white staff motivated for in the 1967 report (see Skukuza Archives NK/9/18).

^d Source Swemmer and Mmethi (2016). These figures represent the upper salary scales within these respective Paterson graded salary bands.

*Rounded to closest whole number.

Where the average income polarization between high income earners is around five times greater than that of low income earners in contemporary South Africa, and where income polarization is one of the key drivers of inequality (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/World Bank 2018), these historical differences in incomes was not only racially biased it also speaks to the degree of inequality that existed in the Park – that inequality in the Park was, and continues to be, substantively greater than the rest of an already unequal South African society. There is preliminary evidence that this income polarization between high- and low-income earners in the Park continues to be as great as it was at the turn of the 20th Century (see Table 3.4) and that it continues to be racially biased despite the end of apartheid. In a self-published book exposé, *Untold Stories about the Dark Side of the Kruger National Park*, written by a former senior human resources manager in the KNP, Risenga Waka

Matelakengisa (2020) highlights the problem of significantly large variances in salaries within a salary band for the year 2012. In some instances, this variance in salary within a salary band was as high as 200 percent where an employee could potentially earn three times the monthly salary of another employee on the same salary band. Matelakengisa (2020) contends that such discrepancies were particularly prominent between white and black employees. It is this absence of a *decent* wage, its racialized qualities and extreme wealth concentration that make South Africa *the* most unequal country in the world in terms of wage distribution⁵⁸ and in the Kruger this measure of inequality exceeds these already ignominious benchmarks.

Rations

The meagre salaries were wholly inadequate to sustain workers. While workers who still resided in the Park could grow limited crops for sustenance on the plots allocated to them, it was not sufficient to sustain them. This often brought workers in conflict with Park administrators for illegally hunting wildlife, fishing or harvesting meat from fresh predator kills without permission. At times such indiscretions could mean deportation for workers of Mozambican origin or eviction from the Park in the form of a trek pass for those who resided in the Park. Park administrators were aware of the hardships African workers faced and in attempt to mitigate this, it instituted a system of food rations in 1945.

our native staff is as a whole underpaid, so that it becomes increasingly difficult either to engage good boys or retain those we who more and more leave our service to better themselves outside...[t]he hardest case is that if the native rangers who ...are expected to supply their own rations...and the numerous native population in the Park in those days were able to grow abundance [of] grain under more favourable climatic conditions...I now make the following recommendations...[a]ll native employes [sic] to be supplied with free rations and free quarters.⁵⁹ [emphasis added]

This directive from the park warden came in the midst of severe food shortages and high maize prices at the end of the Second World War. It shows an uncanny awareness of the inequalities and the depravations suffered by Africans living and working in the Park. Despite this awareness, Park administrators still disassociated itself from the very acts of proletarianization and displacement that they themselves so fervently

pursued a mere decade earlier. The author also distances himself from the fact that African staff were being underpaid and the active hand Park administrators had in purposefully suppressing salaries of African staff.

The use of rations continued well into the 1980s and 1990s when officials provided Park-wide rations for all its African employees in the form of elephant and hippopotamus meat. It is uncertain what prompted a series of grievances lodged by workers from across the Park but in handwritten notes from the various camps or *betaalpunte* (pay stations) as they were called, they all note their distaste for the meat rations that were supplied and that the choice of meat was culturally inappropriate.

You give us the thing that we don't eat eg. elephant hippopotamus...the food is not delicious, the meat is always elephant hippopotamus and its innards...the food that we eat in the kitchen is not good...there is elephant and hippopotamus meat but we don't eat it. The soup is not good...the elephant and hippopotamus the people don't eat it at all...the food in the kitchen is not delicious at all.⁶⁰ [own translation]

In some instances, only the watery soup was served and the meat remained to form the basis for future meals, resulting in it going rotten. The meat provided came at little additional cost to the Park authorities. The lethal control or culling of elephant and hippopotami were part of its wildlife management policy and Park administrators sought to harness this resource to ameliorate the low salaries they were paying their African staff. Mkhize (2012) also notes that low wages were mitigated by a system of ration payments on colonial settler farms. It was also a means to reduce the cost of labour in terms of cash wages and in many instances the payment in kind was more important to farm labourers than cash wages (*ibid.*). It can only be deduced that this was so because of the utter remoteness of some farms, the strict movement control imposed on workers and the bureaucracy and problematic social relations involved in attaining a 'permission document' or 'pass'. However, as Chinguno (2013) asserts, supplemental income in the form of rations, bonuses, overtime allowances and living out allowances are all indicative of a cheap labour regime and it is in this regard that Kruger showed an uncanny similarity to, and even surpassed, the labour practices that typified a cheap labour regime elsewhere in the country.

Worker Compounds

The discipline of labour geography has done much to advance our understanding of the manner in which technologies of housing for labour on the mines in South Africa was a key aspect of labour control and the devastating effects it held for the black mineworkers and their communities (Bezuidenhout and Buhlungu 2010, Smith 2003). The compound system was a particular technology of labour control developed under the labour intensive mining industry in South Africa with the discovery of diamonds in the late 1860s. The barracks-like, single sex accommodation allowed for the rigorous searching of African workers, which fostered much resentment. While the compounds on the diamond mines were primarily to control the theft of diamonds, the compounds on the gold mines on the Witwatersrand was specifically designed to ensure labour discipline and restrict worker movements due to the high number of desertions as a result of the poor health conditions and low wages (see Van Onselen 1976). The managerial dream of total labour control has been and is very much replicated in various forms in the KNP, as movement was and still is, highly regulated. Labour control through technologies of housing have not been fully described in conservation to better understand its rationale and in what ways it produces and reproduces inequalities in the conservation workplace.

The Park continued to deploy the notion that it was a controlled, hermetically sealed space and that it was these features that set it apart from other labour-intensive industries – such as agriculture - in terms of its ability to control the movement of black labour. Despite the increasing clamping down on the use of Mozambican labour in the face of internal unrest and the threat of insurgency from Mozambique, the Park exaggerated these features of itself as a controlled space.

Seeing that the Kruger Park is a closed and controlled area, it would not be possible for these Mozambican workers to abscond and seek work elsewhere.⁶¹ [own translation, emphasis added]

Part of its ability to make these claims was the use of an extensive system of labour compounds as a technology to control its own black labour force. It also showed a particular animosity towards black women and children. This desire to show exceptional levels of control of black children and women was not only outlined in its own regulations but it was also stipulated in the National Parks Act. It was thus illegal to

(xxiii) accommodate any Black child in a compound or on premises in a White staff township.⁶²

In terms of the control of black women, especially those wives and companions of male Mozambican workers, it was especially draconian:

Bantu women of Portuguese origin will be allowed for limited periods to visit their husbands in the Park under the following conditions... No Portuguese Bantu woman shall during the tourist season visit any Bantus that are stationed within a ten mile radius of a rest camp... No Portuguese Bantu woman (except in cases of severe illness) will be allowed to visit any place in the Republic outside the borders of the Park... No Bantu woman will be allowed to accept any work of whatever nature in the Park... Before any Portuguese Bantu woman is allowed to cross the border of the Park, aside from the aforementioned conditions, must also be in possession of written proof from her husband's employer, with the stamp of this office or that of the section ranger through whose section access is desired, that she indeed has permission to visit said bantu... Portuguese bantu dependants between the ages of 10 and 18 shall under no circumstances be allowed to enter the Park... all Portuguese bantu women and children [under the age of ten] who accompany them must, at least 14 days before they enter the Park, be vaccinated against smallpox.⁶³ [own translation]

In effect the Park sought to replicate the control of labour as was practiced on the mines (Meskell 2012). Furthermore, the Park again sought to create a differentiation within African worker ranks by allowing the wives of field rangers to visit for thirty days whereas the wives of other workers could only visit for seven days.⁶⁴ It prided itself on the total control of the movement of blacks and it was completely blinded to its consequences for people and the role it played in fracturing family life. It is part of a broader logic that the labour in its employ is detached from a community, family or even the notion of personhood, and that their only utility lay in work. It is a logic that continues to see workers as assets or components of a machine that makes Kruger work, and if the component part is broken, it can merely be replaced. It also demonstrates how permissions for movement are closely tied to relations, where the authority of any movement was devolved to the discretion of the section ranger and that relations are embedded in the structural conditions of work. It is inconceivable that section rangers would extend these so-called privileges to those workers who did not reproduce the desired form of labour value (see also Chapters 2 and 5).

Lynn Meskell (2012) and Risenga Matelakengisa (2020) offer probably the most thorough and damning account of the racially segregated living conditions of workers in the Park that has changed little after the fall of apartheid. The accommodation facilities of low paid African workers in the Park is generally referred to as the ‘compound’ or ‘*kampong*’ (ibid.). During my year-long ethnography in the KNP, I stayed in some of these compounds in single room accommodation units. My initial assessment of the facilities was as follows.

The room can’t be more than 3x3 metres, its tiny and incredibly hot. The ablutions are shared and seemingly not cleaned on a regular basis and there are communal cooking facilities...the doors don’t lock and showers have no tiles... fortunately I have my mosquito net.⁶⁵

There was no space for much more than a single bed. However, to make it as liveable as possible and to replicate a modicum of privacy, some field rangers had a television set on a chest of drawers, a refrigerator and a makeshift table top with a two-plate stove and a kettle all crammed into the already insubstantial space. Furthermore, these limits became even more pronounced when a field ranger hosted his wife and children for a period of time. It offered absolutely no privacy for intimate relations and to overcome this, the visiting children of staff in this particular ranger outpost, would be housed in a safari tents – an indication of yet another failed attempt at expediency and a low-cost attempt to house workers. Snakes or even predators like leopard breaching the camp fences posed an ever-present danger and there was a constant lack of peace of mind for these parents while their children were housed in these tents. Even in the early spring of October 2016, with the temperatures in the low thirty-degree Celsius range at night, made sleeping in these rooms distinctly uncomfortable. I could only imagine the degree of discomfort during the height of summer when temperatures could nudge the 50-degree Celsius mark and humidity levels in the high nineties. The only way to escape this discomfort was to open a window and hope a breeze would bring some relief. However, opening a window meant unfettered access to the healthy mosquito population in the Park and with it the risk of contracting malaria without access to an adequate mosquito net – the mosquito screens on the windows having long ago fallen into disrepair.

The cooking facilities were communal and they were outside. In summer, when cooking at night, the lights attracted millions of insects

making cooking and eating outside distinctly unpleasant, more so when the weather conditions were adverse. Ablution facilities were also communal. In the 1980s there were not even separate ablution facilities for female employees. Lynn Meskell (2012) noted the common sight of people walking around wrapped in towels as they were making their way from the communal showers and that the foremost grievance of compound residents was the lack of privacy. Some of the accommodation on offer, house eight single beds in a dormitory style room, offering no possibility of privacy (Meskell 2006). This lack of privacy was also raised in a list of grievances 1988 by workers, stating that the doors have no keys, some rooms have no doors at all and the windows have no curtains.⁶⁶ This total lack of privacy was also a considerable point of contention for workers on the mines, who attempted to seal off their portions of the dormitory with rags and old blankets (Van Onselen 1976). For field rangers getting ready for an early morning patrol at dawn meant getting up by 4 or 5 o' clock in the morning to avoid the throng caused when other staff members were readying themselves for the day.

The centre of compound life was the shebeen or drinking hall and in the same list of grievances from pay stations in 1988, one group of workers remarked that the kitchen should open before the shebeen so that staff can have an opportunity to eat before they drink.⁶⁷ Meskell (2012) also recounts the problems of gender-based violence, drugs and underage girls trafficked as sex workers in the compounds. In my interactions with Kruger staff, one respondent who served on the living quarters committee, remarked that the liquor outlet is open at ten in the morning saying "what do you think people are going to do when that's the only form of entertainment?".⁶⁸ The notion of using alcohol as a form of entertainment for African staff has not changed since the days of apartheid. He also lamented that "kids have nowhere to go, pregnancy is increasing, there's no entertainment".⁶⁹ Matelakengisa (2020), the Park's first black senior human resource manager, also recounts the hostile reception he received when he was first appointed. On arrival he was housed in a tourist chalet. The reason he was not housed in an existing vacant house in the staff village, that at that time still exclusively housed only white employees, was because staff members living adjacent to those vacant houses were not happy about having a black neighbour. A two-bedroom flatlet was eventually constructed on the periphery of the staff

village for him (*ibid.*), a space that symbolically also represented the position blacks occupied and continue to occupy in the Park.

In contrast, the senior staff village in Skukuza (as opposed to using the signifier of compound), which was formerly the exclusive enclave of white staff, have a set of tennis courts, a twenty-five-metre swimming pool, a nine-hole golf course and accompanying club house and restaurant, a multi-purpose cricket oval/rugby field/athletics track, a squash court, an extensive botanical nursery and a gym. It also houses a Dutch Reformed Church, a church that provided the scriptural underpinnings for racial segregation and the non-miscegenation of the Afrikaner people (Ritner 1967). While these facilities are now open to all staff, this was not always the case. Furthermore, for black staff living in the compounds, access to these facilities are not as simple as it may seem. These facilities are geographically separated from the compounds where the majority of black staff live. Where they do not have access to their private vehicles for transport, they are further excluded as walking is not only prohibited but the danger of encountering dangerous animals is ever present. Sporting and leisure facilities in close proximity of the compounds for African staff remain sparse and is almost exclusively limited to a soccer field, some grassed but not nearly as verdant as the golf course or cricket field, in many instances it is just a dust field. For staff living in remote outposts, special transport and special days need to be set aside to travel to a main camp in the region to participate in football matches.

Today, field rangers and other junior staff live in a mix of compounded accommodation - single rooms; single rooms with kitchenettes; tents; eight bed dormitories; park homes (prefabricated units); in one informal conversation with a field ranger he lived in a disused storeroom for six months after his appointment before a single room became available;⁷⁰ or, in a minority of instances, two-bedroom houses for long-serving junior staff, houses which include its own ablutions and kitchenette. While these last-named houses are available, they accommodate only a small proportion of staff with long service or senior positions in the A, B and C Paterson grade bands. From a list of staff housing collated in 2017, seventy seven percent of all accommodation types in Skukuza is comprised of single room accommodation, all occupied by black workers.⁷¹ The grounds of these compounds resemble “desolate wastelands with rubbish everywhere and overflowing trash bins...the entire effect is overcrowded and squalid” (Meskell 2012: 359-360). In

contrast to the staff village and rest camps, no one is employed to service these workers living in the compounds and the situation is not, as is often assumed, that workers lack industry or are too lazy to clean their own living spaces (ibid.). The housing provided to section rangers and senior managers stand in stark contrast - large multiple-roomed homes, full-sized kitchens, bathrooms, built-in cabinetry, storerooms, garages or lean-to's for vehicles, offices, adequately fenced manicured gardens with lush lawns and mature trees, swimming pools and tennis courts in some instances and in other instances positioned over magnificent views. Furthermore, many section rangers, particularly white section rangers, remain in one section for many years, in some cases close to two decades. This is especially so where these outposts are situated close to the boundary adjacent to large towns which affords the spouse of that section ranger to work. Aside from the opportunity to earn additional household income, such arrangements prevent the fracturing of these families and affords them the possibility to experience family life. It is not a privilege extended to black section rangers, many of them lamenting the separation from their spouses who may work in the tourism sector in other parts of the Park, which could entail many hours of driving after work or separation for long periods of time. The daily inconveniences, lack of privacy, dangers, restrictions on movement, the stark contrast in leisure facilities, exclusion of and separation from spouses and children and the dehumanising conditions encoded in the housing for African staff reveal - to paraphrase Lynn Meskell (2012: 182) - a blindness and racial prejudice where the limits of care were extended only to Europeans and to nature and the plight of African workers is largely peripheral.

3.8 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has sought to add to the critical scholarship of black labour in the KNP. Its purpose is to show in what ways these historical formations of labour in the KNP can help to inform our understanding of contemporary labour relations and concomitant ranger practices in the KNP that are explored elsewhere in this thesis. Its purpose is also to inform an understanding of whether the Park's treatment of black labour was in any way differentiated from the harshness of the colonial and apartheid workplace regimes found elsewhere in the South African economy. It has demonstrated the ways in which black labour was

produced through the proletarianization of peasants living in the Park through the imposition of taxes and a specific mode of primitive accumulation. The purpose of these dual techniques of social control by the colonial authorities was to compel peasants into waged labour to satisfy an urgent demand for cheap labour in the nascent colonial political economy. The failure to pay taxes meant residents faced the threat of eviction from their homes and lands that were essential for social reproduction. The specific mode of primitive accumulation included the killing of all cattle and other livestock under the guise of veterinary control. This singular act had a profound impact on the social lives of peasants, it severed them not only from a means of subsistence and a crucial component of rural food security but it formed an indispensable means of exchange in a premodern political economy; it embodied household wealth and social status; and cattle formed a cultural reference point for rural life. Furthermore, any rightful claims to the land that they occupied for generations was nullified and the reclassification of residents as squatters further cemented their precarity and uncertain future. Furthermore, these residents were also indentured to provide free labour to Park authorities for thirty days of each year to maintain their residential status and failure to do so also meant the threat of eviction.

Crucially, these coinciding modes of social control, profoundly fractured the social relations of black workers and residents in the Park from their existing social worlds, bringing them not only into racialized paternalistic relationships with white game rangers but also marked an epistemic shock that shifted their deep reverence of cattle to a reverence of wildlife. It marked a significant transformation in the identity formation and production of black labour in the Park. It serves as a counter narrative to the many community-based conservation initiatives that celebrate how African communities have come to value wildlife within the existing wildlife economy, marking a victory for the future of conservation. However, it obscures the disturbing history of violence that led to this transformation and that African communities have valued nature in ways that predate the colonial encounter.

This chapter also shows that while black labour in the Park was being produced through violent means, it was simultaneously invisibilized, that black workers were never seen as playing a part of the administration and conservation of wildlife and wild landscapes. Instead, their identities were erased, except in the case of a handful of special rangers, and the sacrifices

they made in the preservationist exercise was seen as lamentable but necessary, that it was instead the primacy of the dignity of work that elevated them from tribal premodernity.

Furthermore, it points to a largely ignored role the Park played in the supply of cheap migrant labour to the South African economy and that its role was not peripheral or incidental but that it played an active role as an agent in the vast labour recruiting system. As an agent in this vast labour recruiting system, the Park was able to position itself favourably in terms of access to cheap and highly exploitable Mozambican labour. While it created a veneer that this predilection was founded on essentialized tropes of the 'ideal native', it was precisely the precarity of this class of worker that made it highly exploitable to Park authorities. Park officials did not hesitate to leverage this precarity for its own ends with the ever-present threat of deportation when migrant workers did not meet the required levels of productivity. However, when the state showed a greater disinterest in 'tropical labour' because of the fear of fomenting unrest due to rising domestic unemployment and internal migration to white areas or as an ostensible threat to national security as citizens to an enemy state, it was the Park that mobilized to position itself as an arbiter of care for these workers. It argues that this show of solidarity was a misrepresentation, that it was more concerned what a mass dismissal of Mozambican labour would mean for its own security in the form of intensified poaching.

It also draws on the literature on paternalism on the South African farm and how these relations are also mirrored in enclaved spaces such as the Kruger. It shows how the image of the white game ranger was elevated in these relations and how black field rangers reproduced qualities such as loyalty and bravery to elevate their value in the minds of their white overseers. The perpetual threat of deportation to Mozambique undergoing consecutive regimes of repression meant that Mozambican workers had to reproduce those qualities most sought after in African workers, namely docility, obedience and loyalty. These insights form a starting point to understand contemporary relations in the Park and that they structure field ranger actions in important ways.

Lastly it shows that the Park did not represent a counterpoint to the brutal, cheap and exploitative labour regime found elsewhere in the South African workplace. In many respects, it matched and even superseded these already draconian practices. This is evidenced in its persistent use of below subsistence salaries and that income polarization in the Park has

remained stubbornly stable for over one hundred years. It shows that the contemporary income polarization in the Park exceeds the wage disparities that mark inequality in the rest of the country by a factor of three. It also shows that it used rations to ameliorate the below subsistence wages but that even these measures were marked by contestation and the poor quality and culturally inappropriate nature of the rations. Lastly it shows that, like many other coercive labour-intensive industries in the country, that it mirrored the strict control over labour movement through the use of technologies of housing in the form of worker compounds. It shows that it instituted draconian measures of control, especially over the wives and children of black workers and that the presence of their families was contingent on amicable relations with their white supervisors. It shows that these forms of control and the inhumane modalities that typify these forms of housing continue today. Thus, the claim that the Park was a ‘friend of the native’ was a gross misrepresentation. Instead the systematic production, erasure and control of labour matched and, in certain instances, exceeded the brutality that characterized the colonial and apartheid workplace regimes.

Notes

¹ Skukuza Archives NK/9/6 Bantoesake Plakkers [Native Affairs Squatters]1930-1962

² The derogatory term ‘huiskaffir’ is the Afrikaans to denote house (huis) or resident black (kaffir being the derogatory term to refer to black Africans) and is seen as a form of hate speech in post-apartheid South Africa.

³ “Taxing the poor in order to compel them to labour at work they dislike at a rate of wage far below the market price is, I believe, an economic doctrine purely of South African origin” Hansard South African Native Races, 28 February 1906 vol. 152 cc1212-47 [Online] Available at: <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1906/feb/28/south-african-native-races> (Accessed 12 March 2022).

⁴ Skukuza Archives NK/9/6 Bantoesake/Plakkers 1930-1962.

⁵ Skukuza Archives NK/9/6 Bantoesake/Plakkers 1930-1962. ‘Squatter’s Rent: Native Forage Dingane’, 11 January 1935.

⁶ Skukuza Archives NK/9/6 Bantoesake/Plakkers 1930-1962. ‘Re: Native Squatter’s Service’, 12 March 1952.

⁷ Skukuza Archives NK/9/7 Bantoesake Mosambiek Bantoes [Native Affairs Mozambique Natives] 1954-1974 'Beheer oor bantoes uit Portugees Oos-Afrika wat die Republiek via die Nasionale Krugerwildtuin binnekom' [Control of natives from Portuguese East Africa who enter the Republic via the Kruger National Park].

⁸ This was a continuation of the 'permission documents' or passes required to be carried by slaves in the late 18th Century in the Cape instituted by the Dutch colonists to act as proof that they were given permission to travel outside of the farms owned by the Dutch settlers. The Pass Law of 1866 was enacted by the Transvaal government to control the movement of any Africans outside of the designated area of residence for Africans and could lead to arrest without the necessary permission from an employer. This system of passes continued to regulate the movement of African labour after the discovery of diamonds and gold in the latter part of the 19th Century; the Union Government after 1910; and the Pact Government of 1929 that sought greater segregation between whites and Africans. The Great Depression of 1929-1932 led to great hardships, more so for Africans who were severely restricted by the pass system in their ability to find waged labour. This led to a pass burning campaign on the 16th December led by the Communist Party of South Africa and the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union before it was crushed in 1931. After a brief period of respite, an even more draconian system of passes was brought into force by the newly elected apartheid government in the form of the Natives Act of 1952, requiring Africans to carry a range of documents including a photograph, place of residence, employment, tax and criminal records to enforce stricter movement control. In 1960 both the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and the African National Congress (ANC) embarked on an anti-pass drive which culminated in a PAC led protest to the police station in Sharpeville on the 21 March where protesters would turn themselves in to be arrested in defiance of the pass laws. The police shot and killed 69 and injuring 180 people in an event that became known as the Sharpeville Massacre. The Pass laws were eventually repealed in 1986 after an attempt to totally crush anti-apartheid protests after the declaration of a state of emergency in July 1985. It is estimated that between 15 to 20 million Africans were arrested for violation of pass laws since 1800. See [Online] Available at: <https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/pass-laws-south-africa-1800-1994> (Accessed 8 April 2020).

⁹ Skukuza Archives NK/9/7 Bantoesake Mosambiek Bantoes [Native Affairs Mozambique Natives] 1954-1974 'Beheer oor bantoes uit Portugees Oos-Afrika wat die Republiek via die Nasionale Krugerwildtuin binnekom' [Control of natives from Portuguese East Africa who enter the Republic via the Kruger National Park].

¹⁰ Skukuza Archives NK/9/6 Bantoesake/Plakkers 1930-1962. 'P.E.A. "Mafortini" slip into S.A.: Thousands trek the Kruger Park paths', *Sunday Times*, 8 November 1959.

¹¹ This was by no means the only notable footpath in the Park. A further six main footpaths leading to native ranger pickets viz. Pafuri, Shigwedzi gorge to Dipene picket, Malamala picket, Nwanetsi picket, Saliji picket (this footpath was named Mangalane footpath) and Godleni picket were used by migrants. See Skukuza Archives NK/9/7 Bantoesake Mosambiek Bantoes [Native Affairs Mozambique Natives] 1954-1974 'Memorandum insake die beveiliging van die oosgrens' [Memorandum regarding the safeguarding of the eastern boundary].

¹² Skukuza Archives NK/9/18 Bantoesake/Veldwagters 1945-1974.

¹³ 'Did you know?', *SANParks News* undated [Online] Available at: <https://www.sanparks.org/parks/kruger/tourism/history.php> (Accessed 20 May 2020).

¹⁴ 'Did you know?', *SANParks News* undated [Online] Available at: <https://www.sanparks.org/parks/kruger/tourism/history.php> (Accessed 20 May 2020).

¹⁵ See the Cattle Site, 'Foot and Mouth' [Online] Available at: <https://www.thecattlesite.com/diseaseinfo/243/footandmouth/> (Accessed 1 October 2020).

¹⁶ A note on page numbering in the digital version of 'South African Eden' (2008) - the page numbers differ when using a single or double page view. Here I have adopted the single page view.

¹⁷ See 'Faces of Africa -Protector of Kruger National Park' [Online] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mg8rYz6zdOo> (Accessed 29 September 2020).

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Skukuza Archives NK/9/6 Bantoesake Plakkers [Native Affairs Squatter].

²⁰ Zarwan (1976) compares the Xhosa cattle killings in 1856-57 where the killing of an estimated 150 000 to 200 000 head of cattle and the destruction of grain and seed stores following the prophecy of a spiritual prophet-diviner was akin to Xhosa national suicide. The turmoil of dislocation and disruption that the Xhosa people suffered from the conflict with white settlers in the region precipitated the mass killing of cattle which was seen as an act of purification in Xhosa cosmology to deliver them from the societal disruption of colonisation. In effect, it was hoped that by destroying their means of subsistence, the suffering would unite the Xhosa nation to overthrow the British colonists. The mass killing of cattle, however, led to further suffering and starvation leading to the death of an estimated 20 000 to

25 000 people and the mass migration of thousands to the Cape Colony looking for food and work and the eventual subjugation of the Xhosa by the British.

²¹ Skukuza Archives NK/9/18 Bantoesake Veldwagters [Native Affairs Field Rangers]. 1938 to 1946. Letter from park warden, 24 November 1939. “I am always nervous of the effect of our native rangers getting convicted for actions performed while carrying out their duties in making them careless and slack. It is so much easier for them to take the easy path, especially when they are near a crowded district and do not desire to be ostracised” [emphasis added].

²² See the rare biographical documentary of an African field ranger, Charlie Nkuna, ‘Faces of Africa -Protector of Kruger National Park’ [Online] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mg8rYz6zdOo> (Accessed 29 September 2020).

²³ In November 2013, Dr U. du V. ‘Tol’ Pienaar was awarded the SANParks lifetime achievement award (posthumously) for serving a total of 35 years in SANParks, 32 of which were served in the KNP and held the position of Chief Director of SANParks from 1987 until his retirement in 1991 [Online] Available at: <https://www.sanparks.org/about/news/?id=55376> (Accessed 26 December 2020).

²⁴ A sjambok was “...modelled after the original which was use [sic] for a cattle prod, a whip, a riding crop and a means of self-protection. Unlike most western style whips, the Sjambok is not plaited from thin leather thongs. Its considerable reach, lightning speed and devastating impact have built it quite a reputation as a sure defence against deadly snakes. Since the Sjambok is swung like a rod or stick and not cracked like a conventional western style whip, the weight, speed and flexibility of the Sjambok’s lash does all the work and little skill is required to wield it effectively. Sjambok features a thick, beefy lash, injection molded from polypropylene and equipped with a soft comfortable Kraton handle designed to resemble braided leather”. [Online] Available at: <http://drgaurilowe.com/blog/sjamboksouthafrica/trauma> (Accessed 20 March 2020).

²⁵ Informal conversation with retired Kruger trails ranger and section ranger, April 2016.

²⁶ Skukuza Archives NK/9/7 Bantoesake: Mosambiekers [Native Affairs: Mozambicans] “die werwing van swartes vanuit Mozambiek getsaak het nie, en gaandeweg groot getalle van hierdie mense onwettig in diens geneem het en dikwels teen minimum vergoeding en onder haglike en onhigiëniese lewensomstandighede” [own translation].

²⁷ Informal conversation with KNP field ranger corporal, January 2017. “’n wit man het altyd ‘n gooie plan en die swart man, haai, hy kan nie dink vir die werk van ‘n veldwagter”. The same sentiment and reverence for white rangers was also

expressed by another field ranger corporal, also with 26 years' service in the Park. He remarked that things were better when white section rangers were in charge and that black section rangers are just interested in 'chasing' money and are not serious about the job, informal conversation with KNP field ranger corporal, October 2016.

²⁸ Semi-structured interview with a KNP section ranger, March 2017.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ There seems to have been a total of seven formal W.N.L.A. recruiting centres/rest camps in the park, namely Makhuba (Letaba), M'quinine, Spanplek, Isweni (N'wanetsi), Shikololo (Punda Maria), Klopfontein and Pafuri. Pafuri was the most important of these recruitment centres/rest camps due to its position on the international border with Mozambique and its proximity to Soekmekaar, the farm which was effectively the W.N.L.A. headquarters to the west of the Park where labour recruits decamped before being transferred to the rail station at Louis Trichardt for their final onward journey to the mines on the Witwatersrand (see Pienaar, 2012; University of Johannesburg Library: Archives and Special Collections). Boabab Hill - a tiny hillock with a large baobab tree (*Adansonia digitata*) – in the far northern Nxanatseni region of the Park also served as an informal camping or 'outspan' location in the movement of African labour between Mozambique and Soekmekaar. This site is also commemorated with a plaque, paying homage to the efforts of Paul Neergaard, the manager of Soekmekaar W.N.L.A. recruiting station.

³² Despite the Witwatersrand having produced the highest tonnage of gold in the world, the grade of gold ore was so low that the only feasible way to extract it was to mobilize a large and cheap labour force (see Hansen, 2008).

³³ Later the W.N.L.A. amalgamated with the N.R.C. and came to be known as The Employment Bureau of Africa (TEBA).

³⁴ Skukuza Archives NK/9/7 Bantoesake Mosambiek Bantoes [Native Affairs Mozambique Natives] 1954-1974 'Beheer oor bantoes uit Portugees Oos-Afrika wat die Republiek via die Nasionale Krugerwildtuin binnekom' [Control of natives from Portuguese East Africa who enter the Republic via the Kruger National Park].

³⁵ University of Johannesburg Library: Archives and Special Collections TEBA/WNLA 46/B/1 Pad 2.

³⁶ Skukuza Archives NK/9/7 Bantoesake Mosambiek Bantoes [Native Affairs Mozambique Natives] 1954-1974 Raad van Kuratore vir Nasionale Parke aan Alle Permanente Personeel in die Krugerwildtuin Werksreël No. 99 Portugees Bantoes [National Parks Board of Curators to All Permanent Employees in the Kruger National Park Work Rule No.99 Portuguese Natives]. Circa 1960.

³⁷ Skukuza Archives NK/9/7 Letter from Portuguese Institute of Labour in S.A. to Department of Bantu Administration, 20 October 1966.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Skukuza Archives NK/9/18 Bantoesake: Veldwagters [Native Affairs: Field Rangers] 1945-1974 Memorandum insake Bantoeveldwagtersdienste in die Nasionale Krugerwildtuin' [Memorandum regarding Native Ranger Services in the Kruger National Park]. "Die algemene mening is ook dat die Shangaan afkomstig uit Mosambiek, oor die algemeen 'n beter bantoeveldwagter uitmaak as sy ragenoot afkomstig vanuit die Republiek. Hierdie mening is gegrond op die ondervinding dat die Mosambiek Shangaan beter gedissiplineerd is, 'n beter kennis van die veld het en beried is om harder te werk vir die salaris wat hy kry. By ontleding van hierdie verskynsel, wild it vir my voorkom asof die hele aangeleentheid grootliks om die salaris en werksgeleentheids draai. Die bantoeeloonstruktuur en werksgeleentheids in Mosambiek is oor die algemeen redelik lag en vergelyk swak teenoor dié in die Wildtuin. Die aanbod uit Mosambiek is dus groot en keuring kan op 'n redelik streng basis geskied. Met die huidige ontwikkelingstempo in die Laeveld, is werksgeleentheids uitstekend, salarisse hoog en vergelyk die loonstruktuur van die Wildtuin uiters swak. Die aanbod is derhalwe klein en van 'n swak gehalte".

⁴¹ Skukuza Archives NK/9/7 Bantoesake Mosambiek Bantoes [Native Affairs Mozambique Natives] 1954-1974 Letter to All Rangers from Office of the Caretaker, KNP, 27 October 1960.

⁴² Skukuza Archives NK/9/7 Bantoesake Mosambiekers [Native Affairs Mozambicans] 1971 to 1995 'Onwettige indiensneming van vreemde swartes' [Illegal employment of alien blacks] Letter from Commissioner General for the Shangaan-Tsonga Nation to park warden, 4 August 1984.

⁴³ Skukuza Archives NK/9/7 Bantoesake Mosambiekers [Native Affairs Mozambicans] 1971 to 1995 'Onwettige indiensneming van vreemde swartes' [Illegal employment of alien blacks] Letter from park warden to Commissioner General of the Shangaan-Tsonga Nation, 19 August 1983.

⁴⁴ Skukuza Archives NK/9/7 Bantoesake Mosambiekers [Native Affairs Mozambicans] 1971 to 1995 'Navraag – Mosambiek swartes' [Inquiry – Mozambique blacks] Letter from KNP Public Relations Officer: Native Affairs to park warden, 28 August 1985.

⁴⁵ Ibid. Recruitment from TBVC states like Venda was also conditional to special agreements and labour from these states were also regarded as alien. Special permission would be required from the relevant commissioners general and in this case it was unclear whether the KNP indeed had the necessary permission from the Venda authorities.

⁴⁶ Skukuza Archives NK/9/7 Bantoesake Mosambiekers [Native Affairs Mozambicans] 1971 to 1995 'Navraag – Mosambiek swartes' [Inquiry – Mozambique blacks] Letter from KNP Public Relations Officer: Native Affairs to park warden, 28 August 1985.

⁴⁷ Skukuza Archives NK/9/18 Bantoesake: Veldwagters [Native Affairs: Field Rangers] 1945-1974 'Memorandum insake Bantoeveldwagterdienste in die Nasionale Krugerwildtuin' [Memorandum regarding Native Ranger Services in the Kruger National Park].

⁴⁸ Skukuza Archives NK/13/4 Vertroulik Beveiligingsplan [Confidential Security Plan] 1987-1992. 'Mosambiekwerkers van die Nasionale Krugerwildtuin: Die verskaffing van permanente verblyf' [Mozambican workers of the Kruger National Park: The issuing of permanent residence], 27 April 1987.

⁴⁹ Skukuza Archives NK/9/7 Bantoesake Mosambiekers [Native Affairs Mozambicans] 1971 to 1995 'Agreement entered between National Parks Board (Represented by J C Maritz) and Messrs L F Placements (herein called the Agent)', 24 April 1984.

⁵⁰ Skukuza Archives NK/9/7 Letter from Chief Director NPB to Director General Homeland Affairs, 13 July 1987. "My Raad word egter maar telkens weer gekonfronteer met die moontlikheid dat hierdie werkers gedeporteer staan te word...Die noodsaaklikheid (in landsbelang) van die behoud, in die Krugerwildtuin, van 'n klein groepie geskoolde en hoogs betroubare en lojale werkers word duidelik uitgespel in meegaande stukke, wat opgestel is deur die Parkhoof van die Krugerwildtuin. U sal merk dat die dienste van sowat 325 swart werkers (waarvan die meerderheid 15 jaar en langer in ons diens is) nie net onontbeerlik (indispensable) is en 'n sleutelrol vervul in die behoorlike bestuur van die Krugerwildtuin nie, dog ook 'n belangrike skakel vorm in strategie wat die SA Weermag en SA Polisie Teeninsurgensie Eenhede, deur die plaaslike GBS, tans hier op ons oosgrens met Mosambiek ontwikkel. Die waarde van hierdie groep swartes vir die Nasionale Krugerwildtuin, maar ook in belang van landsveiligheid, is inderdaad so hoog, dat al by herhaling deur verskillende instansies, ondermeer deur Admiraal Edwards, en die SA Weermag aanduiding aan my Raad gegee is dat permanente verflyfsregte vir hierdie werkers en hulle gesinne in die RSA noodsaaklik geag word. Tot dusver het egter nog niks hiervan gekom nie, en die swaard van moontlike deportasie nog steeds oor hulle koppe hang...Ek is oortuig, uit my jarelange verbintenis met hierdie werkers, dat hulle vir ons land geen bedreiging of probleme inhou nie – intendeel kan die verskaffing van verblyfregte aan hulle die RSA slegs voordele vir alle betrokke instansies inhou".

⁵¹ Skukuza Archives NK/13/4 Vertroulik Beveiligingsplan [Confidential Security Plan] 1987-1992. 'Mosambiekwerkers van die Nasionale Krugerwildtuin: Die

verskaffing van permanente verblyf [Mozambican workers of the Kruger National Park: The issuing of permanent residence], 27 April 1987.

⁵² Skukuza Archives NK/13/4 Vertroulik Beveiligingsplan [Confidential Security Plan] 1987-1992. ‘Mosambiekwerkers van die Nasionale Krugerwildtuin: Die verskaffing van permanente verblyf [Mozambican workers of the Kruger National Park: The issuing of permanent residence], 27 April 1987. “...dit katastrofiese gevolge vir die bestuur van die Wildtuin [...] hê”.

⁵³ Skukuza Archives NK/9/7 Letter from the Department of Justice, 24 April 1980 ‘Die Staat teen die Kruger Nasionale Park’ [The State against the KNP] indicating that the State had withdrawn its case against the KNP.

⁵⁴ Skukuza Archives NK/9/7 Bantoesake Mosambiekers 1971-1995 ‘Staking van swart werkers op Skukuza in die Krugerwildtuin’ Letter from Chief Director NPB to Director General Homeland Affairs, 12 March 1990. “Hierdie mense sou baie minder vatbaar wees vir politieke manipulasie vanuit geledere van radikale linksgesindes aangesien hulle reeds die elende van ‘n Marxistiese stelsel in Mosambiek ervaar het. Hulle sou derhalwe, volgens ons mening, ‘n besonder stabiliseerende uitwerking hê onder ons swart werkerskorps wat nog nie met dié dinge kennis gemaak het nie... [n]adat toestande weer tot normal teruggekeer het of sekere projekte voltooi is, kan die werkers teruggeneem word na hulle kampe in Gazankulu”.

⁵⁵ Skukuza Archives NK/9/18 Bantoesake: Veldwagters [Native Affairs: Field Rangers] 1945-1974 ‘Memorandum insake Bantoeveldwagtersdienste in die Nasionale Krugerwildtuin’ [Memorandum regarding Native Ranger Services in the Kruger National Park].

⁵⁶ Meer (1985) reports that the unskilled wage rate on the mines were between £3-4 per month while indentured labour in Natal was between 10 shillings and £1 for men and 5 shillings for women. In the Park, salaries for African labourers around the same time was £1 for African labourers and £2 for African field rangers.

⁵⁷ Skukuza Archives NK/9/18 Bantoesake/Veldwagters 1945-1974. ‘Memorandum: Insake Bantoevelwagterdienste in die Nasionale Krugerwildtuin, 1 February 1967, A.M. Brynard: Conservator, KNP. “Afgesien van bogenoemde feite, is die bantoeveldwagters by verre na nie die hoogsbesoldige groep werknemers in die Wildtuin nie. Trouens ek glo dat die besoldiging van die bantoeveldwagterskorps by verre na nie in verhouding is met die verantwoordlikhede wat hulle moet dra, of die gevare wat hulle dikwels moet trotseer, of met die lang ure wat hulle dikwels moet werk nie. Hulle loonskale is ook onrealisties ten opsigte van die huidige tyd waarin ons lewe met hoë lewenskoste, onrealisties in vergelyking met ander organisasies (bv. Die S.A. Polisie), waar bantoes ooreenstemmende werk verrig, en onrealisties in vergelyking

met die algemene loonstruktuur in ‘n vining-ontwikkelende Laeveld, waaruit bantoeveldwagters gerekruteer word”.

⁵⁸ See comments by Thomas Piketty, ‘Transcript of Nelson Mandela Annual Lecture 2015’ [Online] Available at: <http://www.nelsonmandela.org/news/entry/transcript-of-nelson-mandela-annual-lecture-2015> (Accessed 9 December 2015). See also World Bank Data - GINI Index [Online] Available at: http://www.data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI?order=wbapi_data_value_2011+wbapi_data&sort=desc (Accessed 30 August 2015). The Gini coefficient as a measure of inequality is also fraught with shortcomings. As Jason Hickel demonstrates, the Gini Coefficient measure is a *relative* metric, meaning that “if the income of the poor increase at a faster rate than the income of the rich, this is recruited as a decline in inequality even if the absolute income gap between the two continues to widen”. [Online] Available at: <https://www.jasonhickel.org/blog/2019/5/15/how-not-to-measure-inequality> (Accessed 17 May 2020).

⁵⁹ Skukuza Archives NK/9/18 Bantoesake Veldwagters [Native Affairs Field Rangers] 1938 to 1946. Letter to Secretary National Parks Board, 17 November 1945.

⁶⁰ Skukuza Archives NK/9/18 Bantoesake Veldwagters [Native Affairs Field Rangers] 1938 to 1946. “Julle gee vir ons die ding wat ons dit nie eet nie bv. olifant seekoei...die kos is nie heerlik nie, die vleis is altyd olifant seekoei en sy derms...die kos wat ons eet in die kombuis is nie goed nie...daar is olifant en seekoei se vleis maar ons eet dit nie. Die sop is nie lekker nie...olifant en seekoei die mense eet dit glad nie...die kos in die kombuis is nie heerlik nie”.

⁶¹ Skukuza Archives NK/9/7 Bantoesake Mosambiekers 1971-1995 ‘Staking van swart werkers op Skukuza in die Krugerwildtuin’ Letter from Chief Director NPB to Director General Homeland Affairs, 12 March 1990. “Aangesien die Krugerwildtuin ‘n geslote en beheerde gebied is, sou dit nie vir die Mosambiekwerkers moontlike wees om te dros en elders werk te gaan soek nie”.

⁶² Skukuza Archives NK/8/7 Act 57 of 1976 Regulation 27 (xiv) as attached to the memo from G. Mills to J. Kloppers, 12 March 1990.

⁶³ Skukuza Archives NK/9/7 Bantoesake, Mosambiek Bantoes 1954-1974 [Native Affairs Mozambican Natives] Letter from Office of the Conservator to All Park Personnel, 10 January 1964. “Bantoevroue van Porugese oorsprong sal toegelaat word om vir beperkte periodes by hul mans in die Wildtuin te kom kuier onderworpe aan die volgende voorwaardes.

- a) Geen Portugese Bantoevrou sal gedurende die toeriste seisoen by enige bantoes besoek aflê wat binne 'n radius van tien myl van 'n ruskamp gestaioneer is nie.
- b) Geen Portugese Bantoevrou sal (behalwe in gevalle van ernstige siekte) toegelaat word om enige plek in die Republiek buite die grense van die Wildtuin te besoek nie.
- c) Geen Portugese Bantoevrou sal toegelaat word om enige werk van watter aard ookal in die Wildtuin te aanvaar nie.
- d) Voordat enige Portugese bantoevrou die grense van die Wildtuin mag oorsteek, moet sy bo en behalwe die bogenoemde voorwaardes ook in besit wees van 'n geskrewe bewys van haar man se werkgewer, met hierdie kantoor se stempel daarop of dié van die veldwagter deur wie se afdeling toegang bekom wil word, dat sy wel toestemming het om sodanige bantoe te besoek.
- f) Portugese bantoe minderjariges tussen die ouderdom van 10 en 18 jaar sal onder geen omstandighede toegelaat word om die Wildtuin binne te kom nie.
- g) Alle Portugese bantoevroue en kinders wat hulle vergesel moet ten minste 14 dae voor hulle die Wildtuin mag binne kom teen pokie ingeënt wees”.

⁶⁴ Skukuza Archives NK/9/18 Bantoesake Veldwagters [Native Affairs Field Rangers] 1938 to 1946.

⁶⁵ Fieldnotes, October 2016.

⁶⁶ Skukuza Archives NK/9/18 Bantoesake Veldwagters [Native Affairs Field Rangers] 1938 to 1946.

⁶⁷ Skukuza Archives NK/9/18 Bantoesake Veldwagters [Native Affairs Field Rangers] 1938 to 1946.

⁶⁸ Informal conversation with KNP staff member, March 2017.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Informal conversation with KNP field ranger, January 2017.

⁷¹ 'Kruger National Park Staff Housing List 2017', internal excel spreadsheet. Of the 681 housing units in Skukuza listed, 525 were single room type accommodation, allocated to both SANParks employees (permanent and temporary) and a range of external contractors such as outsourced restaurant employees.

4

Learning Counterinsurgency in Conservation: Civil Military Relations and the Continued Trappings of War in the KNP

4.1 Introduction

A succession of historical accounts has referred to the relations between the landscape that makes up the Kruger National Park (KNP) and the act of war. Jane Carruthers in her book *War and Wildlife* (2001) described the landscape as ‘war ravaged’; Lynn Meskell noted that the ideals of conservation encapsulated in the idea that is the KNP and the act of warfare “have a shared history and they often find themselves working in unison” (2012: 221); and Jacob Dlamini (2020a) contends that the KNP was one of the most militarized zones in South Africa at the height of the anti-apartheid struggle in the mid 1980s. While the history of encounters between the military and conservation are multi-layered, Lunstrum contends that they are often complementary (2015). This chapter further explores this complementarity to expand on the early historical accounts of such encounters (see Carruthers 1995, 2001, Lunstrum 2015, Pienaar 2012). Specifically, it outlines how the KNP was incorporated into the security response of the apartheid state during the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s when the politics of the time was heightened by Cold War tensions and the manner those intimate relations shaped its own responses in respect to external threats (see also Ellis 1994, Meskell 2012). David Bunn contends that “the true history of this period has yet to be written” and the need to elucidate on the role the Park’s black field rangers played in aiding the apartheid state (2006: 390). Furthermore, Büscher and Ramutsindela conclude in their essay on ‘green violence’ that much of the scholarly attention on contemporary violence in conservation “over-emphasize violent activities within a specific period” and that we also need to pay attention to the ways in which it is a continuation of historical

practices (2016: 22). This chapter addresses these concerns and how these historical relations with the South African apartheid era security forces inscribed itself in the law enforcement practices in the Park and how they continue to do so. In drawing on these historical military relations, the intention is to demonstrate that contemporary policing responses to rhino poaching did not evolve in a vacuum and that the doctrinal and tactical orientation that informed apartheid era counterinsurgency (COIN) operations in the KNP during the 1980s continue to inform contemporary policing practices in the KNP in its 'war on poaching' (see Chapter 7).

The chapter begins with sketching the manner in which civil/military relations permeated South African life and how the Kruger was incorporated into these praetorian relations. Its perceived isolation from the rest of (white) South Africa on the borderlands with newly independent African nationalist-led governments magnified the KNP's importance to the counterrevolutionary machinations of the apartheid state. Where the security of Kruger became conflated with the security of the apartheid state, these close-knit relations between the military and Kruger also meant that these security related practices of the state were imprinted on the manner in which the KNP conducted its own law enforcement activities. While these relations were embraced, at other times it was highly contested and there was a concerted effort by KNP management to limit the role of the military within its borders when security operations of the military were deemed incompatible with its conservation ideals or match its own security assessments. This mixing of combat troops and field rangers often blurred state security and conservation law enforcement functions and this conflation was central in learning and adopting COIN-inspired practices that it modified for its own purposes. It also shows that these historically situated practices in the specific brand of apartheid era COIN persist not merely through joint operations with the security forces but also through the manner in which Kruger was staffed and how key individuals (and their skill sets in COIN) shaped not only its historical practices but how these practices and actors are recycled in the present in the 'war on poaching'. Lastly, this chapter shows that uniforms played a key role as a cultural artefact in the KNP and that during its attempts at transformation as an organization after the fall of apartheid in 1994, the khaki-style uniform was a key arena of contestation. Despite attempts at de-emphasizing the khaki-style uniform as part of a transformation process at the end of apartheid, an even more

militaristic style camouflaged uniform took its place in the contemporary ‘war on poaching’, utterly turning back any advances, if any, in its attempts at transformation over the last quarter of a century.

4.2 The Militarization of the KNP and Integration into Apartheid’s Total Strategy

The Militarization of South African Society

In the context of a number of global and regional events in the latter part of the 1970s – Angolan and Mozambican independence; the end of white rule in neighbouring Southern Rhodesia; the tightening of sports boycotts against South Africa, amongst others – the South African state was increasingly finding itself isolated and standing alone with “the Soviet wolf at the door baying to enter” (Herbstein and Evenson 1989: 45). It was this dual threat of communism and black nationalism – known colloquially as the *rooi/swart gevaar*¹ – that animated the fear narrative of the apartheid state (Baines 2014). By 1975 the apartheid state had developed a ‘Defence Strategy’ that would involve much more than a military approach, it sought to include political, economic and social spheres into its overarching defence strategy (Herbstein and Evenson 1989). In a bid to coax the majority black South African population away from the solidarity that communist states purported to project with newly independent African states, the ruling Nationalist Party – by this time under the iron will of P.W. Botha from 1979 onwards – sought to extend the allure of the free market economy to a section of the black population in the hope that a growing black middle class would protect their own interests in the face of popular unrest (ibid.). These reforms also included the right of organization for black trade unions and allowing urban Africans to reside legally and permanently in urban areas amongst other concessions – in essence the end to many ‘petty apartheid’ policies (ibid.). On the other hand, any dissent was ruthlessly suppressed by the police (ibid.). Under P.W. Botha, the State Security Council (SSC), a cabinet committee, was becoming more powerful than cabinet itself and was dominated by South African Defence Force (SADF) and National Intelligence apparatchiks (ibid.). By the mid 1980s the apartheid state perceived itself to be in the midst of a *revolutionary* onslaught which necessitated a *total* response or Total Strategy (Rousseau 2014). As a result, security was the prism

through which government was directed and it was the SSC - operationalized through the National Security Management System (NSMS) - and not the cabinet or parliament, that was the *de facto* government (ibid.). Whether the threat to the apartheid state did indeed amount to a 'Total Onslaught' was by and large overstated and there was ample evidence that the "official view collided with [...] reality" (ibid.: 1360).

The NSMS was devolved into nine Joint Management Centres (JMC), 82 sub-JMC's and 320 mini-JMC's.² The KNP constituted one such mini-JMC. These mini-JMC's were the most visible part of the security structure and in effect replaced the civilian administrative functions at a grassroots level, particularly in black townships where local municipal bureaucracies had collapsed during the riots in the mid-1980s. These mini-JMC's coordinated the functions of several departments related to service delivery and their areas of operation not only coincided with military command areas, they were also often chaired by military or police officers. In the Kruger, the mini-JMC was chaired by the park warden, Dr S.C.J Joubert. Where it was the security establishment that coordinated all state functions, it in essence embodied the 'total strategy' envisioned by the SSC. While some of these mini-JMC's could boast of success in the upgrading of services in Alexandria township outside Johannesburg and Mamelodi outside Pretoria, the fact that so much power was invested in the security apparatus, resulted in a lack of accountability to parliament or the public. This 'total strategy' melded both security and welfare components, an essential fusion of the state's counterinsurgency (COIN) strategy, in its bid to win the 'hearts and minds' of the majority of the disaffected South African public. However, despite claims of human development being equally important in its COIN strategy, it is the brutality of the security forces that was a defining characteristic of the apartheid state's response (see IDAF 1980). It was in this context, typified by 'freedom-fighter' insurgencies fought on the Angolan border,³ that the South African security apparatus – which included not only the South African Defence Force (SADF) but also specialized policing units such as the 'Koevoet'⁴ unit - honed its much maligned and brutal combat tracking or manhunting expertise.

Integration into Apartheid's Total Strategy: A Relationship Fraught with Contestation

In October 1978 a neighbouring, high-end private game reserve – Timbavati – reported, with alarm, that a large number of illegal immigrants had, without detection and at their leisure, crossed the Kruger National Park. In the context of a worsening security situation – real or imagined – this act constituted a blatant breach in security which could have dire consequences for the income generation from a burgeoning wildlife tourism industry and thus to the economy of the country. In response, KNP management replied that it was well aware of the situation, that they had in fact arrested eight of the illegal immigrants and that it was Park authorities who alerted the security police which led to the arrest of a further twenty-four illegal immigrants on a farm Birmingham that that was part of Timbavati. Implicit in the raising of these concerns by leaders in a famed wildlife tourism industry was the fact that the KNP was ill equipped to deal with the threat of mass illegal immigration, especially if these migrant routes crossed through a landscape that did not match the one that tourists paid to experience – a wild and unpeopled Africa. The reply from KNP authorities of course showed the opposite but that such calls of alarm proved to have far reaching consequences in terms of how the Park was to be securitised.

Actually it seldom occurs that a person walks across the Kruger National Park without our at least being aware of his/her presence...[a]s soon as it becomes necessary the 350km eastern boundary of the Kruger Park shall be patrolled by the South African Defence Forces. At the moment it is definitely not necessary and I hope that it would never become necessary at any time in the future.⁵ [emphasis added]

The KNP was well aware of the growing security situation and the need for military readiness in all spheres of society. It was in no way opposed to security, in fact it prided itself on its competency in this arena. However, its first instinct was not to embrace the presence of the SADF in the Park. This would be contra to what it had been trying to achieve for more than half a century – greater autonomy to exercise its authorities and continuing Stevenson-Hamilton's fantasy that "no person other than a member, officer or servant of the Board shall enter the Park"⁶ (see Chapter 1). The idea of ceding authority to the military after more than half a century of being virtually autonomous must have rankled Park management in a profound manner.

In reality, however, this fantasy of usurping the role of other state agencies in the Park and the spectre of total control had already long been pierced with the opening of W.N.L.A. recruitment centres throughout the northern section of the Park (see Chapter 3). Where the dual authorities of labour recruitment and passport control became too burdensome, it showed an adeptness in drawing these external officials into a close fraternal bond, especially where its interests were aligned (in this case the supply of cheap migrant labour) and where those officials who showed a sensitivity to the conservation ideals of the Park. To consolidate such bonds, it often sought to appoint such external office bearers as honorary rangers (see Pienaar 2012). Similar bonds were formed with members of the South African Police (SAP) who were stationed at police stations throughout the Park.⁷

Over the years it has been my privilege and a pleasure to work with the S.A.P., specifically with all the S.A.P. representatives in the Kruger Park and to maintain relations [*gesindbede*] at the best level. We accept all the men as part of our staff⁸ [and in a letter to another senior SAP official] ... also for the giant share you played in inculcating a love for the Park in your men.⁹ [own translation]

The notion that its authorities would be undermined by arguably the most powerful state institution in the country at the time, the South African Defence Force (SADF), disconcerted many KNP administrators. By the mid-1980s, with the declaration of a state of emergency, Park authorities report with shock at the speed at which the functions of the SAP would be reduced and that the police stations in the Park would be occupied by the SADF. It was not a development that was welcomed and in a letter to the deputy police commissioner for riot control, the park warden lamented that “I foresee for myself and the Park just endless problems”.¹⁰ With the proliferation of guerrilla wars in southern Africa, brewing since the 1960s, game reserves and remote areas in border zones were becoming increasingly valuable as strategic landscapes to the various militaries engaged in the sub-continent (Ellis 1994). The KNP was no exception to this rule and the Park effectively acted as a military buffer zone, shielding the rest of the country from insurgencies (Meskell 2006). Park management, on numerous occasions, actively tried to insinuate its own importance as a strategic landscape, that the existence of the Park was crucial to the security and prosperity of the state (see Chapter 1).

The Protection Plan for the Kruger National Park (KNP PP) is an operational concept in which the KNP role of protection and conservation is reconciled with the role of the SADF in protection and security. In spite of the fact that it is not a National Key Point, the KNP is managed in the national interest and as a strategic asset.¹¹ [own translation]

Despite its misgivings at the prospect of an increased footprint of the SADF in the Park, the Park itself was complicit in conflating its own security with that of the security of the state (see also Chapter 1). It had become inextricably entangled in the security web spun by the State Security Council (SSC) and was consequently bound to implement a national security plan as part of the state's counter revolutionary strategy. However, the Park was determined to control the manner in which security was deployed within its boundaries, that any security measures be aligned with its conservation ideals and befitting of its exceptional qualities as a wilderness. In an attempt to maintain control over the manner in which security was conducted, there was a great urgency by Park management to successfully implement an order by the Minister of Defence within a two-year timeframe.

[to implement a] totally integrated system for the control and safety (beveiliging) of the RSA [Republic of South Africa] eastern border and the security of the KNP.¹² [own translation]

Failure to successfully implement this plan meant that the SADF would then be authorized to take over complete control of the eastern boundary with Mozambique through implementation of the Caftan fence strategy. KNP management resisted the implementation of this plan to upgrade the fence as it would mean a dramatic increase in troop density, the construction of housing units for the troops as well as over fifty generator plants or the erection of overhead power lines to power the electrification of the fence between Kruger and Mozambique and the and five military bases in the Park. These activities would greatly detract from the conservation ideals of the organization, their constructions of Kruger as a pristine wilderness and Kruger as an internationally acclaimed wildlife destination. Consequently, Park management vehemently resisted the deployment of the Caftan fence strategy and heavily criticized the activities of the South African army in instances of troop indiscipline and the use of technologies that were incompatible to the conservation of a world-renowned wilderness destination.

By April 1987 the KNP was incorporated into the Eastern Transvaal Joint Management Centre (JMC).¹³ The Eastern Transvaal JMC, which was more readily recognizable by its Afrikaans acronym, the OTGBS (*Oos Transvaal Gesamentlike Bestuurs Sentrum*), which was further subdivided into military regions, the KNP falling into the Eastern Border Military Region (known as the *Oosgrens Militêre Gebied* in Afrikaans or OMG) which was then further devolved into mini-JMC's to deal with localized security matters within the Kruger and the border areas in Mozambique, officially known as the Kruger Park mini-JMC, chaired by the KNP park warden. The integration of the KNP in the broader NSMS was formerly outlined in a document *Guidelines for Joint Action*, irrevocably drawing the Park into the broader state security apparatus in defence of the apartheid state.

During this period, the KNP was considered one of the most militarized zones in South Africa (Dlamini 2020a). The SADF had a substantial military presence in the Park, at times with as many as 650 permanent force and civilian members.¹⁴ Furthermore, five military bases were dotted throughout the Park and one airstrip wholly controlled by the South African Air Force (Meskell 2006). Von den Steinen also asserts that “[m]any people infiltrated through Kruger Park, sometimes up to eight or ten people at a time, but the capabilities of the security forces dealt them [national liberation fighters] a serious blow throughout the operation” (2007: 217). However, this ‘total’ control by the SADF posited by Dlamini (2020a) and Von den Steinen (2007) was not necessarily as complete as these accounts allude to. Numerous internal reports by KNP management and the Head of Kruger security, Col. Otch Otto, speak of the unlikely and impracticality of preventing the high influx of refugees traversing the Park irrespective of the number of soldiers and field rangers patrolling the border areas. In a letter to the park warden, a TEBA employee who also ran a trading post in Pafuri shared his insider knowledge of the multiple illegal crossings of the Park by individuals transporting essential commodities, at times up to three times in two months, and the ease with which they crossed the Park meant that “[m]ilitary activities are a small obstacle” to such individuals and groups.¹⁵ Furthermore, KNP field rangers were by far more competent in detecting, tracking and arresting illegal immigrants than SADF reaction forces (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Comparative success rates of the various security forces in arresting illegal immigrants during a specific period in 1985.

Month	SAP	SADF	KNP Field Rangers
July	168	-	60
August	98	38	485
September	322	106	210
Total	588	144	755

Source Skukuza Archives/9/7 Bantoesake Mosambiekers [Native affairs Mozambicans] 1971-1995 'Mosambiek Vlugtelinge' [Mozambique Refugees]. Letter from Head Bantu Affairs to Park Warden, 24 September 1985.

SADF soldiers were only able to arrest approximately a fifth of the number illegal immigrants arrested by KNP rangers. It was clear from this snippet of data that Park management wanted to demonstrate the incompetence of the SADF in its inability in detecting, intercepting and arresting illegal immigrants. Even where arrests were ascribed to the military, it was largely because of the actions of KNP commando members, in other words, KNP rangers.¹⁶ This incompetence was further emphasized in its internal correspondence related to the presence of the military in the Park.

There is however already proven that a black patrol force would be far more successful to intercept and arrest unwanted immigrants than the SADF reaction force.¹⁷ [own translation]

By 1989, 5 000 illegal immigrants were arrested and repatriated,¹⁸ a number thought to be a fraction of the total number estimated from footprint counts. Furthermore, Park management were also highly critical of the ill-discipline and incompetence of SADF soldiers due to their complete lack of bush craft, their fear of dangerous game and their scant regard for conservation principles.

The low success ratio of the military presence in the KNP can therefore be ascribed to the quality and conduct of the troops. It can possibly be caused by a fear of wildlife, a lack of terrain knowledge, uncertainty in acting correctly, demotivation, and possibly many other reasons. The military presence in the KNP is clearly not succeeding in its goal and creates further problems through undisciplined actions (speeding offences, etc.).¹⁹ [emphasis added, own translation]

In other internal correspondence, Park managers spoke of how “ill-prepared” the military was and its lack of systematic planning, the lack of equipment and, ironically, the shortage of troops when it was at the same time critical of troop densities and its impacts on the sense of wildness of the Park.²⁰ Park management were also highly critical in their official communications with military high command of the many indiscretions such as driving at night; accidental shootings; speeding and collisions with wildlife, especially the killing of priority species such as cheetah and wild dog; littering; accidental veld fires resulting from cooking fires or where fires were used to ward off dangerous animals; indiscriminately firing their firearms; in one incident special forces soldiers shooting an eland; aggressive and unbecoming behaviour towards tourists - in one incident tourists reported ‘terrorists’ shooting at them only for it later to emerge that they were the actions of ill-disciplined soldiers. These undesirable actions by officials other than Park officials was exactly what Stevenson-Hamilton attempted to negate decades before. Park management saw these actions as reputationally damaging, especially where the overt presence of the military impacted on the experience of tourists.

Furthermore, the Auxiliary Service Combat Element (in Afrikaans it was commonly known as ‘*Hulpdiens Vegelement*’ or HDVE) troops based in the Park were also beset with ceaseless administrative, logistical, training and staffing problems. For example, the chronic shortage of competent leaders and an unworkable ratio of leaders to troops of 1: 100 resulted in poor command and control and supervision of troops; supply and logistical problems meant that units waited up to four months to replace vehicle tyres; troops went unpaid for four or five months leading to poor morale; inappropriate selection criteria resulted in the wrong ‘type’ of recruit being selected for example a preference for school leavers as opposed to potential recruits who were illiterate but proficient in tracking from their experience in hunting small game or herding cattle; insufficient housing; systems lacking efficient ammunition control; a near total breakdown in coordination and communications during operations leading to the near shooting of researchers and KNP field rangers by SADF soldiers; the fact that the Park fell under two command regions, exacerbating this lack of coordination; and troops harbouring ‘revolutionary’ tendencies, largely as a result of poor leadership, supervision and mission tasking.²¹

To overcome these shortcomings and to bring the activities of the military *under* the control of Park management, proposals were made to upgrade certain strategic section ranger positions to that of a ‘security section ranger’.²² This would mean that the holders of these posts would be elevated to the rank, at minimum, of a captain in the SADF and be responsible for all security related and civil defence matters in the Park, including overall and direct control of all military units deployed in the Park. It is clear that the Park was not opposed to the notion of security and national defence, only by whom it was done and the manner it was deployed.

These criticisms of South African military prowess deployed in the Kruger continue in the contemporary ‘war on poaching’,²³ with one KNP section ranger stating

...at the moment, most of my colleagues will agree, we do not believe that the military that is currently here is effective and I believe there are many reasons for that, there are political reasons, the discipline in the army is not what it used to be. I mean I was in the army for a long time, I know.²⁴ [emphasis added]

In a number of conversations with KNP managers, SANDF soldiers are widely regarded as incompetent and unprofessional and that soldiers lack the necessary bush skills, firearms proficiency and are incapable of having a ‘light imprint’ in the areas they are deployed in, leaving litter, driving off road, and are noisy, thus nullifying any attempt at being clandestine in the field. In reference to a specialized SANDF unit, the Battlefield Surveillance unit, known more readily by its acronym, BFS, one Kruger section ranger offered an alternative for the acronym – “bloody fucking shit” - to express his disdain.²⁵ On the other hand, KNP managers and field ranger staff held the special forces soldiers that were withdrawn from the KNP in 2015 in high regard.²⁶

4.3 Securing the Kruger Landscape: The Fears of a Circumscribed (White) Community

Within the broader context of insurgency, the Kruger Park was seen to be particularly vulnerable to planned insurrectionary actions by liberation movements due its geographical location on the borderlands with African states, particularly those that were seen as black nationalist and Marxist, as

was the case with Zimbabwe and Mozambique respectively. In addition, its separateness from the rest of (white) South Africa, where it was surrounded by black homelands or Bantustans, was also seen as a strategic weakness. The Park was seen as an enclave, surrounded by ‘insurrectionary’ black states in the context of total onslaught. Thus, the Kruger Park has always been considered “a military buffer zone, a wilderness corridor that shielded the state from political resistance and insurgency during apartheid” (Meskell 2009: 92). This enclave mentality is reminiscent of an old Afrikaner cultural touchstone – the laager. The analogy of a laager stems from the manner in which trek boers – the forebears of the modern Afrikaner nation - seeking expansion into the South African interior in the 19th century, would draw their wagons in a defensive formation to ward off attackers when they encamped. This ‘laager mentality’ (Legum 1967) is one that is deeply ingrained in the psyche of many frontier societies where white, outpost communities have “always been bedevilled by fears of the natives”, one founded on the colonial view of Africans as rapacious, disorderly and uncivilized (Hansen 2006: 280). The white settler experience and identity in Africa has been largely defined by a closer affinity to the land and nature and virtually insulated from any connection to the African society in which it was embedded (Hughes 2006, Suzuki 2017). It is this separateness of a white enclaved community, a politics of whiteness and its close affinity to landscape making and nature that is also inscribed in the white experience in the construction of the Kruger landscape.

In a communiqué, entitled *The General Condition in Respect to the Security, Defence and Safekeeping of the Kruger National Park*, the Park’s sense of isolation and separation from the rest of white South Africa was described as follows.

The whole Kruger National Park is essentially encircled by independent black states and other areas set aside for blacks. If the Nsikazi area is incorporated into Swaziland then there will not be a single access point to the Kruger National Park that does not go through a black area. The final outcome of such a situation needs not be spelled out.²⁷ [emphasis added]

Kruger was nearly entirely surrounded by non-contiguous bantustans or homelands, namely Venda and Gazankulu along its western boundary and to a lesser extent Lebowa and KaNgwane along its south western and southern boundary as part of the apartheid state’s balkanization policy of

separate development. In the north it was bordered by Zimbabwe where black nationalists under ZANU-PF overthrew the nascent segregationist and racist leanings of Ian Smith and along the entirety of its eastern border lay the Marxist-Leninist Frelimo-led government of Mozambique entrenched in a fifteen-year long civil war of attrition. To the south, the international border of another black African state, eSwatini,²⁸ was a mere 60 km away. These geopolitical shifts on its borders in the 1970s through to the 1980s, led to an increasing sense of danger that positioned the Kruger at the centre of the defence of the country, further aggrandizing its symbolic relevance. The Kruger saw itself as an enclave, a laager of whiteness - and by extension representative of what was perceived as a god-fearing, modern civilized state - that was under threat by a growing wave of blackness where blackness in itself was an existential threat.

Everyone is well aware of the ill feelings of a hostile world (particularly certain Communist countries and Black African states) who are determined to use any means to bring harm to the Republic of South Africa. According to the latest information available to me the Park is considered one of the possible entry points for trained saboteurs and elements whose intention it is to bring harm.²⁹ [own translation]

Given its geographic location, Kruger was both physically and metaphorically at the frontline to hold back the tide of black nationalism and iterations of communist ideology sweeping parts of the sub-continent. These ideological fears were not only prevalent in the Kruger. In Harry Wels' (2015) *Securing Wilderness Landscapes*, the renowned South African conservationist, Nick Steele exhibited a deep-seated fear of communism, a fear that indelibly shaped his Farm Patrol Plan, a strategic security plan to protect (white) farm conservancies and game reserves in the bantustan of KwaZulu adjacent to the southern Mozambique border. While Steele's deep hatred of communism did not align him with Afrikaner nationalism that was so prevalent in the Kruger that blurred communist ideology with black nationalism, his security plan still bore many similarities to the counterinsurgency (COIN) that was so typical of Kruger's own practices and indeed typical of a form of law enforcement in South African conservation more generally. Carruthers (2008) notes how an increased militarization of social and economic life after 1948 also seeped into the management of the conservation estate in South Africa. It is in this environment of fear – fear of black nationalism or communism or an

amalgam of the two – that embedded COIN firmly in South African conservation practice.

The geographical isolation of the KNP and a growing – largely perceived - threat of insurgency by Park management was distilled in one particular instance, the security of schoolchildren of white park employees who travelled by bus to the town of White River to the south west of the Park.

As a result of the escalation in terrorist attacks (namely the bomb explosions in Pretoria and Bloemfontein [national and provincial capital cities, respectively]) and the latest security information [...] to arrange an escort service for school buses that transports children to high schools outside the Park [...] The fact that both buses have to travel through Gazankulu [...] and this during the dark, makes them highly vulnerable to this type of terrorist attack.³⁰ [own translation]

Essentially the assessment of threat lay in the fact that these school buses, transporting white school children, had to travel through a black homeland. This assessment was not as a result of the formidable intelligence gathering capability the Park had its disposal. In response, the SAP District Commander expressed his inability to meet such a request of escorting these school buses and his assessment of the security situation contrasted diametrically to that of Park management.

The situation is currently not of such a nature that special escort services of buses should be instituted [and that] such a request was also presented to the Joint Management Centre and security committee who agree that school buses should not be escorted at this stage.³¹ [own translation]

Where the security assessment of the SAP and the JMC differed so radically from KNP's own security assessment, speaks of the paranoia of a circumscribed community, insulated from the rest of the country who, at times, saw little more than existential threats emanating from the neighbouring black homelands. It is this paranoia, typified by a growing sense of isolation, that further 'securitized' the thinking within the KNP.

In many ways this sense of isolationism and identifying communities living adjacent to the Park as an external threat continue to be reflected in my conversations with predominantly white KNP managers.

...the world is fucked, you should just let Somalis starve and these humanitarian interventions are just causing bigger problems...there are too many people on the planet and they should be allowed to perish.³²

The views of this white regional ranger encapsulate the dystopian and insular outlook of the world where their concerns matched those narratives of global environmental destruction, overpopulation and resultant anarchy which was a defining feature in the environmental security discourses of the 1990s.³³ It is a view that functions as a scapegoat and deflects attention from the historical precedents that shaped and structured such geopolitical contexts. It is also a worldview that sees black people as the driver of environmental destruction and that the only solution lay in their demise. That this KNP manager espoused such views, particularly one who I was informed possessed a more nuanced and reflexive view of the rhino poaching issue, was concerning. His view that planetary environmental problems stem from black populations in conflict-ridden corners of the continent was blatantly racist. Peluso and Watts (2001), in their book *Violent Environments*, refuted claims that local conflicts were largely as a result of overpopulation and resource scarcity and that it was disingenuous - even racist - to posit that it was the claims of the poor and marginalized that led to both environmental degradation and global or regional insecurity. His view was not unique as my conversations with other white KNP managers also demonstrate.

I'm surrounded by 1.5 million people on my boundary.³⁴

Such views are invariably shaped by the socially insular lives lived by these white KNP officials and their worldviews are often distilled in the notion of overpopulation and a fear of the 'barbarian hordes' at the gate (see Fletcher et al. 2014). This discourse of overpopulation in the 'native reserves' adjacent to the KNP is not a concern that vexes only present-day white KNP managers. Bunn points out that "even in the period before major apartheid legislation, the state supported Lowveld farmers' claims that Africans on unsupervised Crown lands were an unruly surplus, proliferating beyond control and with catastrophic results for environmental degradation" (Bunn 2003: 205). This was in diametrical contrast to the concerns around the same period of a stagnating white population and the need to attract white settlers to rural areas to ensure progress in the country (Dlamini 2020a). Fears of black overpopulation has been and continues to be seen as an imminent threat not only to the

environment but an existential threat to the security of the Park. Christian, in explicating on her structural framework of race and racism, contends that this “fight against the fear of ‘black peril’” serves to further consolidate whiteness (2019: 175). It is here that Lynn Meskell’s analysis of how this isolationism shaped the outlook of the mainly white section of the Kruger population and the ways such insular outlooks persist in the present day.

...they reveal the blindness and racial prejudices of a circumscribed community who mandated their own limits of care extending to Europeans and to nature (Meskell 2012: 224, emphasis added).

This view by white managers differ starkly with that of black managers and the question of overpopulation and the supposed threats that these populations pose to the KNP did not even feature in my discussions with them. Many of these black managers come from these communities adjacent to the Park and continue to support households living there and it is little wonder that their own lived experiences do not elicit the same dystopian and racist worldviews. In contrast, many of the white managers come from elsewhere in the country and as a result most of their working and recreation time is spent within the artificially constructed and insular landscape that is the KNP, one that is devoid of any semblance of the realities outside of its borders. Some of these white managers have managed a single section for as long as 17 years³⁵ while others also grew up in the Park and have careers spanning close to thirty years working inside the Park. One black section ranger emphasized this point stating white section rangers consider the official accommodation they live in as their homes whereas black section rangers consider their homes to be those abodes outside the Park and when they are on duty they consider themselves to be at work, stating emphatically “this is not my home”.³⁶ These long-lived associations with the Park have not only cultivated a deep sense of isolationism but also deep sense of proprietary, that they are characteristically possessive and very territorial³⁷ of the KNP and its wildlife, one where African people living on its borders are not only seen on the spectrum of being unwelcome but the very source of insecurity to ‘their’ Park.

4.4 Manhunting: The Essence of South African Counterinsurgency and its Centrality to Kruger Policing Praxis

South African apartheid era counterinsurgency (COIN) doctrine was comprised of a broad approach that sought to meld military interventions with socio-economic interventions to appease the majority black population and its opposition to apartheid. However, the thrust of South African COIN, despite attempts at downplaying it, was its military prowess. The South African military had many technological advantages that made it perhaps the most powerful military force on the African continent, most notably the manner in which it harnessed its domestic industrial and manufacturing might in the development of military hardware (IDAF 1980). However, despite the advantages these technological advances gave the SADF to develop a diversified and adaptive military doctrine, the most celebrated part of that doctrine was its fearsome proficiency at combat tracking or manhunting (see Stapleton 2014, 2015).

The Fundamentals of Manhunting

Specialized counter-terrorism units were established in both the SADF and SAP (in the form of Battalion 101 and Koevoet respectively). Both units were notoriously efficient at this singular art of manhunting and aggressive engagement with enemy combatants. Koevoet was largely composed of Ovambo or Kavango inhabitants of northern South West Africa (SWA) – a region which formed large swathes of the primary operational area of the SADF - who were familiar with the terrain, language and the particular environmental conditions. These African operatives were subsequently trained in combat tracking and aggressive offensive fire and movement combat drills aimed at suppressing (with firepower) and overrunning (and consequently killing or capturing) enemy positions, a tactic that was foundational to the South African brand of COIN. Manhunting operations in the near featureless landscape of northern SWA, predominated by low scrub, allowed units such as Koevoet to operate from highly mobile armoured infantry fighting vehicles (IFV), such as the modified Hippo or Casspir, as platforms to support combat trackers on the ground who could detect the footprints

or spoor of fleeing enemy combatants. Such IFV platforms made it possible to have a highly mobile and sizable fighting contingent (each fighting group consisted of 40 Ovambo constables and four white officers in four IVFs) and to relentlessly pursue the enemy over multiple days at a time, in some instances for 200 kilometres over a period of five days (Stapleton 2014). In a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) testimony, an operative recalled a typical operation.

[w]e picked up his spoor and chased him for two days...this was typical of the style of contacts I was involved in. Five Casspirs, fifty men chasing one or two people running on foot (TRC 1998 Vol.2 Ch.1: 61).

Such operations were relentless, deadly and highly efficient and Koevoet became notorious for its high kill rate, killing in the region of 3 200 so-called insurgents (which no doubt included innocent bystanders including women and children) in 1 615 contacts³⁸ (see also Herbstein and Evenson 1989, Stapleton 2014, TRC 1998 Vol. 2, Ch.1). It also illustrates that these manhunting operations conducted by the security forces were heavy handed and that the responses were disproportionate to the threat posed by these 'one or two people running on foot'. The TRC Commission found that the Koevoet unit was responsible for the commission of gross human rights abuses (including post-capture assassinations, rapes, torture and fixing bodies of victims to their vehicles while driving through the bush) which was undertaken with the full knowledge of the SAP hierarchy and that the practice of paying bounties induced its members to routinely commit extrajudicial murders (TRC 1998, Vol. 2, Ch. 1). In the aftermath of the war many Koevoet members were drawn into anti-poaching work and a newspaper report from 1989 reported, in a laudatory tone, that "the newly formed police anti-poaching units apply the same skills as those used in the war to track down the ivory hunters".³⁹

Manhunting: Kruger as a Learning Ground

To maintain this awesome, yet disturbing battlefield proficiency at manhunting within the South African security community, it needed to develop a training curriculum and pass on these lessons learnt on the border in its specialized training schools. However, potentially dangerous wildlife such as elephant, buffalo and lion were frequently encountered in

large parts of its combat operations area on the SWA/Angola border and the security forces lacked the ability to realistically replicate interactions with such dangerous wildlife at a given training centre. To do this they required a suitable training locality where they could simulate tactical tracking operations that were influenced by the vagaries and challenges posed by dangerous wildlife and variable environmental conditions. Very few places in the country provided a better practical learning opportunity than the Kruger Park.

During the 1970s the police developed tracker training programmes in South Africa and by the early 1980s this included a six week [sic] basic tracking and survival course near Potgietersrus (now Mokopane), also the site of the police dog school, and another six week [sic] advanced tracking course in the Kruger National Park (Stapleton 2014: 243, emphasis added).

To attain this level of proficiency at both tracking humans and building a competency to deal with potentially dangerous wildlife, it required the full cooperation and tutelage of KNP staff, in the person of section ranger Mike English. The KNP played a central role in developing protocols for tracking and survival in so-called dangerous game areas and provided an outdoor classroom for combat tracker training for the apartheid era security forces. Archival evidence of these advanced survival and tracking courses indicate that it was implemented as early as 1970⁴⁰ and continued into the early 1990s in which participants covered distances of as much as 250km. Kruger management were not hapless bystanders conscripted into assisting the security forces. They went out of their way to make sure these tracking courses were conducted with the utmost professionalism and it provided yet another opportunity to showcase its expertise and its indispensability to the state apparatus. In correspondence between the two entities, the SAP praised KNP management who 'left no stone unturned' in ensuring the successful completion of the course.⁴¹

In its concept protection plan for integration and alignment of KNP security operations into the broader security operations of the SADF, the head of the Kruger Commando, Colonel G.P Otto, spelled out that manhunting, using tracking, was a key tactical capability of its field ranger and HDVE troops in its COIN-infused operations.

Their tracking skills must be of such a standard that an effective detection capability is in place to make it possible to pursue and arrest the insurgent at a pace that matches or is even faster.⁴² [own translation]

Manhunting in the form of search and destroy and hot pursuit operations were two of a number of essential tasks listed under the broad framework related to COIN operations in the Park.⁴³ However, the centrality of manhunting is depicted in Otto's diagrammatic representation of the security plan, the interception and leapfrogging of human tracks through foot, bicycle and vehicle patrols were at the foundation of his operational concept plan.⁴⁴

Today, field ranger training curricula continue to emphasize tracking and manhunting skills in prospective recruits in the conservation law enforcement industry. The Southern African Wildlife College (SAWC), which is situated within a contractual national park incorporated into the Greater KNP to the west of Orpen entrance gate, is a leading accredited training institute for a range of conservation related careers for learners across the African continent. Many, if not all, of the newly appointed field rangers in the KNP would have completed their training at the college. One of its key programme areas is a wildlife guardianship course aimed at skilling field rangers as the "first line of defence for vulnerable wildlife".⁴⁵ Part of the suite of courses offered in conservation law enforcement is a unit standard called "Track a Person in a Natural Environment"⁴⁶ which teaches

skills and techniques required to track a human as an individual or as part of a tracking team. He/she will be able to identify tracks/trails left by suspects, interpret spoor, demonstrate anti-tracking and tactical tracking even in the face of anti-tracking measures.⁴⁷ [emphasis added]

While there remain key differences between manhunting operations used in the border wars, particularly with respect to the use of large contingents of troops, IFV's and heavy weaponry and what is practiced in the KNP today, the principles remain the same. It is the ability to successfully detect and track a human being using bush craft skill, combat patrol formations and aggressive tactics that persist through ranger training curricula and practices. Indeed, it was *the* primary response to the threat of rhino poaching during my twelve-month ethnography in the Kruger Park (see Ethnographic Interlude and Chapter 7).

Anti-poaching operations becomes so specialized. Who in the police can do it? We operate in extended clandestine patrols up to a week, two-man teams even special forces, our special forces that [indistinct] were here they cannot

do tracking and if you cannot track you don't speak the language of the bush.⁴⁸ [emphasis added]

The account of the senior KNP manager above confirms the observation that in order to arrest poachers, the primary technique relied upon by KNP managers is the ability of field rangers to track and intercept suspects using combat tracking. As another senior KNP manager affirmed, “no technology can replace a field ranger on the ground”.⁴⁹ Tracking is a skill that cannot be replaced by the sophisticated and costly array of security technologies deployed in the Park and neither do these skills form part of the skill sets of the SAPS, SANDF or even the special forces regiments which built its reputation on its manhunting capability during the bush wars. Tracking, a foundational element of South African COIN tactics, is indisputably the KNP's primary response in its ‘war on poaching’, despite the myriad discursive assertions that its responses are varied and considered.

Manhunting: Kruger's Role in apartheid era COIN Operations

Very little has been written about the precise role the KNP and its field ranger contingent played in active joint counterinsurgency (COIN) operations with apartheid era security forces. Indeed, David Bunn asserts that there is a need to illuminate the role “black game guards played [...] in aiding the South African Defence Force in counterinsurgency offences against Umkhonto we Sizwe and Frelimo guerrillas” (2006: 390). It was not only black field rangers but also their white supervisors who fulfilled the roles of officers in the Kruger Commando, a militia style grouping, that formed part of the SADF's civil defence units, a response that was an extension of the broader militarization of South African society. The formation of commandos has its historical origin in armed groupings of Dutch settlers, who hunted down and brutally subjugated indigenous transhumance Khoisan in the interior of the Cape province during the early 19th century, killing mostly men and forcing captive women and children into chattel bondage on white settler farms (Mkhize 2012). This commando system was not only a technology of genocide, massacring members of a group but also formed the foundation of a new labour and class system (ibid.). It created a generational rupture and the logic of capturing children meant that they “were least likely to run away and would grow up knowing no other world than the farm” (Etherington 2001 in Mkhize 2012: 75). This

chapter has already demonstrated how the fears of a white, circumscribed community in the Kruger elevated the fear of attack from so-called black insurrectionists. This fear seeped into its own security operational planning. Part of its operational planning was to conduct training ‘camps’, ranging from three days to three weeks, for those white members of staff who were part of the Kruger Commando and who were operationally equipped to participate in defensive and offensive operations. However, the threat assessment by Kruger management did not always necessarily match the assessment of threat by its more junior staff members.

While it is known that forces who are hostile to the RSA also operate from Mozambique and use the KNP as access route to infiltrate the RSA, it is however accepted that the overwhelming majority of illegal immigrants are composed of people in distress.⁵⁰ [own translation]

The influx of refugees was construed as a national security threat by the security establishment and that it could provide a pretext for the infiltration of guerrilla elements into the country. However, it did not always match the direct interactions Kruger staff had with these refugees. Instead, junior managers urged that the matter required a humanitarian and not military intervention. However, it could also have been a response to the inconvenience of having to go on these multi-day ‘camps’. It resulted in a more laid-back approach to the security preparedness required of residents and the whole of the KNP population was most certainly not on a war footing, bracing for an imminent attack. At least it was not constantly in a grip of fear, it was a condition that was guided by their own subjective assessments and not wholly on the assessment of the state security apparatus. It created a sense of alarm in those in Kruger who were responsible for security and who were tasked to implement the security measures demanded by the JMC. To overcome this lack of enthusiasm, KNP security officials contemplated fabricating a pseudo-attack in which one or more KNP residents would be killed. It was hoped that such an ‘attack’ would spur people into a greater state of readiness and that attendance at training camps would no longer be neglected.

All possible paths to increase the attendance figures has already been investigated and implemented. It seems, however, that the only means by which people will be motivated to action and prepare themselves, will be through allowing one or more to die [*sneuwel* ~ to die or fall in battle] in a pseudo terrorist attack.⁵¹ [own translation, emphasis added]

There is no evidence that such a pseudo terrorist attack did indeed take place. What this excerpt does demonstrate is the concerning notion that Park management would contemplate such an extreme course of action. It needed to reproduce insecurity to achieve the desired state of security. The staging of such a pseudo attack on members of their own community was a practice that was not foreign to the extremes apartheid era covert operations would go to heighten the fear narrative and legitimize further securitization and it was now a tactic that was being considered by Kruger management as early as 1978. It demonstrates the extent the practices of the apartheid security forces had seeped into the Kruger's own thinking – considering even the most egregious of acts – and how, through joint operations, the manner practices such as these have become normalized and institutionalized.

Despite these contradictory assessments of threat in the Park, it was also embroiled in a struggle with the state about the security threat posed by its own black field ranger contingent, especially those of Mozambican origin (see Chapter 3). It continually had to justify the importance these workers played in the security of the state itself.

You will note that the services of 325 black workers (many of whom have served 15 years or more) are not only indispensable and fulfil a key role in the adequate management of the Kruger Park, but also act as an important link in the strategy of the SA Army and SA Police Counterinsurgency Units that the local JMC [Joint Management Committee] is developing here on our eastern border with Mozambique.⁵² [own translation, emphasis added]

By 1986, 78 out of a total 83 Class A black field rangers on the organizational establishment had been trained and attested as commando members. These field rangers formed what was a specialized unit within the field ranger ranks known as the 'Special Black Field Ranger Corp'.⁵³ This meant that these field rangers had undergone "intensive counterinsurgency training".⁵⁴ It is a nod to those workers who were labelled 'special' – those who displayed exceptional levels of loyalty and dedication to duty and it is a practice of making a distinction within its worker ranks that persists to this day, most notably the formation of a 'Special Ranger' anti-poaching unit (see Chapter 1). These field rangers enjoyed not only higher salaries but also a higher status within the worker ranks,⁵⁵ a strategy used to reproduce the desired forms of labour value and a racialized division of labour (see Chapter 5). While the value of this fraction of workers was often reiterated in the important role they played

in securing the Eastern boundary with Mozambique, the contradictory position also held true. In its 1984 Annual Report, thirty black field rangers were dismissed on suspicion of participating in elephant poaching and Park administrators reassessed its position “in principle that in future no Mozambican Blacks will be employed along the eastern border” (NPB 1984: 3). However, the Park had to continue to emphasize the value of the most loyal of these workers for its own purposes and more fully entrench the KNP’s justification to hold on to these Mozambican workers, it sought to attest them as members of the Kruger Commando in the hope that their membership could help secure permanent residence for these employees and their immediate families. KNP managers continually tried to portray these Mozambican rangers as indispensable not only to the Kruger but to the national security of the country (see Chapter 3).

Indeed, a key part of Otto’s concept operational plan was to integrate KNP field rangers with the SADF’s HDVE troops. These troops were essentially recruits that were specifically selected based on their ability to speak xiTsonga, the common language of Mozambican refugees who fled the Gaza province in Mozambique. The plan strove for a total integration of these forces, where a small contingent of HDVE forces - up to six soldiers - would be seconded and fall under the full operational command of a selected KNP section ranger who was a member of the Kruger Commando. These Kruger section ranger outposts, in addition to the five military bases dotted across the landscape, formed the operational launching pads for implementing the essence of the KNP COIN strategy – foot and bicycle patrols to detect, follow and intercept human trespassers. These HDVE troops were fully integrated with KNP field rangers – they patrolled together, they were issued identical equipment to KNP field rangers, such as bicycles for speedy and long-range patrols, green overalls so that their uniforms were indistinguishable from those of KNP field rangers as well as identical R1 battle rifles. This blurring or erasing of roles of combat troops and conservation law enforcement roles have distinct consequences in that military rules of engagement take precedence and these practices become embedded in the institutional law enforcement practices in the Park. These small team operations matched Otto’s own expertise in decentralized control and small team operations as a special forces soldier and the desire of Kruger management that military operations have a light footprint and be near invisible to tourists.

One incident in particular, most viscerally demonstrated the total integration of KNP rangers and the SADF in a manhunting operation that resulted in the killing of African National Congress (ANC) combatants in the reedbeds just outside the Shingwedzi rest camp in the far north of the Park in 1988.

Dear dr Joubert...1. I would gladly like to thank you and the members of the Parks Board for the gigantic share you had in the search and destroy operation of ANC terrorists. 2. Thank you very much for the generous way in which you [allowed] the Parks Board's aircraft to participate in this operation. We have great appreciation for that. 3. During this operation we could clearly see the principle of total integration between the Parks Board and the Commando. It is again made clear to me of the necessity to more strongly expand the Commando organization in the Park now more than ever before with the aim to better harmonize the two organizations.⁵⁶ [own translation, emphasis added]

In this moment, the threat of actual insurrectionary elements looking to overthrow the state materialized, and it is in this moment that the SADF and KNP were able to set aside their fractious relationship and collaborate to secure the homeland with devastating effectiveness. The extended incident included the destruction of one of the power pylons carrying power from the Cahora Bassa dam in Mozambique to South Africa on the 11 July 1988 using a limpet mine.⁵⁷ The following day, a vehicle carrying four KNP workers set off a landmine on one of the gravel tourist roads in the Pafuri section, causing minor injuries to the occupants. Rangers from the Pafuri section started following the spoor of the perpetrators, encountering many instances of counter tracking. On the morning of the 13 July the tracks of the perpetrators exited the Park into Mozambique and entered the Park a further 20 kilometres to the south. Three individuals were spotted below the beacon on Gondegonde hill on the international boundary in the Shingwedzi section. A KNP helicopter, a military gunship and military reinforcements were deployed. Two insurgents were killed, a third fled into Mozambique and is believed to have died across the international boundary and three AK-47 assault rifles were recovered. On the 15 July, field rangers again picked up tracks that corresponded with the tracks that they followed from the landmine incident close to the entrance gate of the Shingwedzi rest camp. Again, both the KNP helicopter and a military gunship was deployed with the KNP helicopter acting as an aerial command post. Field rangers picked

up two fresh tracks leading into the reedbed adjacent to the rest camp. When the men were encountered they were shot and killed by both the ground forces and the attack helicopter. While this incident took place in full view of visitors in the rest camp, Park managers made note that no one raised an objection and that no reservations were cancelled as a result of the incident. Thus, over five days, field rangers covered a distance of over eighty kilometres on foot on manhunting operations and it is inconceivable that the detection, interception and subsequent killing of the five insurgents would have occurred without the manhunting skills of KNP field rangers from the Pafuri, Vlakteplaas and Shingwedzi sections. It underlines the centrality manhunting and combat tracking played in the Park's counterinsurgency operations during these Cold War tensions, a feature that persists in its 'war on poaching' to detect and intercept poachers. Furthermore, it was also noted that all the field rangers involved in the follow up and contact were Class A field rangers or 'special rangers', further elevating their status and reproducing the form of labour value most desired by KNP managers. In my discussion with a field ranger who worked in the Park when these events took place, he contends that the Park or the military used a mechanical digger to dig a mass, unmarked grave for the men who were killed in the operation and their remains are still hidden in the Gondegonde area.⁵⁸

4.5 Boomerang Effects: Recycling the Same Actors in Times of Crisis

Büscher and Ramutsindela (2016) draw our attention to the fact that in the scholarly work on violence in conservation, very little attention is paid to the continuity of violence in conservation and how that violence is often perpetuated by the same actors. Indeed, a key part of understanding the extent of the KNP's integration into the apartheid state's total strategy was the manner in which Kruger was staffed and what doctrinal and tactical precepts they brought with them. Under the instructions of the minister, the KNP had to implement, within a two-year timeframe, a security plan that was integrated into a national counter revolutionary strategy. Part of such a plan was to second a military advisor to head KNP security to coordinate this integration. At the same time such an individual had to match the conservation minded ideals of Kruger management,

where security needs did not ride roughshod over the conservation ideals that Kruger management held in such high regard. To be able to successfully implement this security plan, a person of sufficiently high rank in the SADF, preferably either a commandant or colonel had to be appointed and, crucially, the KNP required that such an individual “have an intense interest in the KNP and nature”.⁵⁹ That person was identified as Commandant Gert P. Otto (known also as Colonel ‘Otch’ Otto).⁶⁰ In January 1989 he was seconded to the KNP as Head: Security Officer.⁶¹ As head of KNP security, Otto, in his own words, wore “two hats” and was effectively also Officer Commanding: Kruger National Park Element, a force that numbered as many as 500 permanent and 150 part-time or civilian troops, the latter most likely including KNP white and black rangers who were commando members.⁶² The fact that the military force in the Park now bore the moniker as an ‘element’ was also an indication of the expansion of the military footprint in the Park. The designation as ‘commando’ was no longer fit for purpose and the designation as an element allowed for greater synergy as well as resource allocation and staffing from the military command to implement the KNP concept protection plan. In wearing these two hats, it should not escape our analysis that his primary function was to implement the objectives of the SADF in its counter revolutionary strategy as a commissioned officer.

Stephen Ellis (1994), in his seminal paper outlining SADF involvement in poaching and the illegal trade of ivory to fund their proxies in Angola and Mozambique, pointed out that Otto was a senior officer in the Reconnaissance Commando (also known as Recces), a special forces unit specializing in destabilization tactics of the frontline states on the borders of South Africa and a unit that was implicated in these acts of illicit trafficking. The doctrinal and operational tactics of the Recces epitomised the South African brand of COIN conducted not only direct clandestine operations, but excelled at pseudo-or false flag operations, regional destabilization and the training of proxy forces (Gossmann 2008). As a young officer in the SADF, Otto started his career in the military in what was called the ‘Bushman Battalion’, a unit comprised largely of so-called bushman trackers, led by white officers, that excelled at combat tracking or manhunting of enemy combatants (Uys 2014).

I was trained with the Bushman group until end of February 1977. After the training I commanded the 31[Battalion] recce wing, a heavily utilised group. We walked hundreds of kilometres every week, in the rear areas of

Angola and sometimes Zambia. I commanded all the operations up to 23 August, 1977, when I was transferred to 1 Recce Commando (Otch Otto in Uys 2014: 73).

Otto was therefore highly competent in the special brand of apartheid-era COIN tactics, namely combat tracking or manhunting and covert operations, before his appointment as head of security in KNP. As Anita Gossmann (2008) points out, not all militaries are able to learn COIN but where there is a favourable political environment and a penchant for pragmatism, the SADF was able to learn and exhibit COIN to devastating effect. So devastating, Gossmann contends, that South Africa was home to one of the most infamous COIN campaigns during the 1970s and 1980s, both within and outside the borders of the country (ibid.). This notoriety included techniques such as the use of torture and extrajudicial killings as standard practices (Gossmann 2006).

While it can be difficult to learn COIN, once acquired, it survives not only through doctrine, training, resources and specialized structures (ibid.) but also, as this thesis contends, through charismatic leaders. It is in this light that Otto's appointment is so telling. After his appointment as Kruger's head of security, Otto was instrumental in attempting to establish the Mozambique Assistance and Investment Corporation (MOZAIC) – of which he would be Chairman/Director - and claimed such an initiative would bring security and stabilization to the Kruger/Mozambique border area.⁶³ The most senior manager in Kruger, the park warden Dr. S.C.J Joubert, together with the Head: Conservation, Mr. J.J Kloppers were to act as 'members' of MOZAIC.⁶⁴ Curiously, no Mozambican nationals were appointed in any capacity. The establishment of such businesses, funded by public funds, was a common *modus operandi* of the SADF covert military command in its COIN operations in frontline states.⁶⁵ While there is no evidence that MOZAIC was anything more than a concept it still had very tangible real-world outcomes.

The intention of MOZAIC was twofold. Firstly, it was a joint endeavour by the SADF and KNP to 'privatize' the barter of firewood, curios and other commodities (such as information) supplied by the local communities in the KNP border regions in exchange for rations such as maize meal or other necessities such as soap and medical supplies and providing a service to deliver mail to family working in the Republic after the closure of the border posts.⁶⁶ Such forms of barter were an intrinsic component of COIN doctrine aimed at winning the 'hearts and minds' of

disaffected populations. In fact, these socio-economic incentives in the form of border trading posts to ostensibly uplift disaffected populations were explicitly outlined in the state's guidelines for its joint management committees.

Each sub/mini JMC [Joint Management Committee] must develop a joint and integrated security-/welfare-/[communication operations] plan ... [t]his is a priority.⁶⁷ [emphasis in original, own translation]

The importance of these border trading posts was emphasized in the minutes of the Kruger mini-JMC, stating that these “border trading posts as currently operated is a countermeasure which addresses the cause and must enjoy everyone's co-operation and support”.⁶⁸ Otto was therefore doing nothing other than implementing these strict guidelines, using MOZAIC as a vehicle to further the so-called welfare component of the state's counter revolutionary strategy. Conceptually, MOZAIC was therefore conceived to be no more than a SADF covert operations and Chief of Staff Intelligence-run front company, similar to Frama Inter-Trading Company, the front company that illegally transported high value timber and wildlife products (teak, ivory and rhino horn) as well as diamonds and illegal drugs such as mandrax from Angola into SWA⁶⁹ on SADF transport (see Reeve and Ellis 1995). For all intents and purposes, illicit activities such as smuggling, has become “institutionalized within the fabric of the South African state (Smith and Humphreys 2015: 198). Similar to Frama Inter-Trading, MOZAIC could also have been an attempt to better coordinate the smuggling of illicit products such as ivory and illegal firearms by ‘businessmen’ with opaque, less obvious ties to the SADF covert command. There is, however, no evidence that MOZAIC or Otto was directly involved in similar nefarious activities.

However, in one redacted U.S. intelligence report⁷⁰ from 1984 (before Otto's appointment), it is clear that the SADF had an established track record that included more than the benign trade of firewood to win the hearts and minds of populations in the border region. Renamo grouping along the border area, some with soldiers who were as young as ten, were transported on SADF helicopters and ferried back to ‘Pretoria’ – a reference most likely to the 5 Special Forces (Recce) Regiment outside Phalaborwa on the western border of Kruger. Here they were trained in marksmanship and demolition and redeployed into Mozambique after nine months of training to conduct pseudo operations in *Nyanga* uniforms,

supplied by the SADF, to confuse government forces and to terrorise civilian populations.⁷¹ Renamo groupings also shot and killed elephants for their ivory which was handed to ‘whites’ on the border with Kruger.⁷² Despite the lack of evidence that Otto perpetuated these activities under the guise of MOZAIC, it also bears being reminded that Otto’s appointment was not made in a vacuum. He already had a deep understanding of the proverbial battle space that made up the Kruger and its border areas in his time as a senior officer in the Eastern Transvaal Command⁷³ and it seems unlikely that he would have been unaware of the activities that preceded his appointment. Indeed, he is named in the appendix of the executive summary of the Steyn Commission report, a Presidential inquiry into the illegal smuggling of arms through the KNP which fuelled pseudo-operations (also known as Third Force activities) within and outside the borders of South Africa, as a person who could potentially bear knowledge of such activities.⁷⁴ It is these ‘Third Force’ activities that pushed the country to the brink of civil war in the period leading up to the democratic elections in 1994.

In addition, MOZAIC “also intends to strive towards a goal to establish a game park on the Mozambique side of the border to join up with Kruger National Park”.⁷⁵ In effect, such a game park was to ensure “that only friendly neighbours would exist posing no threat to the Kruger Park”, in effect a *cordon sanitaire*, a precursor to the idea of Peace Parks or transfrontier conservation initiatives.⁷⁶ Such a sanitized space necessitated the displacement of suspect populations under the guise of conservation. It is also reminiscent of a strategy the SADF used to remove around 50 000 people from the SWA border area with Angola to create a depopulated strip called the ‘Yati’ to detect insurgent activity (Stapleton 2014). Some critics viewed such transboundary conservation areas as integral to COIN destabilization tactics and that these conservation spaces ostensibly acted as a springboard to launch covert operations, the training of proxy forces and the smuggling of arms through the KNP (see the findings of the Steyn Commission).⁷⁷ Hidden in the bush in remote locations, such activities were shielded from public scrutiny.

In a range of interview transcripts conducted by Eddie Koch, the celebrated investigative journalist, in January 1993 for a planned *Channel 4* documentary called *Spoils of War*, both Colonel Piet Lategan, the head of the then South African Police Endangered Species Unit (SAP ESPU) and Colonel Jan Breytenbach, who testified at the Kumbelen Commission of

SADF complicity in the illegal wildlife trade, refer to the possible role Otto played in the continued illegal trade in ivory from Renamo operatives on the border with the KNP.⁷⁸ Breytenbach contended that Otto, who was ostensibly seconded to the KNP, was in fact *strategically* placed to continue the illegal trade of ivory that the SADF was embroiled in.⁷⁹ When these allegations came to light, Otto was subsequently transferred for his alleged role in ivory and gun smuggling through the KNP, a charge that Otto vehemently denied and one that caused him considerable reputational damage.⁸⁰ Otto's transfer – and not court martial - is a tacit reminder that he was acting with the full knowledge of covert operations command and that his early transfer was out of fear that his continued relationship and support of Renamo groupings would cause embarrassment to the De Klerk government and jeopardize its commitment to the Nkomati Accord.⁸¹ When the involvement of Kruger personnel in MOZAIC came to light, Joubert, the KNP warden at the time, suggested “that the less said about it, and the less fuss made, the better”,⁸² implying that senior Kruger staff did not want to be seen as complicit in the allegations of nefarious activities, specifically the smuggling of ivory, ostensibly run under the cover of MOZAIC.

Around 2013 Otto was again appointed in a leading role in Kruger's security, this time in the ‘war on rhino poaching’. His role as Mission Area Manager (MAM) placed him at the heart of SANPark's (and thus the state's) response to rhino poaching and gave him direct planning and operational control over the manner in which KNP rangers responded to the poaching threat as well as coordinating the role of the police and military partners in and around KNP. On his departure from KNP, Otto took up the role of Director of Operations in the Greater Kruger Environmental Protection Foundation (GKEPF)⁸³ in June 2016 that sought to coordinate and standardize the anti-poaching response and intelligence gathering capabilities of the private game reserves to the west of KNP as well as the private concessions in the Greater Lebombo Conservancy (GLC) in Mozambique. Otto's operational and doctrinal expertise in COIN no doubt influenced his thinking as MAM in KNP and Director of Operations at GKEPF. In a brief conversation with him, he outlined his vision to address unemployment in the region through training and what he ostensibly positioned as ‘empowerment’.

...the sphere of influence [of GKEPF] roughly overlaps the K2C [Kruger to Canyons] biosphere area where the critical resource is water. There is

just not enough water for everyone. So, through the SAWC [South African Wildlife College] and community initiatives from APNR [Amalgamated Private Nature Reserves – adjacent to Kruger] is to skill someone in an environment where security is the growing industry and skill that person to C2 level grade security officer where they can man a gate and do perimeter patrol and find a job in Jo’burg [Johannesburg]. Getting a job in Jo’burg beats a job anywhere in the country [he made an analogy of a medical doctor based in Cape Town going to the beach driving a crappy car or you could be a doctor in Jo’burg where you can buy the best golf kit and drive in a Ferrari to Serengeti (golf estate) to play a round of golf]. Its better for a guy with five kids to have better earning power in Jo’burg than him hanging around here maybe two of his kids get a job as a cleaner earning ZAR 2 000 and the rest have no other option but to poach. At least if he gets a better salary elsewhere he can send home a ZAR 1 500 instead of ZAR 1,50 every month. What do you think, is that inhuman? [sic].⁸⁴ [emphasis added]

In this brief encounter, he eschewed any progressive values attached to the training and upskilling of unemployed black men. It was probably as a result of my unintended facial response to his proposal that he questions whether such a proposal is indeed ‘inhuman’. In an environment where the “essential identity of the poacher...is male, black African” (Neumann 2004: 826), Otto portends to propose a form of social engineering, ostensibly through training and empowerment to rid the region adjacent to Kruger of this perceived threat. This population group has long been constructed to have a high propensity for crime, where the “moral panic around the criminal behaviour of young black men [...] appears to be independent of the crisis of capitalism” (Hall et al. 1978 in Jones 2006: 96), one where black youth have become *the* collective image of violence (Watson 1999). When state actors like Otto are able to deflect causes of social discontent away from the structural political economic crises that underlie the rhino poaching issue, it offers an important entry point into understanding how and at whom state sanctioned violence is directed and that these representations often occur in synchrony with the coercive activities of the state.

It is a recycled strategy eerily similar to the what Otto conceived under the auspices of MOZAIC – to clear the border area with Kruger of problematic populations. In this instance it is a problematic subset of the population - young black men. It is here that Neocleous’ broader conceptualization of pacification as “nothing less than a feat of social

engineering to (re)build social order” and that this “fabrication of order is organized around the administration of wage labour” (2013: 8). Dunlap and Fairhead (2014) demonstrate that such ‘population and spatial control’ resettlement programmes have long colonial roots and was intrinsic to the British COIN strategy in Malaya. To stem the incursion of poachers into the Park, the KNP conceptualized a strategy of ‘clearing the park from the outside’. Clearing the park from the outside – in this case through the training and hopefully the emigration of black men from the KNP border area in search of work - is often touted by KNP managers as a proactive and pragmatic response to crime (see Chapter 6). At its heart, it is fundamentally inscribed with racial bias. It is this seemingly progressive developmental bent to COIN, the ‘winning of hearts and minds’ of local populations, in this instance, through a training and skills development programme, that masks its decidedly un-progressive intentions. Porch (2011) debunks the dubious promise of economic development in such population-centric forms of warfare and that they are nothing more than a dangerous myth. Instead, it shatters and divides societies and that it is seldom a recipe for lasting stability (ibid.). Kienscherf (2016) posits that such welfare-cum-workfare programmes are part of a disciplinary apparatus distinct to COIN, targeted at ‘reconcilable’ elements within communities into peripheral sectors of the employment market. It is the ‘irreconcilable’ elements that are subject to police action. It does not mark a progressive move away from the overt racial categorizations of threat of the past, it merely reworks these racial forms into a different criterion, in this case unemployment, that warrants intervention (see Schrader 2019).

Like many other former military and security police operatives during the apartheid years who continue to play a direct role in anti-poaching operations in and around Kruger, attention should be directed at what doctrinal and tactical precepts they bring to conservation practice. Hannah Arendt (1973) in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* identifies such recycled practices as ‘boomerang effects’ that not only cross-pollinate repressive technologies and practices across regions but also, as this thesis contends, by key individuals from one moment of crisis to the next. It is through this mechanism of staffing and the practices that these key individuals bring with them that inscribe themselves into the institutional memories of organizations such as the KNP.

In 2016, Otto was the recipient of arguably one of the most acclaimed awards in conservation in South Africa - the rhino conservation award –

awarded by the Game Ranger's Association of Africa (GRAA).⁸⁵ Such prestigious awards promote and legitimises the problematic doctrinal and tactical competencies that is part of Otto's repertoire and where aspects of these problematic practices go unremarked – and even celebrated - in contemporary conservation practice, its use becomes normalized. Ahmed (2012) argues that for certain practices to become routine or ordinary in essence means that its use has become *institutionalized*. Otto continues to wield his influence over conservation practice within SANParks in his capacity as a security consultant (in March 2021), advising Table Mountain National Park authorities on developing a security plan and a joint operations centre after a spate of muggings and deadly assaults on visitors on the mountain.⁸⁶ Attention should be paid to the manner actors like Otto continue to inform the trajectory of conservation public policy premised on COIN inspired doctrine and the underlying racial bias that formed part of his thinking while based in the Kruger area.

4.6 The Material Violence of Paramilitary Uniforms: Fashioning the Field Ranger and Reinforcing a Martial Identity

One of the manifold thrusts of the colonial encounter was the transformation of the colonized human form from the 'uncivilized' into the 'civilized' (Comaroff and Comaroff 1997). For the colonial evangelists, cloaking the human form was at the centre of the "Protestant mission to cover African nakedness...to re-dress the savagery of Tswana by...insinuating in them a newly embodied sense of self-worth, taste and personhood" (ibid.: 220). Indeed, the very essence of civility lay in clothing, or more appropriately, *fashioning* the colonized body (ibid.). Here the quotidian act of clothing the native body was also in itself a central part of the imperialist enterprise (ibid.). The conservative khaki dress of the KNP gate guards and police boys not only served to differentiate them from the two distinct representations of racial identity – "one of the 'improved' native in contrast to that of the customary, ethnic collective" living outside the boundaries of the Park (Bunn 2001: 11), it fashioned them into the desired native form compatible with the European fetish of the nature reserve. These uniforms melded the uniform of the 'houseboy' with that of the colonial military, greeting tourists as they passed from "the

outside realm of modernity to a strange new zone in which an older yeoman class of loyalty can still be imagined” (ibid.: 10-11). It is this servitude and loyalty that was desired and the uniform played a role in the fashioning of the desired ‘native’ human form.

In law enforcement and military organizations, uniforms, in particular, play a central role as a cultural artefact and therefore in the identity and image-making of such institutions (Paul and Birzer 2004; see also⁸⁷). In the KNP, Jane Carruthers notes that the paramilitary origins of the Park meant

...that a uniform has become an important component of their image (1995: 112).

However, it was this uniform that represented a “notorious law enforcement profile” to the vast majority of black citizens that were historically excluded from national parks (Magome 2004: 127). Carruthers also supports this observation by Magome that for a large proportion of Africans, Kruger was not necessarily a manifestation of national pride but that it represented “manifestations of apartheid repression” and that “game wardens were part of Pretoria’s security forces” (1995: 89-90). The question of identity is particularly pertinent to organizations transitioning from one political dispensation to another. During the political transition into post-apartheid, the uniform played a dividing role in the politics of a newly conceived South African National Parks (SANParks) (see Magome 2004, Maguranyanga 2009). It is important to note that as an organization, consisting of geographically disjointed and in some cases isolated park operations and business units across the country, the issue of identity within SANParks as an organization does not always fit into a neat and all-encompassing definition. Despite the political transition into a vision of an inclusive, non-racial society, there would have most likely been some factions within the organization who chose to cling on to these cultural artefacts from the past. At its headquarters in Groenkloof, Pretoria, it was black employees under the leadership of a newly appointed chief executive officer (CEO), the African National Congress (ANC) aligned Mavuso Msimang, who re-enforced the wearing of the new casual corporate uniform (Magome 2004).

Concerned that changes would be limited to the name only, the majority of black employees called for changes in everything that resembled apartheid South Africa, including staff uniform...[t]he uniform was particularly

changed from military style to casual clothing, but only staff at head office mostly enjoyed this change, particularly senior black employees who had always rejected the khaki-style uniform (Magome 2004: 131).

The intention was for this new uniform to “...place less emphasis on the law enforcement profile of the NPB [National Parks Board], and more on its contribution to human needs” (ibid.: 128). However, it was Dr David Mabunda, the managing executive in charge of KNP, who, upon his appointment as CEO of SANParks in 2003, reintroduced the khaki uniform (ibid.). Coming from the KNP, Mabunda no doubt would have been greatly influenced by the martial culture that was so central to KNP identity. It was a curious capitulation for a figure who was regarded as a force for transformation in the KNP and who did not shy away from, at a minimum, acknowledging the inequities of the past and the role the KNP played in perpetuating those inequities (Maguranyanga 2009, Matelakengisa 2020). At a passing out parade for newly appointed field rangers in the KNP in 2012, Mabunda made the following remarks that shows the continued reverence the uniform played in the ranger services in KNP.

I have no doubt in my mind they will join some of the great names that ever donned this noble uniform before them.⁸⁸

Ironically, it was Mabunda, accused by one interlocutor of attempting to de-militarize the KNP during his tenure as managing executive.⁸⁹ It was clear from this discussion that, had Mabunda succeeded, the KNP would have been ill-prepared to deal with the current rhino poaching crisis stating “where would we be now if that had been implemented...what about the rhino population?”⁹⁰ It is conceivable that Mabunda faced stiff internal resistance in the KNP to the broader corporate shift in identity being instituted at head office. But after his tenure of close to six years in the KNP, it seems that he transferred the martial cultural identity so deeply embedded in the KNP to the broader organization after his appointment as CEO in 2003. It was also under his tenure, that SANParks appointed retired Major-General Johan Jooste,⁹¹ a 35-year veteran schooled in COIN tactics and operations during the apartheid state’s ‘bush wars’, as officer commanding of anti-poaching operations in the KNP in 2012. A former colleague of Jooste’s, Brigadier-General McGill Alexander commented on Jooste’s suitability for the position - that he “had considerable command experience with exposure to conventional and counterinsurgency

operations which would serve him well in his current job ... [and] ... he is a fine counterinsurgency strategist and he's nobody's fool".⁹² Upon his appointment Jooste sought to realign and re-emphasize the martial character and function of the KNP ranger services, stating

The battle lines have been drawn and it is up to my team and me to forcefully push back the frontiers of poaching. It is a fact that South Africa, a sovereign country, is under attack from armed foreign nationals. This should be seen as a declaration of war against South Africa by armed foreign criminals. We are going to take the war to these armed bandits and we aim to win it. ⁹³ [emphasis added]

Here Jooste, in framing poachers as 'foreign', 'armed' and 'criminal', is reusing an age-old discursive tactic used in many COIN-inspired campaigns. It serves to legitimize and reproduce state-backed political violence against the same populations that he (and the SADF) targeted during the bush wars of the mid-1980s (see Lunstrum and Ybarra 2018, Peluso and Vandergeest 2011, Woods and Naimark 2020). Many critics of militarized conservation ascribe the militarization of Kruger solely to Jooste but it bears being reminded that he was intentionally employed for that specific purpose as a result of the intense political pressure on SANParks executive staff from Cabinet-level politicians (see Chapter 5). Even though his role has shifted to that of Head: Special Operations at head office after the appointment of Nicholus Funda as Chief Ranger in November 2015, Jooste continued to be a central and much revered figure in the KNP ranger services. This continued reverence for Jooste and the COIN-infused security centric thinking that he espoused despite his shift to Groenkloof stood in contrast to the conservation-centric and sprinkling of post development thinking that influenced the vision that Funda⁹⁴ wished to stamp on his tenure as chief ranger. This influence and charisma that Jooste induced was demonstrated in the many conversations with field rangers and section rangers and their admiration for Jooste, especially in his role in reconfiguring the ranger services which was previously subordinated to tourism related functions and priorities. Under such an organizational structure, there was a general feeling of dissatisfaction amongst ranger staff and that there was an insufficient appreciation of the challenges faced by rangers in the face of rhino poaching.⁹⁵

[Jooste] brought his knowledge, experience and strategic thinking. He adapted military doctrine that could be applied practically in our situation

(Ken Maggs: Environmental Crime Investigations unit, KNP in Rademeyer, 2018: 46).

Shaw and Rademeyer (2016) also affirm this observation that Jooste has indeed refocused operations and ensured greater co-ordination within SANParks. Furthermore, Jooste was also widely lauded outside of the KNP and he commanded appreciable respect and admiration from the broader conservation fraternity,⁹⁶ most demonstrably in his central role as keynote speaker at the Game Ranger's Association of Africa (GRAA) Annual General Meeting (AGM) in June 2016 and the inaugural Africa Ranger's Conference in August 2018 where his celebrity was palpable and where a select few were drawn into his audience between sessions and at meal times.⁹⁷ Conceivably as a result of his influence and Park-wide support, the ranger services have utterly rejected early attempts at jettisoning these problematic cultural artefacts by adopting a camouflage military-style uniform in 2017. As a part of its new uniform, SANParks has also commissioned a new 'anti-tracking boot' for rangers where the "[s]ole must have a non-descript, variable tread pattern resembling an elephant footprint"⁹⁸ to aid rangers in anti-tracking – a key competency in COIN - during combat tracking operations. This new uniform is eerily reminiscent of the notorious Internal Stability Division (ISD),⁹⁹ a counter terrorism SAP unit formed in the run up to the 1994 elections. It is hard to imagine that Jooste played no role in the conceptualization or even nurturing of this new camouflaged uniform but what is certain is that uniforms – especially one so overtly militaristic – is not benign and plays a very specific cultural role in shaping the identity of an organization – in this instance re-emphasizing the martial culture of the KNP ranger services. In doing so, KNP managers like Jooste, have failed not only to recognize the cultural role of uniforms and its symbolic resonance with a brutal regime but have also rolled back any gains, if any, in fundamentally transforming SANParks twenty-five years after the fall of apartheid.

Jooste's appointment served a number of crucial politically coded messages (Smith and Humphreys 2015). Conservation and ranching lobbies are overwhelmingly white and in appointing Jooste, SANParks could assuage the fears of this constituency (ibid.). Second, the organization could show its commitment to addressing the issue of rhino poaching amid allegations of mismanagement and corruption (ibid.). Lastly, a former senior manager, who was privy to management committee (MANCO) meetings at SANParks headquarters asserts that vestiges of the

now defunct Afrikaner Broederbond (formerly a secretive Afrikaner society with highly influential conservative and segregationist political leanings) made a significant contribution to the fight against rhino poaching and would only release the funds on condition that Jooste was appointed.¹⁰⁰ Thus, it is the figure of the white male that represents a higher order of knowledge (Pugliese 2005) and the illusion of coherence and competence (Ahmed 2012).

Paul and Birzer (2004) contend that where the symbolic imagery of clothing conveys social ordering and a symbolic display of power, the adoption of non-traditional militarized police uniforms (ie. military-style black and camouflaged uniforms) equates to an act of symbolic violence, a cultural technique that serves to inspire fear and subservience. This symbolic violence often remains misdiagnosed as a form of legitimacy of the police to wield state sanctioned violence and often “appears in the guise of integrity, respect, prominence, or reverence” with the “power to seduce the public into subservience over police violations” (ibid.: 122). Furthermore, Paul and Birzer (2004) caution that the adoption of camouflaged police uniforms reinforces acts of impunity among officers, deflects public inquiry and ultimately erodes public trust. If this is so, then this symbolic power of uniforms becomes manifestly material. Clothing may indeed seem banal but Comaroff and Comaroff warn that its use should not be underestimated, that “even the most elaborate social formations arise from such quotidian acts” (1997: 220). Thus, the effect of introducing the camouflaged uniform serve to fashion the field ranger force into enacting violence, a quality that threatens to persist in its institutional culture. The adoption of a military-style camouflaged uniform in the KNP is a concerning development, it not only mediates field ranger conduct when conducting law enforcement duties with a tendency to be more violent, its use further alienates the communities that are so central to its purported model of conservation as a central driver of human development.

4.7 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has sought to build on the early accounts of war – which referred in the main to the South African War at the turn of the 20th century - and its relationship to the landscape that makes up the Kruger

National Park. It makes a several contributions to the manner preparedness for war in South African society, in the face of real or perceived counter revolutionary threats to the apartheid state, was matched by efforts in the Park. It shows that the Park was inextricably embroiled in these counter revolutionary efforts and these linkages to the past show that these securitized worldviews and practices used in its counter revolutionary actions in the 1970s and 1980s continue to inform its responses to threats in its contemporary 'war on poaching'.

Firstly, it shows that in the face of the growing security concerns in the country, the Park continued to see itself as exceptional, that an attack on the Park represented a direct attack on the state where a loss of valuable revenue from international tourism could have severe economic ramifications for the state. While it actively sought greater securitization, in the process further enhancing its authorities and showing its indispensability to the state apparatus, it did not welcome the leading role the SADF would play in securing the Kruger's international boundary with Mozambique. It proved to be a relationship fraught with contestation. In essence, it was not opposed to security, only the manner in which security was deployed that did not only detract from its sense of wildness but also that it feared a loss of the considerable authorities it had amassed over the course of its existence. It thus actively sought to bring the authorities of the military under its control.

Secondly, it suggests that the Park's own security assessments also differed to that of the state and that much of its fears were based on a perceived threat of not only communism but black nationalism. This perception of these dual, interrelated threats, set it apart from how other conservation agencies in the border areas perceived national security threats, it was blackness and the fear of blackness that also shaped its securitized worldviews. This 'laager' or siege mentality was deeply ingrained in the psyche of the white management and community within Kruger, heightened by its geographical location of being virtually surrounded by bantustans. This fear of blackness was founded on the colonial view of Africans as a threat, disorderly or uncivilized. This fear of black populations on its borders continue to shape the dystopian views of white managers in the manner they frame who and what population groups pose a threat to the Park.

Very little has been written about the precise role the Park and its ranger services played in the counterinsurgency operations of the

apartheid security forces in deflecting insurrectionary threats. This chapter makes a novel contribution to the precise role the Park played in manhunting operations and it also shows where manhunting was a central tactical tool in the apartheid state's counterinsurgency efforts, that the Park played a very specific role in nurturing and enhancing this skill set in the apartheid security apparatus. It provided much more than a training ground, the expertise of its rangers in detecting and tracking refugees and insurgents and its expertise in bush craft in dangerous game areas made it an indispensable ally to the security forces in perpetuating and enhancing this particular skill set. It also shows the direct role the Park's rangers played in manhunting and killing ANC operatives and that the bodies of these combatants remain hidden in an unmarked, mass grave in the Park. The Kruger Park thus played a direct role in upholding the apartheid state in replicating its atrocities and racial injustices. It played an active role in thwarting a just, more equal society and its this quality to obfuscate its role in these atrocities that continues in its contemporary actions against rhino poachers.

This chapter also argues that attention should be paid to the manner violence is perpetuated by the same actors across different political epochs. It shows the crucial role actors like Otch Otto played and continues to play in shaping ranger practices in the Park, premised on manhunting and counterinsurgency tactics. It also shows how the interventions, ostensibly aimed at improving the lives of people living on the boundaries of the Park, are devoid of substance and that at its core it is motivated by racist notions of who poses a threat to the Park and that its solutions lie in forms of social control that vacates its border regions of problematic populations or sub-sets within these populations in very specific ways.

Lastly, it also shows that uniforms have and continue to act as an arena of contestation for SANParks as an organization and that the uniform plays a central role in the martial identity of the Park. It shows that these seemingly banal acts have enduring and material social effects and that uniforms serve to fashion field rangers and their practices in specific ways. In turning to camouflaged uniforms in its 'war on poaching', it represents an utter rejection of recognizing the divisive and historical role the khaki uniform played and its close association with a repressive regime. It shows that such seemingly quotidian acts can obscure deviant and violent acts and reinforces impunity. It represents a return by the Park in acting like a

state within a state in its ability to use violence and subdue populations it sees as problematic.

Notes

¹ Meaning red (communist) and black danger or menace.

² Skukuza Archives/13/4. 'FW's Reign Marks the end of the "Total Strategy" Era' by Peter Fabricius. From an undated and unacknowledged newspaper clipping in the Skukuza Archives.

³ Baines (2014) makes a crucial observation regarding the phrase 'border wars' and the necessity to problematize a term that continues to be used in common usage in South African literature and in the public domain. The term obscures the fact that South African security forces operated and occupied large swathes of southern Angola for extended periods in support of UNITA (the Movement for the Total Independence of Angola). The term 'border' perpetuated the myth "that SADF troops were protecting South Africa's border and not fighting on foreign soil" (ibid.: 2).

⁴ Afrikaans for crowbar, denoting a character of 'hardness' and its ability to prise terrorists from the bush as you would a nail from a board. Officially it was known as the South West African Police Counterinsurgency (SWAPOL-COIN) unit. The unit was also known as 'Operation K' (see Baines, 2014) which could ostensibly also have given rise to the name *Koevoet*.

⁵ Skukuza Archives NK/9/7 Bantoesake Mosambiekers 1971 to 1995 Letter from Chief Ranger to Secretary Timbavati Game Reserve, 11 October 1978.

⁶ University of Johannesburg Library: Archives and Special Collections TEBA/WNLA 46B/1 Pad 1.

⁷ It is uncertain from the archival records when exactly these police stations were first established and what tensions arose in those early days. By the mid 1980s there seems to have been five police stations in the Park, namely Pafuri, N'wanetsi, Makhadzi, Kostini and Skukuza. The last named still an active community police station and Pafuri and Giriwondo (close to Makhadzi) are staffed by the SAPS and Customs officials where they function as official border posts.

⁸ Skukuza Archives NK/13/32 Vertroulik Veiligheids Polisie [Confidential Security Police] 1966-1985. Letter from Park Warden to senior SAP official, 25 October 1985. "Dit was deur die jare vir my 'n voorreg en 'n vreugde om met die S.A.P., en spesifiek met al die S.A.P. verteenwoordigers in die Krugerwildtuin, saam te werk en om gesindhede op die beste vlak te handhaaf. Ons aanvaar die manne almal as deel van ons personeel".

⁹ Skukuza Archives NK/13/32 Vertroulik Veiligheids Polisie [Confidential Security Police] 1966-1985. Letter from Park Warden to Deputy Commissioner: Riot Control, 10 September 1985. “Ook vir jou reuse aandeel om ‘n liefde vir die Wildtuin by jou manne hier in te skerp”.

¹⁰ Skukuza Archives NK/13/32 Vertroulik Veiligheids Polisie [Confidential Security Police] 1966-1985. Letter from Park Warden to Deputy Commissioner: Riot Control, 10 September 1985. “Ek voorsien vir myself en die Wildtuin net eindelose probleme”.

¹¹ Skukuza Archives NK/13/4 Vertroulik Beveiligingsplan [Confidential Security Plan] 1987-1992. Bevelsbeleid: Krugerwildtuin Kommando [Command Policy: Kruger National Park Commando], 28 February, 1991. “Die Beveiligingsplan vir die Nasionale Krugerwildtuin (NKW BP) is ‘n operasionele konsep waarin die NKW se taak van beskerming en bewaring met die SAW se taak van beskerming en beveiliging vesoen word. Ofskoon nie ‘n Nasionale Sleutelpunt nie word die NWK in Nasionale belang en as ‘n strategiese bate bestuur”.

¹² Skukuza Archives NK/13/4 Vertroulik – Beveiligings Plan 1988-1990, ‘Motivering: Vervroegde Hergradering van die pos van Sekuriteitsbeampte na Hoof: Sekuriteit, Natuurbestuur NKW’, 16 November 1988.

¹³ Skukuza Archives NK/13/4 Vertroulik – Beveiligings Plan 1988-1990. Letter from the Secretariat of the State Security Council ‘Inskakelig van die Nasionale Krugerwildtuin by OTGBS’ 25 April 1987. It must be noted that initially the KNP fell under two command regions, namely, the Far North Command, which was responsible for implementing the national security plan north of the Luvuvhu River and the Eastern Transvaal Command. This caused great consternation amongst Park managers and the lack of coordination and sharing of information between the two command regions often led to operations that were ill conceived and could have caused the killing of KNP field rangers who would have been misidentified as so-called terrorists.

¹⁴ Skukuza Archives/13/4 Stafteiken Herbenaming Krugerwildtuin Kommando (KWK) na: Krugerwildtuin Eendheid (KW Eenheid) en uitbreiding van die Eenheid Sterktestaat [Renaming of Kruger Commando to: Kruger National Park Element and expansion of Element Strength], Letter dated 31 August 1990 on Kruger Commando letterhead.

¹⁵ Skukuza Archives/13/4 Letter from ‘Lappies’ to park warden, 28 October 1989. “Weermagaktiwiteite is ‘n klein hindernis vir hierdie groepe”.

¹⁶ Skukuza Archives/13/4 Buiteinstansies. S.A Weermag 1941-1988. Letter from Dr. S.C.J Joubert: Control Research Officer to Dr. U de V Pienaar: Park Warden, KNP, 19 August 1986 ‘Deurlopers en Militêre Bedrywighede in die Nasionale

Krugerwildtuin (NWK)' [Trespassers and Military Actions in the Kruger National Park (KNP)].

¹⁷ Skukuza Archives/13/4 'Instromingsbeheer aan die oosgrens van die Nasionale Krugerwildtuin', "Daar is egter ook reeds bewys dat 'n swart patrollie-mag by verre meer suksesvol is in die opvolging en arrestasie van ongewenste immigrante as die SAW reaksie -mag".

¹⁸ Skukuza Archives/13/4 Stafteiken Herbenaming Krugerwildtuin Kommando (KWK) na: Krugerwildtuin Eendheid (KW Eenheid) en uitbreiding van die Eenheid Sterktestaat [Renaming of Kruger Commando to: Kruger National Park Element and expansion of Element Strength], Letter dated 31 August 1990 on Kruger Commando letterhead.

¹⁹ Skukuza Archives NK/13/4 Buiteinstansies. S.A Weermag 1941-1988. Letter from Dr. S.C.J Joubert: Control Research Officer to Dr. U de V Pienaar: Park Warden, KNP, 19 August 1986. Deurloper en Militêre Bedrywighe in die Nasionale Krugerwildtuin (NWK). "Die lae sukses-syfer van die militêre teenwoordigheid in die NWK moet dus aan die gehalte van die optrede van die trope toegeskryf word. Dit kan moontlik teweeggebring word deur die vrees vir ongediertes, gebrek aan terreinkennis, onsekerheid oor korrekte optrede, ongemotiveerdheid, en waarskynlik nog vele meer redes. Die militêre teenwoordigheid in die NWK slaag duidelik nie in hulle doel nie en skep verder probleme deur ongedissiplineerde optredes (spoedoortredings, e.a.)".

²⁰ Skukuza Archives NK/13/4 Buiteinstansies. S.A Weermag 1941-1988. Letter from Dr. S.C.J Joubert: Control Research Officer to Dr. U de V Pienaar: Park Warden, KNP, 19 August 1986. "Daar is genoegsame bewyse dat die veiligheidsmagte wat tans in die NWK is, heeltemal ontoereikend is om aan die verwagtinge te voldoen. Dit is inderdaad ook nie a.g.v. 'n gebrek aan getalle, toerusting, ens. nie maar eerder gemotiveerdheid en planmatigheid". [There is sufficient evidence that the security forces that are currently in KNP, is utterly ill-prepared to meet the expectations. It is indeed also not as a result of a shortage of numbers [of troops], equipment, etc. but can rather be ascribed to demotivation and a lack systematic planning.]

²¹ Skukuza Archives/13/4 'Operasionele Doeltreffendheid: Hulpdiens Vegelement Lede: Krugerwildtuin Kommando' [Operational Effectiveness: Auxiliary Service Combat Element: Kruger National Park Commando], 25 August 1990, Col. G.P. Otto.

²² Skukuza Archives/13/4 Buiteinstansies. S.A Weermag 1941-1988. Letter from Dr. S.C.J Joubert: Control Research Officer to Dr. U de V Pienaar: Park Warden, KNP, 19 August 1986 'Deurlopers en Militêre Bedrywighe in die Nasionale Krugerwildtuin (NWK)' [Trespassers and Military Actions in the Kruger National

Park (KNP)] “Die doel met die oornam van gesag oor militêre kampe deur veiligheidsheidveldwagters sou wees om alle militêre aksies en inisiatiewe in die beheer van die Raad te plaas” [“The purpose with the take-over of authority over military camps by security section rangers would be to place all military actions and initiatives under the control of the Board”; emphasis in original].

²³ ‘SANDF ill-discipline sticks its head out in Kruger’, *defenceWeb*, 16 January 2015 [Online] Available at: <https://www.defenceweb.co.za/sa-defence/sa-defence-sa-defence/sandf-ill-discipline-sticks-its-head-out-in-kruger/> (Accessed 23 December 2021).

²⁴ Semi-structured interview, KNP section ranger, August 2016.

²⁵ Informal conversation with KNP section ranger, February 2017.

²⁶ Informal conversation with field ranger, November 2016.

²⁷ Skukuza Archives NK/13/4 ‘Algemene toestand T.O.V sekerheid, vedediging en beveiliging van die Nasionale Krugerwildtuin’ [General Condition with regard to Security, Defence and Protection of the Kruger National Park].

²⁸ To mark its 50th anniversary after independence the country changed its name from Swaziland to eSwatini.

²⁹ Skukuza Archives NK/13/4 Vertroulik – Beveiligings Plan 1988-1990, “Almal in hierdie land is terdeë bewus van die kwade bedoelings van ‘n vyandige wêreld (veral sommige Kommunistiese lande en Swart Afrika state) wat daarop uit is om die Republiek van Suid-Afrika op enige denkbare wyse skade aan te doen. Volgens die jongste inligting tot my beskikking, word die Wildtuin beskou na een van die moontlike deurgange van opgeleide saboteurs en elemente wie se doelstellings dit is om die land te saboteur en skade berokken”.

³⁰ Skukuza Archives NK/13/4 Letter from KNP Park Warden Dr P de V Pienaar to Col. Olivier, District Commander SAP, 7 June 1983. “Na aanleiding van die eskalاسie in tereuraanvale (vgl. die bomontploffings in Pretoria en Bloemfontein) en die jongste veiligheidsinligting [...] te reël vir ‘n eskort-diens vir die skoolbusse wat kinders na Hoërskole buite die Park vervoer [...] Die feit dat albei busse deur Gazankulu moet ry [...] end it gedurende die donker, maak hulle hoogs kwesbaar vir hierdie tipe terreuraanslae”.

³¹ Skukuza Archives NK/13/4 Letter from Lt Col G.S. Olivier, District Commander to Dr Pienaar, Park Warden KNP, 18 July 1983. “Daar kan nie aan die versoek van die Parkeraad voldoen word nie. Die situasie is tans nie van so ‘n aard dat spesiale geleide diens van busse ingestel moet word nie [...] Die aangeleentheid is ook voor die Gesamentlike Bestuursentrum en die veiligheidskomitee gelê wie eens is dat skool busse nie op hierdie stadium begelei moet word nie”.

³² Semi-structured interview with KNP regional ranger, March 2017.

³³ See Kaplan, R.D. (1994) 'The Coming Anarchy: How Crime, Overpopulation, Tribalism and Disease are Rapidly Destroying the Social Fabric of our Planet', *The Atlantic* February 1994 [Online] Available at: <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1994/02/the-coming-anarchy/304670/> (Accessed 16 October 2015).

³⁴ Informal conversation with KNP section ranger, October 2016.

³⁵ Semi-structured interview with KNP section ranger, February 2017.

³⁶ Informal conversation with KNP section ranger, September 2018.

³⁷ Informal conversation with former senior KNP manager, March 2021.

³⁸ See 'South African Special Forces Documentary', 28 November 2016 [Online] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GEArr4RhWX8> (Accessed 27 April 2020). Reportedly, by the end of the conflict, Koevoet had killed 3 200 so-called insurgents in 1 615 engagements or contacts (Stapleton, 2014).

³⁹ Archival Papers of Stephen Ellis, African Studies Centre, Leiden. 'Namibia boosts hunt for ivory poachers', *Times*, 15 August 1989.

⁴⁰ Skukuza Archives NK/13/5 'Spoorsny en Teenspoorsnykursus' [Tracking and Countertracking Course], Letter from Commander: Parachute Regiment to Chairman: Board of Curators NPB, 30 November 1970.

⁴¹ Skukuza Archives NK/13/32 'SAP Algemeen' 1987-1996. 'Gevorderde Spoorsnykus: Spoorsnyers: Suid-Afrikaanse Polisie Kruger Wildtuin' 1 October 1991. Letter from Brigadier D.S. Blom to Mr D.J. Ackermann, Chief Director of National Parks Board. "...het geen moeite ontsien om vir die kursus aldaar reëlings te tref nie".

⁴² Skukuza Archives/13/4 Bevelsbeleid (BB): Krugerwildtuin Kommando: 1991/92. Taktiese Operasionele Konsep: Die Integrasie van Veldwagter en die Hulpdiens Vegelement (HDVE) in die NKW BP [Command Policy (CP): Kruger National Park Kommando: 1991/92. Tactical Operational Concept: The Integration of Field Ranger and Auxiliary Service Combat Element in the KNP CP], 28 February 1991. "Hul spoorsnyvaardighede moet op so 'n standaard wees dat hulle 'n effektiewe opsporingsvermoë daarstel en die indringer teen sy eie spoed en selfs vinniger kan opvolg en arresteer"

⁴³ Skukuza Archives/13/4 Bevelsbeleid (BB): Krugerwildtuin Kommando: 1991/92 [Command Policy (CP): Kruger National Park Kommando: 1991/92], 28 February 1991. "Tipe Operasie. Formasie Teen-insurgensie operasies. Take: Soek en slag operasies...Hakkejagops" ["Type of Operation: Formation Counterinsurgency operations. Tasks: Search and destroy operations...Hot pursuit ops [operations]".

⁴⁴ Skukuza Archives/13/4 Bevelsbeleid (BB): Krugerwildtuin Kommando: 1991/92 [Command Policy (CP): Kruger National Park Commando: 1991/92], 28 February 1991. Addendum 2 to Appendix C Operational Concept (Graphical).

⁴⁵ Southern African Wildlife College 'Wildlife Guardianship' [online] Available at: <https://wildlifecollege.org.za/wildlife-guardianship/> (Accessed 2 May 2020).

⁴⁶ Southern African Wildlife College 'Law Enforcement: Track a Person in a Natural Environment' [Online] Available at: <https://wildlifecollege.org.za/courses/track-person-natural-environment/> (Accessed 2 May 2020).

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Informal conversation with senior KNP manager, November 2016.

⁴⁹ Informal conversation with senior KNP manager, November 2016.

⁵⁰ Skukuza Archives/13/4 'Instromingsbeheer aan die oosgrens van die Nasionale Krugerwildtuin [Influx control on the eastern boundary of the Kruger National Park], 13 February 1987. "Hoewel dit bekend is dat magte wat die RSA vyandige gesind is ook vanuit Mosambiek opereer en die NKW gebruik as 'n toegangsroete om die RSA binne te sypel, mag dit egter aanvaar word dat die oorgrote onwettige immigrante uit mense met lewensnood bestaan".

⁵¹ Skukuza Archives NK/13/4 Buiteinstansies. S.A Weermag 1941-1988 [External Institutions: S.A Army]. Letter from KNP Commander P. van Wyk, 22 May 1978, "Opleiding van Lede – Krugerwildtuin Kommando [Training of Members – KNP Commando]. "Alle mootlike weë om die bywoningssyfers te verhoog, is reeds ondersoek en geïmplimenteer. Dit wil egter voorkom asof die enigste manier waarop mense gemotiveer sal kan word om tot aksie te gaan om hulleself voor te berei, sal wees om een of meer in 'n skyn terroriste-aanval te laat sneuvel".

⁵² Skukuza Archives NK/9/7 Letter from Chief Director NPB to Director General Homeland Affairs, 13 July 1987. "U sal merk dat die dienste van sowat 325 swart werkers (waarvan die meerderheid 15 jaar en langer in ons diens is) nie net onontbeerlik is en 'n sletelrol vervul in die behoorlike bestuur van die Krugerwildtuin nie, dog ook 'n belangrike skakel vorm in strategie wat die SA Weermag en SA Polisie Teeninsurgensie Eenhede, deur die plaaslike GBS, tans hier op ons oosgrens met Mosambiek ontwikkel".

⁵³ Skukuza Archives NK/13/4 Buiteinstansies. S.A Weermag 1941-1988 [External Institutions: S.A Army]. Letter from Head: Nature Conservation to Commander: Command Eastern Transvaal, 1 July 1986.

⁵⁴ Skukuza Archives NK/13/4 'Algemene toestand T.O.V sekerheid, verdediging en beveiliging van die Nasionale Krugerwildtuin' [General condition (with regards to the) security, defence and safety of the Kruger National Park].

⁵⁵ Skukuza Archives NK/13/4 Vertroulik Beveiligingsplan [Confidential Security Plan] 1987-1992. ‘Mosambiekwerkers van die Nasionale Krugerwildtuin: Die verskaffing van permanente verblyf’ [Mozambican workers of the Kruger National Park: The issuing of permanent residence], 27 April 1987.

⁵⁶ Skukuza Archives NK/13/4 Buiteinstansies SA Weermag [External Organizations SA Army] 1941-1988. Letter from Commander Group 33 to park warden, 17 July 1988.

⁵⁷ Skukuza Archives NK/13/4 Vertroulik Aanhangsel J: Betrokkenheid van veldwagters in teen-terroriste aksies, 11-15 Julie 1988 [Confidential Appendix J: Involvement of field rangers in counter terrorist actions 11-15 July 1988].

⁵⁸ Informal conversation with KNP field ranger, January 2017.

⁵⁹ Skukuza Archives NK/13/4 Vertroulik – Beveiligingsplan 1988-1990, ‘Aanstelling van Sekerheidsveldwagter: Nasionale Krugerwildtuin, 17 Oktober 1988’; ‘Sekondering na die Nasionale Parkeraad: 66518150 PE Kmdt G.P. Otto, SAIK, 20 Oktober 1988’.

⁶⁰ This was confirmed in an informal conversation with Otch Otto, 9 March 2021. Two senior KNP managers, one with many years’ experience in the Kruger, confirmed that the Head of Kruger Security and its Commando during the late 1980s is the same Colonel ‘Otch’ Otto who was the Mission Area Manager who directed anti-poaching operations in KNP around the period of 2015/2016. A third respondent in DEA also confirmed that it is the same individual. See also Meskill, 2012 and Ellis, 1994.

⁶¹ Skukuza Archives NK/13/4 Vertroulik – Beveiligingsplan 1988-1990, ‘Aanstelling van Sekerheidsveldwagter: Nasionale Krugerwildtuin, 17 Oktober 1988’; ‘Sekondering na die Nasionale Parkeraad: 66518150 PE Kmdt G.P. Otto, SAIK, 20 Oktober 1988’.

⁶² Skukuza Archives/13/4 Stafteiken Herbenaming Krugerwildtuin Kommando (KWK) na: Krugerwildtuin Eenheid (KW Eenheid) en uitbreiding van die Eenheid Sterktestaat [Renaming of Kruger Commando to: Kruger National Park Element and expansion of Element Strength], Letter dated 31 August 1990 on Kruger Commando letterhead. Also, informal conversation with Otch Otto, March 2021. In a conceptual security plan for the KNP, Otto outlined the composition of the SADF element in the KNP – 9 soldiers per squad, 3 squads per platoon; 3 platoons per company; 1 company per military base; five military bases in the KNP amounts to a total of 405 soldiers, two thirds of which to be composed of HDVE (Hulpdiens Vegelemente or Auxiliary Service Combat Element) composed of xiTsonga speaking troops and one third composed of DTM (Deeltydse Mag elemente or conscripts). See Skukuza Archives NK/13/4 Vertroulik Beveiligingsplan [Confidential Security Plan] 1987 to 1992 Taktiese Operasionele Konsep: Die integrasie van veldwagters en die Hulpdiens Vegelement (HDVE) in

die NKW BP [Tactical Operational Concept: The integration of field rangers and the Auxiliary Service Combat Element in the KNP].

⁶³ Archival Papers of Stephen Ellis, African Studies Centre, Leiden.

⁶⁴ Archival Papers of Stephen Ellis, African Studies Centre, Leiden.

⁶⁵ Archival Papers of Stephen Ellis, African Studies Centre, Leiden.

⁶⁶ Archival Papers of Stephen Ellis, African Studies Centre, Leiden. See letter from the Executive Director: KNP, Dr S.C.J. Joubert to Mr I.S.C. Parker dated 12 January 1993. See also Skukuza Archives/13/4 ‘Verslag insake die Implementering van die Militêre-Beveiligingsplan vir die Krugerwildtuin [Report related to the Implementation of the Military Security Plan for the Kruger National Park].

⁶⁷ Skukuza Archives NK/13/4 Vetroulik OT GBS (2) 1987-1995 Riglyne vir Gesamentlike optrede: Sub/Mini GBS van die OTBGS [Guidelines for Joint action]. “Elke sub/mini GBS moet ‘n gesamentlike en geïntregeerde veiligheid-/welvaarts-/komops plan ontwikkel...[d]it is ‘n prioriteit’.

⁶⁸ Skukuza Archives/13/4 ‘Notule van die Derde Nasionale Krugerwildtuin Gesamentlike Beplanningskomitee Vergadering gehou 241000B Augustus 1989 te Groep 13’ [Minutes of the Third Kruger National Park Joint Planning Committee Meeting held August 1989 at Group 13].

⁶⁹ Other smuggling routes or ‘pipelines’ were also through Botswana and Zambia before heading south to South Africa with Angola and ‘Central Africa’ (presumably Zaire – present day Democratic Republic of Congo) as source countries. From there, these illicit products were flown out on SADF Airforce aircraft to unknown destinations (Reeve and Ellis 1995).

⁷⁰ Archival Papers of Stephen Ellis, African Studies Centre, Leiden. (U.S.) Department of Defence; Unvetted Classified Report, DOI: 88 09 00.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Informal conversation with Otch Otto, March 2021.

⁷⁴ Historical Papers Research Archives, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa, *ZA HPR A AG3288, Steyn Report Summary* [Online] Available at: <http://historicalpapers-atom.wits.ac.za/steyn-report-summary> (Accessed 22 February 2021).

⁷⁵ Archival Papers of Stephen Ellis, African Studies Centre, Leiden. This is not the first instance in which a transboundary conservation area adjacent to the KNP was proposed, with the first proposals dating back to 1925 (see Mavhunga and Spierenburg 2009).

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ ‘Shocks from the Steyn Report’, *M&G*, 31 January 1997 [Online] Available at: <https://mg.co.za/article/1997-01-31-shocks-from-the-steyn-report/> (Accessed 22 February 2021). See also Archival Papers of Stephen Ellis, African Studies Centre, Leiden. ‘The African Parks were Created as a Cover for Destabilization’, *Executive Intelligence Review*, November 1994.

⁷⁸ Archival Papers of Stephen Ellis, African Studies Centre, Leiden. ‘Ivory Wars Interview’, January 1993.

⁷⁹ Breytenbach’s contention, not mine. See Archival Papers of Stephen Ellis, African Studies Centre, Leiden. ‘Ivory Wars Interview’, January 1993.

⁸⁰ Informal conversation with Otch Otto, March 2021.

⁸¹ Archival Papers of Stephen Ellis, African Studies Centre, Leiden. The Nkomati Accord was signed on the 16 March 1984, in which the South African authorities guaranteed to discontinue their support for Renamo (which they never did) and in return, Mozambique would evict the ANC from Mozambique, except for a small diplomatic mission in Maputo. This was also seen as a means to pave a way for much needed Western aid to Mozambique and to tilt Mozambican alliance away from the communist-aligned interests to that of the West (see Azevedo, 1991).

⁸² Archival Papers of Stephen Ellis, African Studies Centre, Leiden. See letter from the Executive Director: KNP, Dr S.C.J. Joubert to Mr I.S.C. Parker dated 12 January 1993.

⁸³ See GKEPF Chairman’s Report 2016 [Online] Available at: <http://www.gkepf.org/founding-statement.html> (Accessed 7 October 2016).

⁸⁴ Informal conversation with Otch Otto, 13 February 2017. This excerpt is not from a voice recording but from a contemporaneous note which was made immediately after our brief encounter in the Skukuza camp parking lot.

⁸⁵ See [Online] Available at: <https://www.rhinoconservationawards.org/gallery.html> (Accessed 25 March 2021).

⁸⁶ Informal conversation with Otch Otto, March 2021. See also ‘Show us the money from our Mountain, SANParks’, *Daily Maverick*, 7 March 2021 [Online] Available at: <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2021-03-07-show-us-the-money-from-our-mountain-sanparks/> (Accessed 25 March 2021).

⁸⁷ This was particularly salient to an organization such as the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) where the organization was restructured and incorporated into the newly conceived Department of Homeland Security (DHS). CBP uniforms, known as the ‘Green Monster’, is derived from the CBP’s proud tradition of wearing a dark green uniform. In wide-sweeping changes after 9/11, the new CBP commissioner, Robert Bonner, opened his remarks to the twenty sector chiefs all dressed in full dress green uniforms, simply saying, “‘The Border

patrol will remain green'. The room erupted in applause and cheers as Bonner noted afterwards, 'They're proud of the green – they were proud of that uniform...they were concerned about losing that identity'. See 'Green Monster: How Border Control became the America's most out-of-control Law Enforcement Agency', *Politico Magazine*, November/December 2014 [Online] Available at: <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2014/10/border-patrol-the-green-monster-112220?paginate=false> (Accessed 20 January 2020).

⁸⁸ 'Speech delivered by Dr David Mabunda (CEO: SANParks) at passing out parade of rangers at Skukuza on 31 July 2012: Skukuza Cricket Ground' [Online] Available at: https://www.sanparks.org/docs/news/2012/ceo_speech_at_passing_out_parade_skukuza.pdf (Accessed 14 March 2022).

⁸⁹ Informal conversation with KNP regional ranger, April 2016.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Major General (Retd) Johan Jooste is a 35-year veteran of the then SADF and post-apartheid SANDF. He served in 31 Battalion which was known colloquially as the 'Bushman Battalion' (O' Neill 2013). It was largely composed of fighters from a San ethnic background (!Xu and Khwe), a hunter-gatherer society who excelled at tracking and bush craft skills and led by white officers. Many of these San combatants were also forcibly recruited into 31 Battalion and any dissent was met with ruthless disciplinary interventions (TRC 1998, Vol. 2, Ch. 1: 23). Some of these fighters were former special forces operators under the colonial Portuguese army called the *Flechas*' or arrows in reference to the bow and arrow tools the San used to hunt. Combat tracking or manhunting were fundamental to the counterinsurgency doctrine that was inscribed in the tactical and operational DNA of this unit. 31 Battalion was incorporated into the newly formed 201 Battalion (as part of the South West African Territorial Force [SWATF]) with Jooste as officer commanding of 201 Battalion from 1986-1987 which was based in the central Caprivi, Omega Camp, in northern South West Africa (SWA present day Namibia, see O' Neill 2013). "[A]round 1980, 201 Battalion ... began fielding mechanized tracking teams called 'Romeo Mike' after the Afrikaans 'Reaksiemag' or 'Reaction Force'" (Stapleton 2014: 247). It is this tradition of mechanized manhunting in 201 Battalion where Jooste would have honed his mechanized counterinsurgency skills. Stapleton (2014) contends that it was during the early 1980s that the SADF copied the Koevoet approach, demonstrating how such practices circulated amongst the different units in the South African security forces and that such practices were not siloed in any way. Later these battalions within SWATF were amalgamated to become what is today the 31 South African Infantry Battalion (SAI). Jooste moved to 8th Mechanized Infantry Battalion as officer commanding (Training Battalion) from 1987-1990. This unit was considered the

tip of the spear of the South African military in that its highly mobile light armoured infantry personnel carriers, specifically the Ratel Infantry Fighting Vehicle, (IFV – the first wheeled infantry fighting vehicle of its kind worldwide) which was able to outmanoeuvre static enemy positions deep behind enemy lines. The 8th Battalion was withdrawn from SWA during the peace process and directed at quelling internal unrest within the borders of South Africa in 1990 using counterinsurgency tactics (see also [Online] Available at: <http://www.warinangola.com/Default.aspx?tabid=1758&Parameter=1551&ParameterString=&ParameterString2=> (Accessed 3 May 2020). Jooste later rose to the rank of deputy chief of the South African Army (see Esterhuysen 2007, O’Neill 2013). After retirement Jooste went on to work for Land Systems South Africa (LSSA), a military vehicle manufacturing company focusing on landward mobility capabilities, a key skill-set of Jooste’s. LSSA was a 75 percent subsidiary of the aerospace and defence corporation, BAE (LSSA has subsequently been incorporated into DENEL, the South African state-owned armaments manufacturer). Jooste was appointed officer commanding of anti-poaching in SANParks in 2012 and later head of special projects at SANParks which directs the use and application of a range of security infrastructure and military grade technologies in the KNP. In March 2020, Jooste left SANParks to take up a position as Project Manager: Environmental Law Enforcement and Security with the Peace Parks Foundation (PPF) seconded to the Department Environment, Fisheries and Forests (DEFF – formerly DEA) where he continues to inform national strategies related to security and wildlife crime. See also [Online] Available at: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/johan-jooste-2129342a/> (Accessed 27 April 2020). It was, ostensibly, at a junior officer’s staff course (informal conversation Otch Otto, March 2021) that Jooste would have made his acquaintance with Col G.P ‘Otch’ Otto, whom he appointed as Mission Area Manager (MAM) in the KNP between 2013-2016 to coordinate all security related operations and communications in the KNP in the ‘war on poaching’.

⁹² Smith, N. (2014) ‘Its War: Meet the General’, *Farmer’s Weekly*, 12 September 2014, 14035, pp.46-49.

⁹³ Media Release: ‘SANParks enlists retired army general to command anti-poaching’. [Online] Available at: <http://www.sanparks.org/about/news/default.php?id=55388> (Accessed: 17 August 2013). The link has subsequently been deleted by SANParks.

⁹⁴ This assessment of Funda is informed by own interactions with him when he was my park manager in Marakele National Park in the early 2000s. Many of our discussions in those days centred around conservation management, leadership and notions of post development, most notably with him sharing a book by Rahnama, M. and V. Bawtree (eds) (1997) *The Post-Development Reader*. London &

New Jersey: Zed Books in the margins of which were numerous handwritten notes reflecting on the passages in the book. It was my foundational introduction to the politics and critique of development.

⁹⁵ Informal conversation with KNP regional ranger, March 2016. Informal conversation, September 2020.

⁹⁶ Participant observation at both the GRAA AGM in June 2016 and Africa Ranger Conference in August 2018.

⁹⁷ Fieldnotes, June 2016 and August 2018.

⁹⁸ South African National Parks (SANParks) Invitation to Bid, Bid number GNP-028A-19 [Online] Available at: https://www.sanparks.org/docs/groups_tenders/2019/rangers-uniform-2019/invitation-to-bid.pdf (Accessed 27 April 2020).

⁹⁹ This research has tried to confirm the material code and the pattern code of the ISD uniform through inquiries to the SAPS Museum in both Muizenberg, Cape Town and in Pretoria to see whether there is any similarity between the material and uniform code of the SANParks uniform. In addition, this research has also made an inquiry to the SAPS Head of Corporate Identity for any archival records related to the material code and pattern code of the ISD uniform without success. These inquiries also opened up the legality of wearing camouflaged uniforms by non-security personnel outside of the police (SAPS STF) and the SANDF. The SANParks uniform material and pattern code is TCJ74 and XG 1327 C/W 01 respectively (see [Online] Available at: https://www.sanparks.org/docs/groups_tenders/2019/rangers-uniform-2019/invitation-to-bid.pdf (Accessed 27 April 2020)). Visually there seems to be a close resemblance between the ISD uniform and new ranger camouflaged uniform. Numerous inquiries and emails to KNP staff to clarify the inspiration and driver behind its new camouflage ranger uniform went answered.

¹⁰⁰ Informal conversation with former senior KNP manager, September 2020.

5

Reconfiguring Labour Value in Conservation: From Loyal ‘Police Boy’ to Warrior

5.1 Introduction

The body of scholarly work critiquing violent responses to poaching is an important and timely intervention (Duffy 2014, Duffy et al. 2019, Büscher and Ramutsindela 2016, Lunstrum 2014, Massé 2017, Verweijen and Marijnen 2016, Verweijen 2020). The critique largely revolves around how conservation has become altered through militarization; that militarization intensifies state sanctioned violence in the name of conservation; and that its presence bears costs for people living in and around protected areas. To a lesser extent the literature also refers to the costs for conservation labour referring only to the unequal power hierarchies in the conservation workplace without delving into much detail. Crucially, its main contribution is drawing attention to human rights abuses. In the African and Asian contexts these abuses are not only confined to protected areas in elephant and rhino range states¹ but they are also observed where such charismatic species are absent, where pastoralists and other resource users also bear the brunt of these arbitrary forms of state sanctioned violence (see Mushonga 2018). Less emphasis is placed on problematizing what conditions in the conservation workplace lead to these abuses of power by conservation law enforcement personnel. Many critical media reports² leave the impression of a handful of individuals within ranger teams that are ill-disciplined and wilfully violent, calling for the prosecution and imprisonment of rangers involved in these abuses. While such actions are clearly problematic, this chapter proposes that they do not occur in a vacuum of voluntarism and that there are distinct institutional pressures and structural features embedded in the labour process that foment this violence.

This chapter contextualizes the circumstances which circumscribe the use of violence, particularly the use of irregular, arbitrary, excessive or extrajudicial force. Firstly, it provides a short historical sketch to demonstrate the anxieties over African field ranger productivity in the Park and how organizational measures of productivity were distilled in the notion of loyalty. While these anxieties over productivity persist to the present day, the defining characteristic of labour productivity in the past was the ability of black field rangers to inform, arrest and even use force against perpetrators from their own social networks. Secondly, it demonstrates that KNP managers face an incredible amount of public and political scrutiny and pressure in reducing the number of rhino killed on average per day in the Park. It shows that while the South African state recognizes the problem of wildlife crime as complex, requiring a ‘whole-of-society’ approach, that it was never the intention of the state to bring about far-reaching socio-economic reform. Instead, it is to policing which it turned to attain quick and demonstrable ‘wins’ in the form of arrests and other interdictions as a visible demonstration in curbing rhino poaching in the face of threat narratives that frame wildlife crime as a national and global security threat. It then demonstrates that in its urgency to reduce the number of rhino killed, Park management had to reconfigure the African field ranger from its historical form of a ‘loyal police boy’ to a warrior. It is in this apparition of the warrior that field rangers could more effectively produce a desired form of labour value premised on aggression and violence in the hope to curb rhino poaching.

Lastly, it interrogates the accounting controls and metrics that ‘measure’ labour productivity of both section rangers and field rangers. In the case of the former, it shows that these accounting controls in the form of Key Performance Indicators (KPI) privileges aggressiveness in the conduct of law enforcement duties. Additionally, it shows that in assessing the performance of its section rangers, black section rangers are disproportionately discriminated against when it comes to the allocation of resources. Despite these inequities, they are subject to the same performance criteria as their white counterparts and these disparities hold specific workplace consequences for them. In the case of black field rangers, where KPI’s are not applicable for this category of work, it is the expenditure of ammunition and other demonstrable acts of aggression that is used as an accounting control to demonstrate work performance and that loyalty as a measure of labour value has been perversely

reconfigured to lean on violence. It shows that these desired forms of labour value, premised on violence, are integrated into the labour process through the payments of significant amounts of supplementary income in the form of overtime and rewards. It is these structures embedded in the labour process that shape the violent practices of field rangers in their encounters with poachers.

5.2 The Loyal 'Police Boy': Anxieties over African Field Ranger Loyalty and Productivity in the KNP

The early agri-capitalists, who founded the private game reserves on the western edge of the Kruger Park, found labour value in the 'appropriate ethnic subject' (Bunn 1996). For them, this appropriate ethnic subject was one who displayed a 'natural' degree of subservience and docility and only performed those acts of masculinity like tracking without challenging the existing social order (ibid.). While these native subjects in the employ of the private game reserve only had to display particular performative roles whether it was the tracking skills to bring the high-paying white hunter within range of his prey; the camera wielding tourist into position to capture the image of wildness; or performing traditional songs and dance to visitors around the nightly campfire, all while remaining invisible when these essentialised native tropes were not required.

In the Kruger, the notion of a loyal native field ranger or 'police boy' (after Carruthers 1993) took on a decidedly different character and the duties they were expected to fill differed starkly from the performative roles of the African field rangers in the neighbouring private game reserves to the west of the Park. As commissioned native constables who were empowered with the same powers of arrest as native police constables, African field rangers were expected to arrest trespassers, persons who hunted game, fished in its rivers, illegally grazed their livestock or exceeded their allotted stock numbers, established unauthorised homesteads or fields for cultivation, cut wood for fuel, lit unauthorised fires or illegally collected wild foods and medicines. Many of these so-called offences that were foundational to the livelihood security and daily lives of people, had become criminalized with the establishment of the game reserve. This was even more pertinent for residents living within the confines of the Park who were now reconstituted from residents to 'squatters', a status

denoting their undesirable, and illegitimate presence (Meskell 2012). Being arrested for any of these newly regulated offences would carry severe consequences, including penalties such as eviction from the Park, imprisonment with hard labour and the payment of fines. Furthermore, what made the fulfilment of these duties even more onerous for field rangers was that many of them would have been drawn from these very families already living in or adjacent to the Park. Arresting any ‘offenders’ would very likely have included people who were either kin or part of the social worlds they were still very much a part of. Furthermore, the area that is the Kruger Park, has also been traversed for generations by people living on the borderlands of South Africa and Portuguese East Africa or what is today Mozambique (see Rodgers 2008). These travellers were also very much part of the social worlds of these field rangers, bearing in mind that Kruger had a particular predilection to employ precarious Mozambican labour (Chapter 3). Arresting people guilty of these newly criminalized acts was no small matter. Doing so could risk being ostracized from these social networks and the effects of this ostracization completely reconstituted their social worlds into one that centred around the white politics that framed game preservation (Chapter 3). This ‘willingness’ to arrest their own family was a key metric Kruger management could use to measure the degree of loyalty of these black field rangers.

They argue (entirely correctly) that their loyalty, even with the *deurloper* [refugee] situation, has never been brought into question. They do not hesitate even for a moment to arrest their own family and friends. They have even shot those known to them during the armed elephant poaching [situation].³ [own translation, emphasis added]

In this context then, the loyal field ranger in the Kruger specifically was one who was willing to inform on the activities of the people who almost inevitably formed part of their traditional social worlds. The *most loyal* of field rangers would be those who arrested or was even prepared to use deadly force when their law enforcement duties brought them in tension with the newly constituted criminal activities of family or friends.

From its inception, Kruger management were at pains to measure the performance and productivity of its African field ranger corps. They tried to condense those characteristics that it most desired in its field rangers in descriptive terms such as loyalty, trustworthiness or reliability. Nowhere

did they seem to expressly define these concepts but in general terms it seems that the overarching notion of 'loyalty' was deployed as a catchall metric whereby African field rangers could demonstrate their allegiances to the Park. The most unmistakable display of this allegiance was where field rangers were willing to arrest their own family members for transgressions. However, not all African field rangers displayed this degree of loyalty and the productivity of its staff was an ever-present concern to Park administrators.

For some time past I have been doubtful as to the reliability of certain Native Rangers in the Park. Any such unreliability is most serious, and the question has been exercising my mind. It is almost impossible for an adequate European check-up to be maintained and the only solution I can think of is to establish under my personal control a small section of most reliable Native Rangers who could act anywhere in the Park on my instructions.⁴ [emphasis added]

Most African field rangers in the KNP were stationed in pickets, constituting no more than a mud and thatch abode surrounded by thorn branches to ward off predators, spread throughout the Park away from the direct supervision of their white supervisors. Kruger administrators were pre-eminently preoccupied with whether these employees were indeed fulfilling their duties, and not leaving their work station or picket to visit family or friends outside of the Park or at the many settlements within the Park or simply just wiling away their time within the confines of their picket without doing patrols. Furthermore, Park administrators were also concerned whether field rangers were either directly poaching wildlife for meat or illegally 'stealing' meat from predator kills; fishing illegally; or the growing of marijuana and brewing beer. These transgressions were considered criminal offences and could result in immediate dismissal. This anxiety by Park administrators was a problem Marx also saw as a central concern for capitalists, a problem that centred around imposing sufficient work on workers to realize surplus value (Cleaver 2017). For these capitalists, "imposing work was a problem because of the resistance and struggles of workers" (ibid.: 50). Considering the utterly remote setting of most of these pickets and the fact that their salaries were wholly inadequate to buy sufficient food for their themselves or the families (see Chapter 3), Park administrators were more concerned with criminality amongst their staff instead of interrogating the conditions under which they worked such as living

conditions, access to supply stores for food, transport facilities to get food to their remote pickets and the purchasing power of their salaries, amongst others. Park authorities went as far as conducting unannounced raids on the field ranger pickets – a rudimentary form of workplace surveillance - in an attempt to catch offenders red handed.

In response to the Warden's instructions, Sgt. Prinsloo and I left at 16.00 hours...to raid the Native Ranger's pickets and squatters [sic] kraals in the Saliji-Mlondozi area on Section 4...and searched for meat, beer, dagga [marijuana], etc. A quantity of dried meat and a pot full of cooked meat was found, also a fresh Impala skin...[b]oth Native Rangers were taken into custody...[at Ngwanetsi] we searched his picket first and found about 5 gallons of Skokeyan [home brewed alcohol] ...a small quantity of dagga...[and] fish. Both Native Rangers were taken into custody.⁵

In the colonial mind, the only adequate form of supervision was by a European. In the absence of this form of supervision, the only other reliable form of supervision was 'the most loyal of native rangers'. These field rangers were designated 'special rangers' and Park administrators deliberately sought to create a racial division of labour within its worker ranks, a distinction that placed certain Africans above others. This movement, Cleaver argues, not only marked the evolution of labour control under capitalism which pitted workers against hierarchies of power, but "*recomposed* both the internal division of the working class and the balance of power between the classes" (2017: 58, emphasis in original). In the context of the racialized paternalism that characterized social relations in the Park, positioning oneself into a position of trust with their white overseers brought with it many advantages and privileges. It also is resonant with the notion of *baas boys* [literally boss boys], those black workers in the apartheid workplace regimes described by Von Holdt (2003), who acted as the eyes and ears of white production foreman on the industrial steel mills. Smith (2003) also notes that this particularism differentiates certain workers from others based on metrics like loyalty and not universal principles of rights. As a result, certain workers benefit from these relationships with employees and have greater access to economic and social inducements (ibid.).

...I am convinced that in spite of his age he will be a great asset in view of his extreme reliability. You will recall that prior to his retirement he had 30 years of exemplary service in the Park. I have therefore engaged him under

the designation of Special Native Ranger, for the want of a better name.⁶ [emphasis added]

It was to these 'special rangers' that white rangers and Park administrators turned to surveil its black labour force. Nombolo Mdhluli – and the many other notable black rangers named by Pienaar (2012) and Stevenson-Hamilton (2008, 1974) - embodied this notion of a 'special ranger' or the loyal police boy. In individual cases such as Mubi (see Chapter 6), the transgressions and egregious acts of these special rangers were also overlooked. The Park actively rewarded these loyal rangers not only in familial social relations that structured the paternalistic relations between white and black but also in material ways. The use of rewards and incentives in the face of below subsistence wages was a crucial technique used to structure these relations.

...during the month of September he has already completed his 25 years unbroken service. He is one of the squatter families and has to date only worked in the Park. He is a very loyal and honest worker and is also very neat. He possesses the ability to command respect and discipline. I thus freely recommend him for an award for loyal service as you may see fit.⁷ [emphasis added]

The allocation of these rewards was entirely subjective, based on the assessment of individual white rangers. Of course, these levels of loyalty were not prevalent throughout its field ranger ranks and therefore the Park had to devise some means of 'measuring' these desired qualities through a series of 'loyalty tests'.

... all new native ranger appointments henceforth be subjected to a trustworthiness test.⁸ [own translation].

In a wide-ranging training and evaluation exercise in 1967,⁹ KNP management sought to bring a more objective measure in assessing field ranger productivity in what they called a pledge of loyalty or *pligspleging*. Key performance areas related to reliability, trustworthiness and loyalty were entirely subjective, left to the section ranger to score the field rangers under his supervision, despite proclamations of objectivity. Devolving authority in this way to the local section ranger held a number of consequences for the teams of African labour in his charge. In terms of trustworthiness and reliability, field rangers were scored according to absenteeism, willingness to report irregularities and trustworthiness with

respect to their care and handling of material goods such as ammunition, money and rations. On average, field rangers across the Park scored a relatively high score of 86,84 percent. With respect to loyalty to the organization, the employer, the sergeant, corporal and fellow native rangers the average score was 84,65 percent. In the margins of the evaluation a senior manager scribbled

Fantastic...it sounds too good to be true.¹⁰ [own translation]

Despite these attempts at rigour to more objectively quantify African field ranger loyalty, the results of the Park-wide exercise were still met with derision and scepticism. In effect, KNP management have never been fully able to verify what field rangers do when they are out on patrol away from the direct supervision of white managers. The Park has repeatedly turned to concepts such as loyalty, trust and reliability despite its quantifiable elusiveness. To further deepen their attempts to quantify labour productivity, the 1967 report articulated the subjective character traits most desired in the native field ranger. These traits included honesty, loyalty, trustworthiness (*getrouheid*), respect, punctuality (*stiptelikeheid*), steadiness, being well-behaved, helpful/obliging (*behulpsaamheid* - where field ranger duties could include those duties not included in the terms of reference), clean/tidy (*sinderlikeheid* - for example the washing of feet and neat appearance and care of uniforms).

Although these desired character traits are not necessarily any longer expressed by contemporary Park managers, anxieties over field ranger loyalty and measuring productivity persist. However, in some ways some of these subjective traits such as being obliging - in instances where employees are expected to fulfil tasks outside of their normal duties, persist. Also, are notions of being punctual, and neatly dressed, especially in paramilitary parades, drill sessions or when managers would comment on field ranger appearances and conduct where field rangers were considered to be *paraat*, referring to their presentable appearance in uniform denoting their battle readiness.

In a discussion with a white section ranger these anxieties over what exactly field rangers are doing while out on patrol still persist in the minds of KNP managers.

we actually working long hours and hard or that's my impression of my guys. I do not have control measures in place, its one of the things that bugs me [...] especially after the recent incident with [a senior ranger arrested for

rhino poaching] is the trust relationship. Its very easy for a field ranger to go and sit under a tree or say to me we've been following the spoor or not even try hard or wipe out spoor if they see new spoor and stuff like that.¹¹

The ever-present desire to know precisely whether field rangers are doing what they say they are doing is still a problem that plague modern day managers in the Kruger. The need to know what field rangers are doing while out on patrol is especially urgent in the context of the intense public and political scrutiny KNP managers face. During my participant observation in his section he also tried to recruit me in some capacity to assuage his fears despite the repeated assurance that he does not want me to 'be an *impimpi*¹² or to spy on the field rangers. Various methods of workplace surveillance have been implemented in the KNP to monitor field ranger patrol effort in terms of area coverage and time spent in specific locations. Tools such as CyberTracker and CMORE are two database platforms that use GPS-linked handheld tools that plot field ranger locations and patrol routes as well as record a range of biological data, for example sightings of priority species such as sable antelope (*Hippotragus niger*), or law enforcement data such as poacher footprints or carcass locations of rhino. In this way, respective section rangers are thus able to generate a map to ostensibly build a visual overview, over time, of the range use of certain species or more importantly in the present context, to establish whether there are repeated patterns of points of entry, exit or routes used by poachers and thus predict (using the CMORE Echo platform) in real time where suspected poachers would exit an area based on the data inputted into the system from previous incidents.

These imperatives to gather data obscure an added reason in the use of these tools, to monitor field ranger activities. However, the use of these tools was only observed in one section that I conducted participant observation in and in any event, it was used rarely and certainly not in matters related to anti-poaching.¹³ The reasons for this could be manifold, but in the main it could be due to a number of factors related to section rangers being resistant to allocating the substantial amount of time collating what would be a considerable amount of data on a daily basis and further confining them to their offices; operating in remote locations and the constant limitation of battery life of these electronic units; the unavailability of replacement parts or units and thus a discontinuity in data collection; and, most importantly, the need for secrecy where certain section rangers prefer to keep law enforcement information and patrol

data to themselves in the context of a broader atmosphere of mistrust in the Park. This need for secrecy was particularly important where section rangers were unsure under what circumstances a suspect was injured or killed and the need for KNP managers to first secure the crime scene and debrief field rangers *before* members of the police arrived. This was to prevent any possibility of field rangers being prosecuted for the irregular or extrajudicial use of force (see Chapter 6). Thus, the much-vaunted predictive capabilities of platforms such as CMORE was being undermined as it was used instead as a data capture tool where data was inputted retrospectively and not in real time.¹⁴ This latter reason was one it seems that took precedence over even the urgent need to measure field ranger productivity in real time.

However, workplace surveillance does not only take on technological forms but social forms as well (Ball 2010). It is these social forms of surveillance and control that has been the preferred mode of control in the KNP (see Chapter 3), through the use of ‘special rangers’ or ‘baas boys’ within the field ranger ranks. Where section rangers find it hard to always quantify field ranger productivity and in the event of suspected non-productivity they preferred to use exemplary disciplinary measures or curtailing opportunities for field rangers to earn supplementary income through overtime allowances instead. A white section ranger in another part of the Park shared, with a degree of nostalgia, an early workplace practice in instances when field rangers were suspected of not being sufficiently productive or gave them reason to mistrust field ranger reports.

Prior to '94 it was a lot easier...literally if a guy gave you trouble you dismissed him, its as simple as that...[t]he thing of human rights has become, I don't want to say an obstacle, but it has become a bigger factor whereas in the past the job had to be done and that's it.¹⁵ [emphasis added]

It is important to first acknowledge and set aside the notion of human rights and how many Kruger managers see it as an obstacle. This will be explored further in Section 5.5.2 below as well as broader discussion around human rights and its corrosion in the context of the use of deadly force is taken up in Chapter 6. Here the speaker is referring to human rights in the context of the basic conditions of employment and the rights and responsibilities of employees. Prior to the end of apartheid in 1994, the rules governing disciplinary procedures gave an inordinate amount of power to workplace supervisors. Workers could be dismissed purely on

the assessment of a supervisor and not a more objective panel composed of human resource managers, witnesses, oversight by senior SANParks managers from outside of the Park nor did they have recourse to challenge unfair dismissals through The Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) as is the practice today. This narrative was affirmed by a ranger corporal in yet another part of KNP with close to thirty years' service when he said

in those days under apartheid, he [the section ranger] could ask you to do anything, if you wavered, the section ranger in those days would just call you to his office and say 'you are not prepared to work, pack your things', no disciplinary hearing, no going to Skukuza, just the local section ranger's office, that's how much power they had.¹⁶ [own translation].

This threat of having been told to 'pack your things' or 'pack your bags and leave' was relayed to me on two further separate occasions. In both instances it was used as a threat by their respective managers when they, as subordinates, showed any hesitancy in fulfilling a task.¹⁷

Today, while it is a fairly onerous process to dismiss an employee under the protections offered by the SANParks Basic Conditions of Employment and national Labour Relations Act, this fantasy of total control over the labour force is something that some KNP managers still yearn for. Despite the purported care that Kruger has and continues to express when it comes to its field ranger corps, the narratives above offers a glimpse of its preferred modality of labour control, one where it was sufficient to tell subordinates to 'pack your things' when they did not meet the levels of productivity expected of them. Of course, this is not to suggest that this form of labour control was 'complete' and that it obliterated any agency in the form of resistance from workers. This was evidenced in the continued killing of wildlife for consumption, the growing of marijuana, incidents of drunkenness, absconding from work, go-slows, failure to always arrest perpetrators of illegal acts, strike action and sabotage in the instances where many field rangers are accused of supplying security information to rhino poachers and even aiding them in entering the Park.

5.3 Political Pressure and the Shaping of Kruger's Policing Response

International and national civil society groups were quick to criticize KNP managers for incompetence in the face of ever-increasing rhino losses and this quickly translated into intense political pressure and scrutiny. Carl Death (2011) demonstrated that South African credibility has suffered serious blows on the international stage after the highs of the Mandela administration and visible outpourings of racial unity that typified the 'rainbow nation' narrative. However, the one arena where the South African state ostensibly still commands respect is its leading role in global environmental diplomacy and politics. It is through leadership in this field that the South African state is able to "rebrand and promote itself as an exceptional and inspirational leader" on the global stage (ibid.: 471). It is also part of a broader rebranding of the country's international image as being violent and crime-ridden (McMichael 2012) and that its competency in policing the problem of wildlife crime will reassert an image of effective governance and South Africa as a desired destination for tourism and investment. Despite Shaw and Rademeyer's (2016: 7) contention that "the war for the rhino' is nowhere near the top of the policy agenda" of the South African state, this section argues that rhino poaching has indeed been given a high priority but it was done to guard its reputation as a leader on a global environmental politics stage so that the state could leverage that prestige in matters of a more pressing political economical nature. Managers in the KNP were thus subject to enormous political pressure, as one senior manager shared.

...there is real pressure, there's politics...in this environment the politics are hectic, its an uncomfortable truth, nobody likes this [acknowledging the lack of progress in other human development spheres] the minister doesn't like it and the president doesn't like it, its something that must just go away or deal with it.¹⁸

KNP management and the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) formulated a 'whole-of-society-approach', an acknowledgment that policing responses in itself were not sufficient to curb rhino poaching (Gonçalves 2017). Holmqvist et al. (2015) demonstrate the manner in which new forms of military intervention founded on COIN is increasingly being deployed by international agencies in an array of diverse arenas of expertise including humanitarian interventions. These

interventions are called an array of descriptors ranging from an “‘integrated mission’, ‘comprehensive approach’, ‘whole-of-government’, unity of effort, joined-up-ness, three-block-war and so on” (ibid.: 2015: 1). We have thus, these authors posit, “become accustomed to hearing about military intervention as an integrated project ...[where] new forms of interventionary power forge novel spaces of military and civilian engagement” in disciplining those sectors of society deemed ‘problematic’ (ibid.: 1). This strategy called for all spheres of government and civil society to coordinate their efforts to undo broader societal ills and inequalities and that it was these inequalities that was directly related to the persistence of wildlife crime. However, as the respondent above demonstrates, even where the highest political authorities acknowledged that addressing the matter of wildlife crime would require a radical macro-economic and social transformation that there was no real political appetite to address the scale and the complexity that such a response would require. This is evidenced in the response of the respondent above - that ‘it is an uncomfortable truth’ and that ‘its something that must just go away’. Despite this obvious reluctance by the cabinet level politicians to address broader societal ills, discursively, SANParks officials continued to reassure its constituency of the political will of the state.

...people say there’s not political will. I can say that is not true friends, I can really say our minister leads well.¹⁹

Such laudatory pronouncements on the quality and will of senior political leadership was bordering on sycophancy. In essence, there was no political appetite for a ‘whole-of-society-approach’ – to achieve that would necessitate a radical political and economic transformation. Instead, there was a need for a more visible and immediate ‘win’ which is why, when adopting the national strategy, cabinet signed off on what he called “compulsory interventions”, in effect the overt security and policing responses we see in KNP today.²⁰ It is thus the desire for expediency and not a comprehensive socio-economic strategy that guided the responses to curb rhino poaching. However, it is not only external political pressure that privileged quick and demonstrable ‘wins’ in the Park. Operational success was a clearly identifiable measure that also informed South African commanders in South Africa’s bush wars and these successes were more in line with traditional military measures of success (O’Neill 2013). While Jooste, the former SADF and SANDF general who was appointed to steer SANPark’s anti-poaching efforts, was very involved in civic actions as part

of the apartheid state's counterinsurgency offensive, for him "real operational success was always a priority" (ibid.: 174). This desire for expediency on the part of the political elite was also alluded to by another senior KNP manager and the explicit pressure Park managers face - that they are not only accountable to the highest political authority but that it was the *reputation* of the highest political figures in the country that was at stake. Didier Fassin (2011) also demonstrates that the French police are directly accountable to the state. In concrete terms that means they are accountable to the minister of interior. Thus, the responsibility of the police is not towards the population directly. Where the state is embodied by the minister, far from being neutral or distant, successive ambitious ministers have used the police directly to promote their own political careers (ibid.). Elected officials can be thus be seen to be fulfilling campaign promises to be tough on crime (Schrader 2019). Where the political aspirations and the credibility of political elites are directly tied to the ability of KNP managers to stem the poaching of rhino, it demonstrates that the responses adopted in KNP did not evolve in a localized political vacuum.

...its something that gives us sleepless nights, more especially myself, my supervisors from the managing executive to the CEO [Chief Executive Officer] to the minister of environment to the president - we are measured, we will all be measured on what we do with our rhinos. If we can save these rhinos we will heroes but if we lose these rhinos...we will be seen as losers.²¹

There is a paucity of robust discussion that problematizes the political pressure on wildlife managers to deliver positive results, in effect to "sell success to a global conservation and donor community" (Bluwstein 2016: 692). Svarstad and Benjaminsen (2017) also show how success narratives dominate presentations around Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) projects, especially its purported benefits for local people, its role in poverty reduction and as a viable climate mitigation strategy. However, these authors find that there is often not only a lack of evidence to substantiate these claims but in explaining this disjuncture between claims and evidence, that actors with vested interests, whether individuals, institutions or nation states, have a material stake in marketing such interventions as successes (ibid.). Specifically, it is the credibility of the Norwegian government, a key donor of REDD projects, whose climate mitigation policy hinges on the success of REDD initiatives who perpetuate such unsubstantiated claims (ibid.). Leaning on

these insights by Bluwstein (2016) and Svarstad and Benjaminsen (2017), the political pressure on the South African state and KNP management to show results was also becoming increasingly acute in the run-up to South Africa hosting the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP) to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in September 2016. This conference was widely considered to be a watershed moment in addressing the sharp increase in illicit wildlife crime and the poaching of rhino in particular. It was being held on the African continent for the first time since 2000 and once again the South African state, as hosts, wanted to showcase its ability of 'selling success' in protecting a global commons – the rhino - on the international stage. In maintaining its brand as a leader in global environmental politics, the South African state is able to use it as a vehicle to demonstrate its capacity for 'good governance' and position itself favourably as an attractive destination for foreign direct investment (FDI). On the other hand, its inability to stem wildlife crime can be seen as posing a political threat, revealing the state's relative impotence (see Chamayou 2010).

That the state discursively committed itself to a 'whole-of-society' approach was merely performative and continues to be evidenced in the government's continued inaction on meaningful political economic transformation to address the underlying causes that has fuelled wildlife crime: gross economic inequality. This inequality is most starkly evidenced in the border areas of the Kruger, which is home to one of the highest unemployment rates in the country, well above the national average. In the Bushbuckridge municipality adjacent to the Park, youth unemployment is estimated to be as high as 64,4 percent (Thakholi 2021). The South African state had acquiesced to the pressure of a much more powerful political constituency, the national and international conservation lobby and not the plight of its own citizenry. It was a response that privileged the rule of law and the protection of state and private assets by framing the threats of wildlife crime as a threat to national and global security. Hidden from view, the material outcomes of such political jostling may take many forms.

Many senior politicians and executive and senior SANParks officials discursively constructed the threat of rhino poaching as a 'war' and that its own responses amounted to a 'war on poaching'. At various times the political rhetoric coming from these officials have consistently emphasized that "the battle lines have been drawn...[w]e are going to take

the war to these armed bandits”;²² “we will fight fire with fire”;²³ “we are now at war” (Shaw and Rademeyer 2016: 8) and describing the threat of rhino poaching as a ‘military incursion’ (ibid.). However, in the face of criticism that its responses were too militarized, SANParks and Kruger management tried to cloak its responses as nothing other than a police action (see Gonçalves 2017). A revised discourse started to take shape, varying from “[rhino poaching] is actually a police task”²⁴ to “stamping out poaching is what is expected of a rational, civilised nation”.²⁵ Park officials were attempting to reinforce the myth of a separation of war and police and echoing a deeply held belief that restoring law and order is a mark of civilised government. They overlook that in re-establishing this ‘order’, that it is intrinsically a political project, that it seeks to ensure the integrity of private property, whether it is privately or state owned and police actions are asymmetrically meted out to target poor and racialized communities (see Chapter 2). At other times, the rhetoric of SANParks officials have likened poaching to an insurgency²⁶ and in the corridors and informal conversations with Park officials, anti-poaching practitioners are increasingly describing their roles and the techniques they employ as *counter poaching*.²⁷ In effect, many counterinsurgency veterans in contemporary conservation actively transfer that knowledge within the conservation anti-poaching fraternity, for example at a workshop in the use of aerial assets.²⁸ Where senior Park managers started to detect a criticism of counterinsurgency, its use is framed as nothing more than a generic approach to ensure area integrity.

Offhand remarks about counter insurgency style operations as if this is not generic area defence type tactics and practices in militaries worldwide seem superfluous.²⁹ [emphasis added]

Again, conservation practitioners are attempting to detract from what counterinsurgency really is - a substitute for pacification and that it is a technique that is foundational to the police project (see Chapter 2).

Complementing these discursive constructions, the State President, in his opening address to the CITES conference, declared rhino poaching as a priority crime, one that posed not only a “...significant threat [...] to the conservation of our species, but also to this country’s national security”.³⁰ Where rhino poaching acts as a visible cue to public disorder and where disorder is conflated with serious crime, “there is little else to do but crack down on the disorderly” (Harcourt 2001: 19). It represents a shift in

category where the lines between a minor infraction becomes synonymous to a major offence (ibid.). This framing of rhino poaching as a national security threat by the highest political authority in the country mimicked the discursive production that wildlife crime constitutes a threat to global security and the framing of 'poachers-as-terrorists' (Duffy 2016). By reframing threats to biodiversity as a national and global security threat and poachers as terrorists provided a legitimising platform to use extraordinary measures to curb these constructed threats, what Duffy (2016) calls 'war by conservation'. The United States (U.S.), with its global reach in almost every conceivable policy arena proposed significant pieces of legislation, amongst others, the Global Anti-Poaching Act, Bill H.R.2494 with the intention to:

...support global anti-poaching efforts, strengthen the capacity of partner countries to counter wildlife trafficking, designate major wildlife trafficking countries, and for other purposes.³¹ (H.R.2494: 1, emphasis added).

This Bill made explicit that the intensification of poaching - of rhino and elephant - not only threatens viable populations of these species but that the proceeds of the sale of high value wildlife products fund the activities of a range of rebel groups and terrorist organizations for example Sudan's Janjaweed militia, The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), the Seleka rebel movement in Central African Republic and Somalia's al-Shabaab. However, a number of authoritative sources³² have discounted the links between groups such as al-Shabaab and claims that it funds its activities through elephant poaching and that such narratives are based on "false assumptions and mistaken conclusions" (Maguire and Haenlein 2015: vii) In the Kruger the dominant threat narrative instead circulated around organized criminal networks and their ability to leverage the economic deprivation of marginalized communities in the border areas of Kruger. It is thus poverty and the susceptibility of the poor to be manipulated by these organized criminal networks that was positioned as the primary driver of the rhino poaching crisis. While neither of these narratives had any basis in empirical evidence it did not hinder the operationalization of the provisions made for in the Bill. In this respect, H.R.2494 also made provision under Section 23 of the Arms Export Control Act. In terms of the latter, it authorizes the U.S. President to enter into bi-lateral defence agreements facilitating the sale of restricted surplus armaments and equipment and defence assistance in the form of training.

One example of how legislative vehicles such as this facilitated defence assistance from U.S. contractors by extending U.S. national interests in ensuring regional security under the rhetoric of ‘saving a species’ in the Kruger, is evidenced in the procurement of the services of Guardian Point.³³ Guardian Point is a U.S. based private security service provider comprised of members of former elite military special operations units specializing in tactical K9 (canine) deployments and training.³⁴ Through the Office of Defence Cooperation (ODC), a joint initiative by the U.S. Department of Defence and U.S. State Department, this office marries U.S. Government national interests and U.S. business interests in the sale of military equipment, services and the development of security assistance policy. Guardian Point, through its facilitating partner organization, EDGE (or Eco Defence Group), was approached by the ODC to assist in Kruger’s canine counter poaching operations.³⁵ This facilitation through the ODC linking U.S. security service providers and the KNP offers some preliminary evidence of how the provisions under the Arms Control Act embedded within H.R.2494 is operationalized and how conservation forms an arena or vehicle for the expansion of one branch of a broad political economic agenda through the sale of military equipment or services in which wildlife crime is positioned as a threat to global security (see also Duffy 2016, Lunstrum 2018). This collaboration also irrevocably *shapes* ranger practices not only in the Kruger but forms part of a broader international policing project.

A second, equally important mechanism in the political economic strategy embedded in H.R.2494 is the manner in which U.S. policy interests are furthered under the rationale of saving a species. Bill H.R.2494 makes provision for withholding foreign assistance under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to those states in instances where they do not adhere to the obligations under international agreements to curb poaching and illicit wildlife trade. Hidden in the text of such legislative vehicles, is that the open-ended authority in a phrase such as “...and for other purposes” allows the U.S. government wide-ranging authority to discipline states by withholding foreign assistance and to bind them to bi-lateral agreements that prescribes how states should respond to regional and local extra-state actors. That the ODC already facilitates the sale of military equipment or services through private service providers is clear. What is unclear, in the face of the lack of transparency from SANParks, is in what ways such bi-lateral agreements entered into between the U.S. and

South African governments discipline and constrain the South African state. Intergovernmental funding often comes with conditionalities and in my conversation with a senior KNP official he confirmed that such funding packages “come with strings attached”.³⁶ Conditionalities include preferential procurement for technologies from U.S. based companies and life cycle maintenance and supply agreements that commit significant public funds for long periods of time; appointment of designated consultants who then shape national policy position papers vis-à-vis wildlife crime; and aligning voting on international conservation and environmental issues with U.S. interests. If such agreements were indeed made, it is clear how it *structures* the response from the South African state for a foreseeable time into the future, without the possibility to conceive of a more progressive and non-violent solutions to these complex nature-society dilemmas.

5.4 Invoking the Warrior: From Loyal 'Police Boy' to Warrior

Alex Vitale argues that the problem of police brutality stems largely from a 'warrior mentality', one where police officers “think of themselves as soldiers in battle rather than guardians of public safety” (2017: location 74 single column view). This is further reinforced by the use of military-grade weapons, tactics and the pervading sense of insecurity under a 'war on drugs' and the 'war on terror', which fuels the perception that “entire communities are disorderly, dangerous...and ultimately criminal” (ibid: location 83 single column view). It sets the stage for the excessive use of force by police. Judith Verweijen (2020), in her analysis of the micro dynamics of violence by park rangers in Virunga National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), shows that this 'warrior culture' is also prevalent in conservation policing, emboldened through a ranger training curriculum that emphasizes endurance in physical fitness and tactics that mimic those of battle zones. Similarly, McClanahan and Wall (2016) also refer to this contemporary shift towards 'warrior conservation'. In the KNP, there are parallel aspirations to mimic this warrior ethos and that for rangers to be more effective in stemming the surge in rhino poaching, they too have to become 'warriors'. In effect, this call for African field rangers to become warriors in the 'war on poaching' is not new. It is merely an extension of the particular masculine traits that could

be performed by African field rangers, a typology of traits that has shifted from the ‘appropriate ethnic subject’ (after Bunn, 1996) tracking wildlife to hunting humans. It is not a transformational shift in their becoming more ‘complete men’ that is so often associated with the image of the warrior, but merely a shift in what performances of masculinity are permissible under the police labour regime, one still strongly influenced by paternalism.

...law enforcement has become a very prominent part ...unfortunately, unfortunately but we must also stop apologizing for that because... its not going away. In Africa, ranger equals warrior otherwise your ranger will die with a gun in his hands and that we also cannot afford...its got nothing to do with over-militarization, its not a retired old general’s idea, it is happening now and you roughly on your own...here and there you have armed forces support but anti-poaching operations has become a specialized, not even the army can do it well like rangers can because of tracking, because of bush skills, because of working in small teams, working clandestine, knowing the terrain.³⁷ [emphasis added].

Essentially, the work of rangers, as described by a senior KNP manager above, has surpassed what has traditionally been required to fulfill the duties of a ranger. The work of a field ranger traditionally required bush craft skills and the ability to work under a range of demanding environmental conditions in remote locations replete with dangerous animals to conduct conservation monitoring functions. These basic skills and attributes of what was required to be a ranger has been reconfigured to that of a special forces operator and that indeed very few units in the armed forces have the necessary attributes and bush craft skills to do what field rangers in the KNP are able to do. That this sentiment of a warrior ethos has infused the thinking of other senior staff members in his team was evidenced by an informal conversation with a regional ranger in the KNP.

[we] need to escalate to another level – to that of a warrior...what prevents the criminal element from escalating? We need to become warriors.³⁸ [emphasis added]

What animated the respondent above was that the ever increasing ‘arms race’ that poaching gangs were engaged in, necessitates a shift in the makeup and character of the ranger corp. This reconfiguration of what it means to be a ranger could serve multiple purposes. As Dalby posits, the

image of the Western warrior is one that simultaneously succeeds in not only physically securing the West but also to secure its identity as a “repository of virtue against barbaric threats to civilization” (2008: 440). This image of the warrior serves to obfuscate the moralities of warfare and it succeeds in offering an alibi of exceptional circumstances requiring exceptional license in spaces that are imbued with danger (ibid.). Indeed, this reference to being a warrior also has disconcerting historical resonance in apartheid era COIN policing. O'Brien (2001), in his analysis of counter-revolutionary warfare waged by the apartheid state's security forces, references one of Koevoet's most ruthless and effective commanders, Captain Eugene de Kock. Considered to be one of apartheid's 'great assassins', De Kock was nicknamed the 'Lion' or 'Prime Evil' or as another colleague described him, “I think we must understand from the start that Eugene was a warrior [...] never a policeman” (Pauw 1997 in O'Brien 2001: 47, emphasis added). In de Kock's case, being revered as a warrior served to obfuscate the many atrocities that he committed precisely because they were enacted in the context of deflecting the existential threats against the apartheid state. Acting in the service of the state and adopting the reverential label of being a warrior gave him exceptional license despite the barbarity of his actions. This notion will be explored in greater detail in Chapter 6. However, this section advances the argument that this reconfiguration of the African field ranger from that of a loyal subject to that of a warrior is founded in anxieties over productivity and has a deep historical connection to the patterns of racialized paternalism that has come to typify relations between white and black in the Kruger Park. It is in this context that aggression and the - at times - arbitrary, irregular and extrajudicial use of force has become a signifier or attribute of labour value in the KNP.

5.5 The Productive Value of Violence: Accounting Controls over Labour and its Consequences

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1977) identifies the workshop as one of a handful of primary social structures where discipline as a phenomenon could be observed. Under a new regime of the great workshops and factories, an intense and continuous supervision was required that wound its way throughout the labour process. These forms of surveillance and supervision not only concerned itself with the production process – the

raw materials, instruments used and the dimensions and quality of the commodities – but “it also took account the activity of men, their skill, the way they set about their tasks, their promptness, their zeal, their behaviour” (Foucault 1977: 174). These new forms of surveillance became an integral technique not only of the production process but “as a specific mechanism in the disciplinary power [where] the work of directing, superintending and adjusting becomes one of the functions of capital” (ibid.: 175). Sir William Petty, one of the earliest thinkers of political economy and statistics and who lay the foundation for how sovereigns could view their subjects through the prism of ‘population’, noted that “wealth creation was dependant on a systematic approach to surveillance and control of populations through accounting” (Rigakos 2011: 67).

This preoccupation with performance measurement is not benign and has profound social consequences. Sharma and Irvine (2016) show that accounting as a management tool was developed to extract surplus value from indentured labour on the colonial sugar plantations in the Pacific and that it had distinct social consequences. Such accounting tools were particularly useful even where owners were absent and enabled colonial landlords to still exercise strict control over operations from a distance (ibid.). These costs came in the form of marginalization and exploitation of labour through the practice of ‘tasking’, where wages were not paid for hours worked but on the completion of set tasks. While task work is not a feature of remuneration in the KNP per se, tasking in the form of a reduction in the number of rhino killed per day and the ‘effort’ expressed in terms of aggression used to apprehend a suspected poacher has become for all intents and purposes a ‘tasked’ feature of the work of those involved in anti-poaching. The inability to complete these ‘tasks’ had the effect of marginalizing workers in the Park, predominantly along racial lines, and prevented access to forms of supplementary income (see below). These calculative practices are thus more than a tool to merely monitor workers’ output but serves as a means of labour control.

Cleaver (2017) argues that contra to the assumption of neoclassical economist who saw labour as an unproblematic input, capitalists were always aware that getting hired workers to work sufficiently long hours to generate surplus value was always open to contestation. This understanding resulted in their “inevitable use of overseers, productivity measures, and quality control” (ibid.: 66, Footnote 63). Within the context

of policing, to render the manhunts effective, police officers also need to be impelled to conduct these hunts. Police officers then, "have been given numerical targets and are held responsible by their superiors for meeting them" and often it results in the hunt taking on spectacular forms. (Chamayou 2010: 142). Police then have to meet arrest quotas.

Anxieties over labour productivity in the Kruger remain. Below I sketch how productivity is 'measured' in those categories of conservation labour who are at the forefront of anti-poaching operations, both section rangers and field rangers. It shows that accounting controls for the former has distinct racial features and for the latter category of work, it is aggressiveness and violence that has become the primary measure of labour productivity.

5.5.1 Measuring the Productivity of Section Rangers

Senior and mid-level managers in the KNP are subject to performance reviews known as Key Performance Indicators (KPI's).³⁹ The primary indicator of success for section rangers in the KNP has become the reduction in the number of rhino killed per day in their respective sections. Even where there are increasing numbers of incursions, it is still the number of rhino killed on average per day that is a key organizational performance indicator. At the height of the poaching surge, the Park experienced on average 3.3 rhino killed per day in 2014 and by 2017 the target for was set at two rhino killed per day across the Park irrespective of the number of the incursions.⁴⁰ One of the key strategies for section rangers in meeting this organizational performance indicator is to displace the poaching pressure through intensive and relentless patrolling, detection, manhunting and 'arrests' (see Chapter 1 for the ambiguous meaning of this term). In many instances this may mean displacing the poaching pressure into a neighbouring section or other parts of the KNP or to other Key 1⁴¹ rhino populations such as Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park in KZN province.

A measure of satisfactory performance is not only linked to a reduction in rhino killed but also in the ability of incumbents to display aggressiveness. Success in this sphere translates into reverence and admiration in a tight knit and exclusive social and professional setting. One regional ranger shared his admiration of a young section ranger who

has been involved in more ‘contacts’ (see below) in his short tenure in the KNP than he had in his entire career of close to thirty years in the KNP.⁴² This level of admiration is centered around his dedication to being in the ‘bush’ with his ‘guys’ (field rangers) and his qualities as a warrior. It is also clear that as a revered figure in the KNP, this senior manager is actively nurturing this quality of aggressiveness in younger or junior section rangers and that aggression is a quality that is admired. Even though the section ranger mentioned here is white, he is also susceptible to the familial ties that steer paternalistic relationships with black field rangers in the KNP and it is a workplace strategy that fuels worker productivity (see Chapter 3). Massé, in his study of anti-poaching rangers in the GLC in Mozambique, adjacent to the KNP, makes similar observations how the use of violence is celebrated and the manner in which rangers are revered as “pitbulls” – referring to their aggressiveness - by their colleagues (2017: 188). Where performance in anti-poaching operations are prioritized above conservation functions, a senior KNP manager lamented how conservation skills are being subordinated in favour of performance in job functions pertaining solely to law enforcement activities.

I am worried we are losing conservation skills. I was saying [...] its worrying. I was thinking how do you measure a good performing section ranger now, what would be your criteria? I’m telling you now, number one is going to be saving of rhino or elephant.⁴³

It is aggressiveness and the qualities of a warrior that are held in high regard and is a clear measure of that particular section ranger’s effort to stem poaching regardless of whether rhino poaching statistics in the area under his control worsen. Despite the regret in his tone, this senior KNP manager has accepted that this measure of productivity is what will deflect criticism and scrutiny of his own performance. Thus, aggression and violence is linked to his own performance assessment and it is a metric that he is unlikely to challenge. In being able to demonstrate tangible statistics related to the number of contacts as a measure of effort, KNP managers are able to deflect any public or political criticism in the face of persistent rhino mortalities.

Where it is the reduction in rhino killed that is the ostensible marker of performance for section rangers, in practice questions around competency and trustworthiness are becoming increasingly associated with race. In the KNP, the intensive and joint protection zones where the greatest intensity

of the rhino poaching takes place, close to 90 percent of section rangers are white males.⁴⁴ This racialized landscape is as a direct result of imposing workplace transfers on black section rangers. Where these black section rangers were formerly stationed in areas with substantial rhino populations, the onset of rhino poaching placed them under severe scrutiny from Park management and when they did not meet targets in reducing the number of rhino killed or demonstrated effort in terms of either making an actual or near arrest they were transferred to the northern region of the Park for 'operational reasons'. Neighbouring white section rangers who suffered equal or even greater losses in rhino were not subjected to the same scrutiny and workplace pressures.⁴⁵ This is evidenced by the fact that some of these white section rangers have been resident in their sections for many years, some for as long as seventeen and fifteen years as is the case with Crocodile Bridge and Kingfisherspruit sections respectively, despite the fact that these sections at one time or another experienced some of the most intense rhino poaching pressure in the Park over the last decade.

Black section rangers were unequivocal that this disparity was because they were black and that different metrics are at play depending on whether you are black or white. They contend that if you are black and experience high incidences of rhino poaching you are useless and if you are white where poaching persists that it only is so despite their considerable efforts. Furthermore, black section rangers and field rangers in the northern region of the Park also report on the disparity in the distribution of resources, whether that be human resources, field equipment, security technologies or priority responses in the form of aerial support. Most of the considerable expenditure of close to ZAR 1 billion between 2011 and 2016⁴⁶ has been allocated to the deployment of a range of security infrastructure in the IPZ and JPZ, areas managed largely by white section rangers. That these resources are allocated to the hardest hit areas may be justifiable but as one black section ranger observed

They evaluate me in the same way as a second person who has actually got all of the resources, all of the technologies I don't have anything, they evaluate me in the same way...there's a huge disparity.⁴⁷

This disparity in resource allocation is magnified at performance reviews within the Key Performance Appraisal (KPA) framework. While these security technologies do not necessarily lead to a greater number of arrests,

they do assist section rangers in better situational awareness, more complete reporting of the magnitude of threats and where to proactively deploy their field ranger staff. These technologies also provide supporting evidence to the inordinate threat that they face and an extenuating explanation for the rhino losses in their sections. Even within the IPZ, resources are not allocated equitably between black and white section rangers. One black section ranger, in an effort to curb the unrelenting incursions in his section, installed, at his own expense (to the cost of approximately ZAR 65 000), a series of camera traps along the southern boundary of his section.⁴⁸ These camera traps, although a low-tech and low-cost solution in comparison to other security technologies deployed elsewhere in the Park had a significant measure of success in arresting a suspect as a real time image would be relayed to his cell phone when a camera trap was triggered and he could deploy his field rangers, who were already on stand-by, to the precise location. These camera traps also ensured a high rate of success in criminal proceedings simply because a photograph of the suspect proved, in many cases, to be irrefutable as evidence. In addition to these costs, he also has recurring costs in terms of batteries and service provider costs that send alerts and images to his phone, amounting to anywhere between ZAR 15 – 20 000 per annum. These costs would have been negligible considering that expenditure on security technologies and infrastructure in the Park is estimated to be in the region of ZAR 200 million per annum (Aucoin and Donnenfeld 2017). While he has no doubt that this form of marginalization was based on racial discrimination, he chose this course of action to not only demonstrate his competency and forestall any pretext to move him to another section, but because his own experiences with lodging grievances based on discrimination or wrongdoing often resulted in little recourse. Furthermore, light sport aircraft, like the Bat Hawk, provide section rangers with a significant advantage in combatting poaching threats and meeting organizational KPI's in terms of intercepting poaching groups, directing ground-based operations, carcass detection and acting as a measure of deterrence. Black section rangers lament how the allocation of these light aircraft to white section rangers further disadvantage them. This disparity occurs despite them having either the necessary skills such as pilot's licences⁴⁹ and/or the infrastructure such as runways and aircraft hangars in their sections to effectively operate such aircraft.⁵⁰

These structural inequalities in resource allocation along racial lines further alienate black managers and place an inordinate psychological, and in the case above, financial burden on them in a system that structurally inhibits them from being effective. As you traverse the Kruger landscape from north to south, it becomes apparent that this longitudinal gradient does not only represent low intensity threat zones in the north to high intensity threat zones in the south, it also represents a demographic gradient of black to white; a gradient that ostensibly represents who is seen as not competent to who is seen as competent; who is seen as untrustworthy and who is seen as trustworthy. These racialised demographic undertones, hidden in plain sight, characterize the face of middle management anti-poaching personnel in the KNP, where competency, trustworthiness and the allocation of resources are strongly correlated with race and to a lesser extent gender.⁵¹

5.5.2 Measuring the Productivity of Field Rangers

While senior and mid-level managers are subject to formal performance assessments, no such assessments are required for field rangers. The performance of field rangers is a direct reflection of the effectiveness of a section ranger. Section rangers adopt a range of practices to measure the productivity of their respective field ranger teams. This may be through the submission of overtime sheets evidencing field ranger hours worked or mapping of patrols on digital platforms such as CyberTracker or CMORE to visually demonstrate patrol routes and patrol frequencies and thus field ranger effort. However, these indicators of productivity do not necessarily translate into reducing the number of rhino killed. The most visceral and convincing indicator to demonstrate field ranger productivity or effort is the number of contacts that field rangers have with poaching groups. Such contacts or 'incidents' may include disrupting a hunting expedition and driving poaching groups from an area; arrest of individuals or the entire poaching group; confiscation of poaching paraphernalia especially rifles, ammunition, axes and mobile phones; or the injury or killing of suspects from gunshot trauma. A contact is a military term to denote an engagement with enemy combatants often including an exchange of gun fire. In the KNP a contact is defined similarly but may also include a sighting of a poaching group, gun shots heard or the discovery of fresh poacher spoor/tracks or camps. Some section rangers

and their field ranger teams reinterpret the meaning of what it means to be engaged in a contact.

the only way to reduce the poaching level is to have a good contact...its unfortunate but that's the way it is.⁵² [emphasis added]

The respondent above, a white section ranger who manages a section in one of the hardest hit areas of the KNP, is unambiguous by what he means to have a 'good' contact. Where a contact could be as common place as the discovery of fresh spoor, a 'good' contact entails either injuring or killing a suspect. In this way field ranger teams in his section are able to have some respite from the incessant, often multiple, incursions happening on a daily basis. As the same respondent lamented "this is what we do Monday to Sunday and Monday we start again".⁵³ After a 'good contact' there is often a period of respite generally extending for two weeks when there is a marked reduction in incursions into his section after which it starts picking up again. Repeating such 'good' contacts is thus the only way section rangers and their staff are able to enjoy some level of normalcy in terms of working hours as well as reduce the intense scrutiny and performance related pressure that they are under. That such good contacts don't include in any way an arrest that would determine a suspect's innocence or guilt through the criminal justice system also reveals extreme violence is what is the new measure of a job well done. This observation was reinforced by another senior KNP manager who said "if there is a contact in a section, things go a little quiet".⁵⁴ Its purpose is not only to mete out violence as punishment on the individual but also to make "punishment and violence on the body *visible to others*" (Massé 2017: 171, emphasis added) or as one Kruger field ranger commented, when referring to a suspect whose leg was amputated below the knee after a shooting incident, that it is a 'good advertisement'⁵⁵ to deter would-be poachers. It is a recycling of the exemplary violence that Stevenson-Hamilton was renowned for close to a century ago (see Dlamini 2020a). There are many reasons why arrests and the subsequent trial of suspects is not always the preferred option but space does not allow to fully explore and unravel the explanatory motives for ranger misconduct. Rather it is the qualities of a warrior, similar to the way the section ranger above is revered and celebrated, that field rangers are measured. When making a presentation, which included the quotation of a 'good contact', to an executive manager in the KNP, he remarked that he was aware who had made the statement despite not having disclosed the name or area of

operation of the respondent. This alludes to an intimate understanding by senior Kruger management of the proclivity for extreme violence and points to a culture of permissiveness and complicity (see Chapter 6).

Often the phrase, 'a good field ranger', is used to denote a field ranger that meets these standards of what it means to be a warrior in the KNP.

...it's very difficult to go there [Section 23] and say you mustn't do this or this, they will just report to the section ranger and he will write a report that you are not a good field ranger and that you shouldn't be sent to Section 23 again.⁵⁶ [emphasis added].

Section 23 is an unofficial denotation for a support group of field rangers that are drawn from other sections in the Park – typically those sections in the north of the Park from the Nxanatseni regions which experience low incidences of rhino poaching – to support those sections in the IPZ or JPZ on reactions or extended clandestine operations. On such deployments, field rangers in Section 23 would most often camp for extended periods of up to two weeks in clandestine camp sites to conduct an observation post (OP) to listen for gun shots and visually detect poaching groups from OP's that command a sweeping view over an area from a position that is hidden. On such deployments, field rangers in Section 23 can earn as much as half their monthly income from supplementary allowances such as camping out allowances and subsistence and travel (S&T) allowances.⁵⁷ Consequently, this significant financial injection has enabled many field rangers in the KNP to purchase vehicles and/or pay for home improvements (see Chapter 7). Where these field rangers question disproportionate aggression or extrajudicial actions they stand the risk of losing a significant source of supplementary income. This new financial indebtedness renders them increasingly precarious and nullifies any remnant of agency to *not* use disproportionate force. In many instances, just being complicit in acts of disproportionate violence is sufficient to earn the moniker of a what it takes to be a 'good field ranger'. Field rangers are thus constrained in how they are able to act in ways that are not only legally but also morally justifiable. In other instances, the very act of being at the forefront of contacts and showing aggression in a contact is a character trait that is becoming highly valued.

Bravo [generic field ranger radio call sign] is someone who can get the job done and not be worried about human rights.⁵⁸

The respondent above is a white section ranger responsible for the direct supervision of black field rangers. That it is aggression, instead of loyalty, that is valued in field rangers is one that is becoming increasingly commonplace in conversations with KNP managers and field rangers. ‘Getting the job done’ is the only metric that matters and the rights of suspects are increasingly being seen as an impediment to Kruger management in reducing the number of rhino killed on average per day. Efforts to inculcate a human rights ethic into the South African Police Service (SAPS) after the fall of apartheid (see Hornberger 2011) was often resisted in an institution that equated its adoption to allowing criminal impunity (Hansen 2006, McMichael 2012). Where human rights are seen as an impediment to effectively achieving law enforcement targets in the KNP is a concerning development in the light of human rights violations in conservation programmes elsewhere in elephant and rhino range states in both Africa and Asia.⁵⁹ In referencing the theme of human rights, the respondent implicitly condones the possibility that field rangers may not only use disproportionate force that exceeds what is prescribed in the organizational standard operating procedures (SOP’s) premised on minimum force but also that their interactions with suspects exceed the premises of human rights. In effect the suspension of the rights of suspects is not a matter that concerned him as a supervisor. In the context of the complex social relations outlined in Chapter 3, and where field ranger performance is linked to performance bonuses (whether formal or informal – see Chapter 3 and below) and awards, it is clear that KNP field rangers are actively incentivized to be aggressive. In my conversations with field rangers it is clear that the use of excessive force was an action that was not only sanctioned but encouraged. Often the use of disproportionate force by law enforcement officers are attributed to a ‘rotten apple’ syndrome or the injudicious use of discretion. Suffice it to say here, that these practices are not necessarily attributed to ‘atrocities from above or below’ but one of connivance “where the hierarchy has not given explicit orders but creates a permissive climate by not punishing acts of abuse” (Verweijen 2020: 3).

One tangible means to measure aggression is the number of rounds of ammunition that was used in a contact with poachers. The use of ammunition needs to be reported to a section ranger – and indeed it is a legal requirement in terms of the Firearms Control Act - so that expended ammunition can not only be replenished or act as system of accounting

for ammunition used but more importantly to evaluate the circumstances that necessitated the expenditure of ammunition. Where poachers managed to escape, field rangers face the displeasure and ire of their section rangers and where an inconsequential amount of ammunition was used, field rangers would be accused of not performing their duties adequately and being 'lazy'.

If you see a poacher and they get away you will be in a big problem [with management] they will scream at you to ask how they [the poachers] could get away from you ... we are tired of answering them ... so if you let them get away or use [little] ammunition you have to explain but if you use twenty rounds and someone is killed then you don't have to answer anything.⁶⁰ [emphasis added]

This form of workplace pressure that calls on field rangers to use disproportionate or even extrajudicial force was observed across the KNP and not only in those areas that were hardest hit in terms of poaching pressure, as the respondent below who is stationed in the north of the Park attested.

If poachers are there [indicating to a tree less than 50 meters away], it is very difficult to arrest them and when you report that you saw the poachers [and they got away] your supervisor will reprimand you for not shooting them.⁶¹ [emphasis added]

It is these responses from field rangers at the forefront of anti-poaching operations in Kruger that demonstrate the pressures placed on them to use disproportionate force. Where decisions for performance bonuses or deployment to Section 23 lie directly with section rangers, field rangers are placed in an untenable position where their value is directly – and perversely - linked to using disproportionate force. As Mockaitis remarks in the use of minimum force, “[m]embers of the security forces could thus face legal action for employing too much force, but they could be punished for using too little” (Mockaitis 2012: 763). Massé (2017) reports in the GLC in Mozambique, that rangers are subject to formal reprimands by their employers for using too little force and that it could lead to dismissal. In the KNP, it is unlikely that disciplinary procedures could be instituted against a field ranger for using too little force. However, there are other forms of workplace sanction, typified by victimization, that could be used to sanction any perceived acts of non-productivity or non-performance. The most effective means is for section rangers and other

supervisors to deny field rangers opportunities to earn supplementary income in the form of overtime and subsistence and travel (S&T), which can, as demonstrated above, be significant; overlook them when nominating recipients for organization-wide awards that have a monetary reward; being selected to attend local football matches or overseas trips to participate in prestigious marathons such as the Berlin marathon or training exercises abroad and the lucrative S&T associated with it; or an informal system of reward for their participation in a contact which entails the exchange of gun fire and/or the recovery of a firearm. It is these structural features embedded in the labour process, in the form of overtime and other forms of supplementary income that gives rise to a new forms of worker precarity – financial indebtedness (see Chapter 7). It limits the agency of rangers to act in ways that are prescribed within the organization SOP's or the law and it is through these assemblages of power that labour value is reconfigured from loyalty to another preferred mode of productivity – the use of violence. In this way, the manner in which value is generated takes on an even more perverse character than the value cultivated through subalternities that shaped labour relations historically. Kruger management have been able to overcome the subjective measures of field ranger productivity that was a hallmark of its performance assessments in the past. Today those measure of performance are much more quantifiable and more readily observable in the amount of ammunition expended and the violence meted out, measured in the physical injuries and death of poachers.

This perversity in measuring labour productivity is not unique to the KNP, it also mirrored in other conservation law enforcement settings with similarly disturbing outcomes. Mushonga, in her investigation into the militarization of the Forestry Commission in Zimbabwe's Sikumi Forest Reserve, noted the "violent evictions, arrests and, sometimes death of people [is seen] as an important measure of success [where] [t]he number of people arrested or killed [...] featured as activity targets for the FCS's [Forestry Commission Security] integrated performance agreement" (2018: 75). In the Messok Dja forests of northern Republic of Congo, anthropologist Jerome Lewis also reports that international conservation NGO's like WWF which funds eco-guards salaries or allowances, measure their success in terms of "arrests made, kilometers walked [...] seizures of meat and illegal guns. They are quantifying their success in terms of repressive actions that they finance, rather than species abundance or

ecosystem health".⁶² Similarly, such non-biological measures of field ranger performance is also mirrored in the reporting structure of major donor agencies. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has developed a toolkit for measuring ranger effectiveness where the criteria for ranger performance is distilled in the number of 'encounters' rangers have with offenders of wildlife crime.⁶³ In this way donor agencies are able to quantify how 'effective' their donor dollars are in addressing wildlife crime. Where conservation agencies are able to meet these measures of efficacy, the better they are able to position themselves for future rounds of funding. Missing from this reporting frame, is the *nature* of these 'encounters'. No consideration at all is given to the fact that in meeting these targets in terms of the number of 'encounters', it may predispose rangers working for recipient agencies, agencies already under considerable financial constraints, to use disproportionate or extrajudicial force.⁶⁴

Rewards and Incentives, and its Troubling Transformation

Kruger management have always been acutely aware of many shortcomings and contradictions in its treatment of its labour force and the hardships workers faced in the face of below subsistence wages. However, they seemed to disassociate themselves from being the architects of these deprivations faced by its African staff. This was demonstrated in the many memoranda and Park-wide assessments of its field ranger corps vis-à-vis salary structure and for example playing an active role in securing maize at cost price for its field rangers despite the insistence of suppliers to add profit margins and accusing Park administrators of undercutting the businesses of legitimate maize suppliers. However, this awareness did not necessarily lead to wide ranging structural changes, only minor corrections to ameliorate the immediate struggles of its labour force. One such mitigating strategy has been the use of rewards or incentives to demonstrate what it most valued in its field ranger labour force – to work uncomplaining for work long hours, at times under extreme environmental conditions and not to shy away from dangerous interactions with wildlife or armed poachers.

At this stage I feel special mention should be made of B[lack] Rangers Robert Mathebula from Shangoni and Elfias Mabusa from Vlakteplaas who carried the follow up operation through to the end under extreme conditions when the temperature rose to 43 degrees C[elcius] and we had

no water for the last 2 hours of the follow up. They never once showed anything but tireless enthusiasm and their bushcraft and ability to follow spoor was absolutely incredible. They followed the spoor for a distance of ± 30 kms [kilometres].⁶⁵

Park management also used rations and the provision of meat, not only as a strategy to ameliorate the low wages it paid African staff (see Chapter 3) but also to extract greater productivity from its labour force. In instances where field rangers showed exceptional work performance it used meat from wildlife, together with alcohol, as an incentive or bonus.

Tuesday 25th June, 1991 – Go out and shoot an Impala for the b/rangers [black rangers] and also buy beer for them at a local bottlestore. This is all for a party I am giving them as a token of appreciation for the work they produced during the last few months of Elephant Poaching problems.⁶⁶

White section rangers, like the person above, in some instances used their own financial resources to buy alcohol, further enhancing the figure of the personality in the paternalistic relations that governed his relations with African field rangers (see Chapter 3). In other instances, Park management rewarded black field rangers with monetary rewards for the participation in anti-poaching operations that may have included not only the arrest of suspects – as that would have been a fairly common and mundane occurrence – but in the recovery of a firearm; the participation in an armed contact or exchange of gun fire; and the killing of suspects.

Wednesday 26th – Leave after lunch for Shingwedzi to attend the handing over of the black rangers [sic] bonuses by Dr. Joubert. Cpl Maluleke received ZAR1 000, Cpl Mabunda ZAR800 and Robert Mathebula ZAR800 and Caiphus Chiloane ZAR600.⁶⁷

The median monthly earning in the agricultural sector (a category in which conservation workers fall) at the same time this report was made, was ZAR 210 (Statistics South Africa/National Department of Agriculture, 2000). While it is uncertain what the monthly income of field rangers in the KNP was in 1991, the bonuses paid to these field rangers in the excerpt above would have been significant and most probably exceeded their monthly earnings. Such rewards would no doubt have a significant impact in the manner field rangers in the Kruger Park would actively seek to replicate these forms of labour value. During my fieldwork period in the Park, the payment of rewards was not an official policy of

the Park. Despite this, in my discussions with some white section rangers, the question of rewards or performance-based incentives related to an arrest of a poacher, the recovery of a firearm or possibly the participation in a contact or firefight was a frequent topic of discussion. One section ranger I interacted with was able to access private funding and justified this system of reward for field rangers in the following manner.

...there's this drive if you going to do it, it doesn't matter who you are, human nature is if I said ok [...] do this task you will do it once out of interest and you stimulated to do an arrest then you get to a point in the task where the task becomes repetitive and there's not a stimulation anymore [...] so that kind of skill needs to be rewarded because its just repetitive, repetitive, repetitive.⁶⁸ [emphasis added]

While this was in contravention of Park policy, the fact that it was common knowledge amongst a group of his colleagues and supervisors indicates that it was tacitly tolerated. The rewards varied from ZAR 750 for the recovery of a firearm and ZAR 1 500 for the arrest of a suspect or the in the event a suspected poacher was killed.⁶⁹ This latter amount was significant in the context of the low salaries paid to field rangers. According to 2013/2014 data on salaries in the Park (see Swemmer and Mmethi 2016), this latter amount could constitute as much as 20 percent of the monthly salary of a field ranger earning a maximum salary on the Paterson graded B Band. It also points to how many managers in the Kruger view social relations in general – that it is a narrow economic incentivization that forms the basis of all human relations and behaviour. This view overlooks, as James Scott reminds us, “the coercive structure of the situation...that impels people into such catastrophic choices” (2012: xx). This phenomena of using higher wages, or in this case monetary incentives that form a sizable portion of the monthly wage, also forms part of what neoclassical economists characterize as “efficiency wages” (Clever 2017: 66 Footnote 63). It was a strategy employed by industrialists like Henry Ford to pay “higher than market-clearing rates” in order to “obtain workers’ cooperation, higher productivity, and low turnover” (ibid: 66 Footnote 63). In my discussions with field rangers from this section,⁷⁰ they were under the impression that the money came directly from the ‘pocket’ of this section ranger, replicating an historical technique of labour control and its dual purpose of enhancing the image of the white game ranger and fomenting loyalty to this image of the ‘father figure’ (see above and Chapter 3). In other instances, other section rangers

perennially instigated discussions with their superiors to formalize such a reward system. The preoccupation with rewards again primarily arose out of an anxiety over field ranger productivity.

...its easy to pull the wool over my eyes...even if I had the opportunity to go with them on a daily basis, I can only go with one team so the other teams can still do what they want, they can lie under a tree, they can sit at a waterhole and give me GPS's [geographic position coordinates] of places where they pass you know and say this is where we lost the spoor [...] there is another angle... that I have been playing with for a very long time is the compensation issue versus the military discipline issue.⁷¹ [emphasis added]

On the surface, it may seem that the payment of rewards is yet another emblematic, albeit problematic, technique of a cheap labour regime that has characterised the labour regime in the Kruger since its inception and the South African workplace more generally (see Chapter 3; Chinguno, 2013). However, the payment of rewards did not come without troubling complexities.

...if you compensate they might become like a bounty hunter. If you do not compensate them they run on spoor like they did on Saturday for the whole day without having any success and the moment they see somebody they just open fire like wild and that happens hey. Because out of frustration [...] so basically, ja [yes] I don't know, I mean that is probably... and I do not know how one addresses that.⁷²

In effect, what this KNP section ranger was alluding to in his reference to 'bounty hunters', is the practice - what he referred to as a 'rumour' emanating from another section in the Park - whereby field rangers were said to 'recruit' would-be poachers and arrest or kill them for the purpose of claiming a monetary reward or non-monetary rewards such as enhancing their social standing with their white section ranger. While such egregious acts on the part of field rangers to recruit would-be poachers was never explicitly articulated by their managers, it is an outcome that is observed in many other problematic military and policing cultures. Manhunting teams from the apartheid era paramilitary police units, such as Koevoet, also paid rewards to its black operators for killing 'terrorists'.

One of the more distasteful aspects of *Koevoet's* operations was that the Ovambo and Kavango 'constables' who filled out the unit's ranks were paid *kopgeld* [literally head money or bounty] for each guerrilla captured or killed.

This amount ranged from R200 to R20 000 and served often 'as an incentive for the extra-judicial murder of captives' (O' Brien 2001: 45)

Often, the people killed and framed as 'terrorists' were nothing but innocent peasants or incidental bystanders to the activities of so-called insurgent groups but the payment of a substantial reward perversely incentivized these operatives to kill irrespective of the complicity of the victims in any insurgent activity. Similarly, in Colombia's war against paramilitaries and drug cartels, military command explicitly used killings and not arrests as a performance measure for brigades and battalions. Those commanders and soldiers of units that scored high in the number of kills were rewarded with lucrative monetary rewards, days off, commissions abroad (together with the lucrative monetary incentives that come with such commissions); and distinguished service awards.⁷³ Failure to meet these targets left commanders open to losing their commands and subsequently soldiers were pressured to meet these kill targets. To achieve these targets, some units 'recruited' homeless and vulnerable civilians whose murders were framed as combat killings.

Furthermore, the payment of rewards to field rangers also had other consequences. Field ranger teams within a section were divided into smaller units under the leadership of a ranger corporal or ranger sergeant, typically referred to as *Alpha* and *Bravo* teams. It foments inter team rivalries and while in the eyes of the section ranger this sort of rivalry may lead to greater productivity, it leads to mistrust and the reluctance to share information between teams because getting the monetary reward is the greater incentive, not team work. It creates animosity, favouritism and harks back to the paternalistic relations of being in favour with the father figure. It was a deliberate strategy of the section ranger to juxtapose the successes of one team against the other in the hope that it would elicit a fierce competition amongst his members of his field ranger team. It was also an old strategy in workplace regimes to create a differentiation in the labour force. In this case it served only to breed mistrust, the withholding of information from other team members and effectively fractured the unity of field ranger teams within a ranger outpost.⁷⁴

5.6 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has demonstrated that anxieties over field ranger productivity has preoccupied managers in the Kruger since founding of the Park. It shows that its notion of productivity differed to that of the labour in the employ of agri-capitalists and the private game reserves that were established on its western boundary. While labour productivity also centred on the notion of fealty or loyalty, the Park's particular conceptualization of loyalty lay in the ability of black field rangers to arrest people in their social worlds who violated the newly proclaimed laws related to resource use. The most loyal or reliable of field rangers were those who willing to arrest or even use violence against their kin in upholding these new laws. It shows that in the absence of white supervision, it turned to special rangers within its ranks, not dissimilar to the *baas boys* engaged in the industrial workplace regimes, to provide oversight of worker productivity and to create a differentiation in its labour force. It shows that these anxieties over labour productivity continue in its contemporary 'war on poaching' and that despite the use of GPS-linked technologies to track field ranger patrol effort, Kruger managers still struggle to quantify labour productivity.

Secondly, this chapter also shows that the overtly militarized responses to rhino poaching did not evolve in a vacuum. It shows that Park managers have been subjected to intense political and public pressure to demonstrate that they are effectively curbing illegal wildlife crime. It shows that the ability of wildlife managers in the Kruger to stem illegal wildlife crime is closely linked to not only the political aspirations of high-level politicians but also the reputation of the South African state on the international stage, where it has eked out a niche for itself as a leader in global environmental politics. It shows that the state recognizes broader political economic ills are at the root of many of the issues that give rise to wildlife crime and while it discursively looks to a whole-of-society approach to address these inequalities, that there is no earnest political will to bring about such far reaching political economic and social transformations. Instead, to demonstrate short term 'wins' the state and concomitantly the Park, has leaned almost solely on a policing logic to address the rhino poaching issue. It also shows that the responses of the state are further entrenched by conditionalities attached to funding from private, intergovernmental and bilateral sources of funding that prescribe the manner in which such funds are dispensed, further limiting the ability

of the state to adopt non-violent approaches and to address broader political economic ills.

Thirdly, in order to achieve these law enforcement targets and increase labour productivity, the Park set about reconfiguring the figure of the ranger. It is only in the reconstituted figure of the warrior that field rangers could now meet these measures of labour productivity. However, it shows that this reconfiguration of labour value and the accounting controls that measure productivity holds distinct consequences for anti-poaching staff that include both section rangers and field rangers.

In the case of section rangers, it shows that in its key performance indicators to measure the productivity, it leans on the notion of aggressiveness that is valued above traditional conservation skills. While the actual measure of productivity lies in the concept of reducing the number of rhinos killed on average per day, it is an aggressive posture in pursuing and intercepting suspects and displacing that poaching pressure that act as a measure of productivity. It also shows that there is a racial disparity in resource allocation between white and black section rangers. To overcome this disparity in resources, some black section rangers resort to committing their own financial resources to address the uneven allocation of resources. Furthermore, black section rangers are increasingly being associated with untrustworthiness and incompetence while the figure of the white ranger is associated with competence. This is demonstrated in the longitudinal gradient of the racial makeup of section ranger incumbents as one traverses the Park from north to south. Over ninety percent of the section ranger positions in the south of the Park that is home to the majority of rhino, are occupied by white section rangers.

When it comes to measuring the productivity of black field rangers and where these key performance indicators are not applicable to this category of work, this chapter shows that managers reinterpret the notion of labour value. Where field ranger labour value was traditionally premised on loyalty, in its reconstituted form as warriors, field ranger productivity is also premised on aggression. However, as opposed to using the reduction of rhino killed on average per day as a measure of field ranger productivity, managers lean on a more visceral or tangible measure. It shows that where field rangers can demonstrate that have used a sufficient number of rounds of ammunition when they encounter suspected poachers in the bush they will have met the required metrics of productivity. To ensure

field rangers meet these metrics of productivity, Park managers have also embedded these metrics into the structural features of the labour process in the form of significant forms supplementary income. It shows that field rangers can earn as much as half their monthly salary over two weeks and that these forms of supplementary income to augment below subsistence salaries has long been used as a technique by Park managers to reward labour productivity. Crucially however, it shows that these features in the labour process perversely shape ranger practices in disturbing ways and can include instances where field rangers seemingly out of their own volition induce persons who would not have committed a crime to commit a crime and to claim the reward as a result.

Notes

¹ 'WWF's Secret War: WWF Funds Guards who have Tortured and Killed People', *Buzzfeed News*, 4 March 2019 [Online] Available at: <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/tomwarren/wwf-world-wide-fund-nature-parks-torture-death> (Accessed 3 May 2019). See also 'Death in the Wilderness: Secret Killings, Enforced disappearances by the KWS, KFS Officers', *Standard Digital*, undated [Online] Available at: <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/special-report/death-in-the-wilderness/?fbclid=IwAR1RZPeU8RpkSF80THiAait7qBQ-SxKjVS-S7Cn3uMEKbJm-OgVqokSBCys> (Accessed 12 May 2019).

² 'WWF's Secret War: WWF Funds Guards who have Tortured and Killed People', *Buzzfeed News*, 4 March 2019 [Online] Available at: <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/tomwarren/wwf-world-wide-fund-nature-parks-torture-death> (Accessed 3 May 2019).

³ Skukuza Archives NK/14/4 Vertroulik Beveiligings Plan [Confidential Protection Plan] 1987-1992 'Mosambiekwerkers van die Nasionale Krugerwildtuin: Die verskaffing van permanente verblyf in die RSA, 27 April 1987 [Mozambique workers of the Kruger National Park; The issuing of permanent residency in the RSA]. "Hulle argumenteer (heeltemal korrek) dat hulle lojaliteit, selfs met die deurloper situasie, nog nooit in gedrang was nie. Hulle huiwer nie 'n oomblik om hulle eie familie en vriende te arresteer nie. Selfs met gewapende olifantstropery het hulle al van hulle bekendes geskiet".

⁴ Skukuza Archives Native Rangers NK/9/18 Nature Con 1946-1974. Letter from Warden KNP to Secretary, National Parks Board of Trustees, 7 January 1952.

- ⁵ Skukuza Archives NK/9/18 Bantoesake Veldwagters [Native Affairs Field Rangers] 1945 to 1964. Letter from Ranger to Warden, 25 August 1952.
- ⁶ Skukuza Archives Native Rangers NK/9/18 Nature Con 1946-1974. Letter from Warden KNP to Secretary, National Parks Board of Trustees, 7 January 1952.
- ⁷ Skukuza Archives NK9/18 1946-1974 Letter from Ranger D.C. Swart to the Director National Parks, 20 November 1970 Toekenning Bantoe Sersant Simon Mangana.
- ⁸ Skukuza Archives NK/9/18 Bantoesake/Veldwagters 1945-1974 [Native Affairs/Field Rangers]. "Dat alle nuwe bantoeveldwagters-aanstellings voortaan aan 'n betroubaarheidstoets onderwerp word".
- ⁹ Skukuza Archives NK/9/18 Bantoesake/Veldwagters 1945-1974 [Native Affairs/Field Rangers] 'Memorandum Insake Bantoeveldwagtersdienste in die Nasionale Krugerwildtuin [Memorandum relating to Native Field Ranger Services in the Kruger National Park].
- ¹⁰ Skukuza Archives NK/9/18 Bantoesake/Veldwagters 1945-1974 [Native Affairs/Field Rangers]. "Fantasies...dit klink te goed om waar te wees".
- ¹¹ Semi-structured interview with KNP section ranger, August 2016.
- ¹² An *impimpi* is a Zulu word referring to someone who "secretly gives information about another person to the police or other authorities; an informer". [Online] Available at: <https://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/impimpi> (Accessed 1 July 2021).
- ¹³ Extensive use of CMORE was implemented in one ranger outpost, evidenced in a semi-structured interview with a KNP section ranger, February 2017.
- ¹⁴ Informal conversation with KNP data capture analyst, February 2017
- ¹⁵ Semi-structured interview with KNP section ranger, February 2017.
- ¹⁶ Informal conversation with ranger corporal, January 2017.
- ¹⁷ Informal conversation with KNP field ranger, November 2016 and semi-structured interview with KNP section ranger, March 2017.
- ¹⁸ Semi-structured interview with senior KNP manager, February 2017.
- ¹⁹ Remarks by Johan Jooste, SANParks Head: Special Operations at the Game Ranger's Association of Africa (GRAA) annual general meeting at Berg-en-Dal, KNP, June 2016.
- ²⁰ Semi-structured interview with senior KNP manager, February 2017.
- ²¹ Interview with KNP anti-poaching staff as nominee for the 'South African of the Year: Conservationist of the Year' award, remarks by Nicholus Funda, Chief

Ranger, KNP. See [Online] Available at: <https://gkepf.org/interviews-with-general-johan-jooste/> (Accessed 9 February 2020).

²² Media Release: 'SANParks enlists retired army general to command anti-poaching'. [Online] Available at: <http://www.sanparks.org/about/news/default.php?id=55388> (Accessed 17 August 2013). The link has subsequently been deleted by SANParks.

²³ 'SA Wages War on Ruthless Rhino Poachers', *Mail & Guardian*, 17 November 2010 [Online] Available at: <https://mg.co.za/article/2010-11-17-sa-wages-war-on-ruthless-rhino-poachers> (Accessed 11 October 2018).

²⁴ Comments by retired Major General Johan Jooste, GRAA AGM, June 2016.

²⁵ Comment by retired Major General Johan Jooste, head of Kruger's anti-poaching response in Smith, N. (2014) 'Its War: Meet the General', *Farmer's Weekly*, 12 September 2014, 14035, pp.48.

²⁶ Media Release: 'SANParks enlists retired army general to command anti-poaching'. [Online] Available at: <http://www.sanparks.org/about/news/default.php?id=55388> (Accessed: 17 August 2013). The link has subsequently been deleted by SANParks.

²⁷ Informal conversation with anti-poaching practitioner, September 2017.

²⁸ See 'Air Reconnaissance and Response in the Anti-Poaching Context' by Wynand Uys in *SA Flyer*, date unknown.

²⁹ Email correspondence with senior SANParks manager, November 2019.

³⁰ 'President Jacob Zuma's opening address of the COP17 to the CITES in Johannesburg, South Africa', 24 September 2016 [Online] Available at: https://www.environment.gov.za/speech/presidentjacobzuma_openingaddress_sofcop17cites (Accessed 7 October 2016).

³¹ 'Global Anti-Poaching Act of 2015' (H.R.2494, May 21, 2015) [Online] Available at: <http://www.congress.gov/114/bills/hr2494/BILLS-114hr2494ih.pdf> (Accessed 31 October 2015).

³² See Nelleman et al. (2014), Maguire, T. and C. Haenlein (2015)

³³ Informal conversation with field ranger from the KNP Special Ranger Unit, November 2016.

³⁴ See [Online] Available At: <https://guardian-point.com/> (Accessed 1 July 2021).

³⁵ See [Online] Available at: <https://www.ecodefensgroup.org/latest/edge-provides-helicopter-fast-rope-training-for-firefighters-in-table-mountain-national-park> (Accessed 1 July 2021). While the excerpt pertains to helicopter fast rope training in Table Mountain National Park, the president and founder of EDGE, Nathan Edmondson, also refers to their role in frontline anti-poaching operations

in the KNP and the manner they were approached by the ODC as a security service provider.

³⁶ Informal conversation with a senior KNP management official, September 2018.

³⁷ Remarks by Maj-Gen (Retd) Johan Jooste, Head: Special Projects at the Game Ranger's Association of Africa Annual General Meeting (AGM) at Berg en Dal, KNP, June 2016.

³⁸ Informal conversation with KNP regional ranger, March 2016.

³⁹ KPI's form part of a broader Key Performance Appraisal (KPA). Performance appraisals are only relevant to employees in a Paterson C Grading and above. In the 2015/2016 SANParks Annual report, there were 860 employees across the organization that were subject to performance reviews. See [Online] Available at: <https://www.sanparks.org/assets/docs/general/annual-report-2016.pdf> (Accessed 9 February 2020). For the reporting period 2013/2014, there were 341 employees in the KNP who were subject to performance appraisals (Swemmer and Mmethi, 2016).

⁴⁰ Informal conversation with regional and section ranger, February 2017.

⁴¹ The IUCN Species Survival Commission African Rhino Specialist Group has defined what constitutes a 'Key' and 'Important' populations. Key 1 populations contain either more than 50 percent of a subspecies or have a stable or increasing population of greater than 100. Key 2 populations contain 25-50 percent of a subspecies or have an increasing or stable population of 51-100 rhino. Key 3 populations have either rapidly declining population (> 25 percent) of over 100 or less rapidly (< 25 percent) declining population of 51-100. Important populations are divided into four categories. See Emslie et al. 2007.

⁴² Informal conversation with KNP regional ranger, February 2017.

⁴³ Semi-structured interview with senior KNP manager, February 2017.

⁴⁴ Towards the end of my fieldwork period in the KNP, eight of the eleven sections that make up the Marula South and Marula North regions – the regions with the highest poaching incidences which also incorporates the IPZ and JPZ protection zones – were managed by white males.

⁴⁵ Semi-structured interview with KNP section ranger, March 2017. There is also preliminary evidence that in the case of one 'underperforming' white section ranger, who was newly appointed, was awarded a conservation practitioner award as part of the prestigious rhino conservation awards in 2018. He was stationed in a section adjacent to the Mozambique border and subsequently moved to an area in the IPZ that was experiencing lower levels of rhino losses. While this could not be verified, it adds credence to how white section rangers, despite their levels of competency, are not only shielded from scrutiny but that a system of awards and public acclaim obscures their competencies and problematic practices (as is the

case with Otch Otto, Chapter 3). On the other hand, the competencies of black section rangers are summarily questioned and they face being redeployed, disciplined, or fired,

⁴⁶ Semi-structured interview KNP executive staff member, March 2017. In the region of ZAR 200 million annually (Aucoin and Donnenfeld 2017).

⁴⁷ Semi-structured interview with KNP section ranger, March 2017.

⁴⁸ Semi-structured interview, KNP section ranger, March 2017.

⁴⁹ Semi-structured interview with KNP section ranger, March 2017.

⁵⁰ Fieldnotes, January 2017.

⁵¹ Towards the end of my fieldwork period in the KNP, eight of the eleven sections (close to 90 percent) that make up the Marula South and Marula North regions – the regions with the highest poaching incidences which also incorporates the IPZ and JPZ protection zones – were managed by white males. Three of the four women section rangers were stationed in the northern regions of the Park and only one was stationed in the JPZ, but she was allocated a section that was surrounded by white males. This was deliberately the case because the supposed competency of the white male section rangers would deflect any poaching pressure her area of responsibility (Fieldnotes, 2016).

⁵² Informal conversation with KNP manager, October, 2016.

⁵³ Informal conversation with KNP manager, October, 2016.

⁵⁴ Informal conversation with senior KNP manager, February 2017.

⁵⁵ Informal conversation with KNP field ranger, June 2016.

⁵⁶ Informal conversation with KNP field ranger, January 2017.

⁵⁷ Informal conversation with KNP field ranger, January 2017.

⁵⁸ Informal conversation with KNP section ranger, June 2016.

⁵⁹ WWF's Secret War: WWF Funds Guards who have Tortured and Killed People', *Buzzfeed News*, 4 March 2019 [Online] Available at: <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/tomwarren/wwf-world-wide-fund-nature-parks-torture-death> (Accessed 3 May 2019).

⁶⁰ Informal conversation with two KNP field rangers, August 2016.

⁶¹ Informal conversation with KNP field ranger, January 2017.

⁶² Green Violence: "Eco-Guards" are Abusing Indigenous Groups in Africa', *Environment* 360, 17 March 2020 [Online] Available at: <https://e360.yale.edu/features/green-violence-eco-guards-are-abusing-indigenous-groups-in-africa> (Accessed 23 March 2020).

⁶³ Fieldnotes CITES conference and semi-structured interview with USAID representatives, September 2016.

⁶⁴ Semi-structured interview with USAID representatives, September 2016.

⁶⁵ Skukuza Archives/Ranger Diaries/Shangoni/3 March 1991.

⁶⁶ Skukuza Archives/Ranger Diaries/Shangoni/25 June 1991.

⁶⁷ Skukuza Archives/Ranger Diaries/Shangoni/December 1991.

⁶⁸ Semi-structured interview with KNP section ranger, June 2016.

⁶⁹ Informal conversation with KNP field ranger, June 2016.

⁷⁰ Informal conversations with KNP field rangers, June 2016.

⁷¹ Semi-structured interview with KNP section ranger, August 2016.

⁷² Semi-structured interview with KNP section ranger, August 2016.

⁷³ 'How the Perverse Incentives behind "False Positives" Worked', José Miguel Vivanco, 12 November 2018, *Human Rights Watch*, [Online] Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/11/12/how-perverse-incentives-behind-false-positives-worked> (Accessed 12 July 2021).

⁷⁴ Informal conversation with KNP field ranger, June 2016.



An Ethnographic Interlude: The Working Day

A Fraction of Everyday Ranger Life: The Working Day

Its predawn, 04h30 on a section ranger outpost somewhere in the Kruger National Park (KNP) on a crisp, clear June morning, in the middle of the South African winter. It's still dark, no indication yet that the rising sun will soon paint the eastern horizon in a beautiful, almost banal, palette of orange and reds. In the distance a leopard rasps in its guttural way, becoming ever fainter as it continues to patrol the limits of its territory; a fiery-necked nightjar¹ makes its almost presciently ominous lament considering the potentially violent manner in which the day could unfold. *Good-Lord-Deliver-Us-Good-Lord-Deliver-Us* it calls repeatedly - a nocturnal birdcall that is not at all part of the characteristic soft melody that will later coincide with the rising of the sun. I assemble with a group of field rangers and one ranger corporal. Some have just emerged from their single roomed accommodation,² their boots still untied, one has a cup of tea in hand, another zipping up his backpack so the contents don't spill, indicating their haste in getting up to face yet another day - perhaps also indicating either their reluctance or indifference to performing the routine that has become a trademark of their everyday work. They jostle to sign out their issued R1/R2 semi-automatic battle³ rifles from the communal rifle safe. Others have been ready for some time, their battle jackets bulging with tactical first aid kits, Global Positioning System (GPS) units, multiple spare ammunition magazines and hand-held two-way radios; their semi-automatic rifles are slung over their shoulders and there is an easy conversation in xiTsonga⁴ after the ritualized round of brazing-up, a militarized form of salute. The conversation is intermittingly interrupted by the sound of the cycling of their rifle bolts, checking that the rifles are safe; the characteristic sound of the insertion of a fully loaded magazine into the magazine receiver; the adjustment of a tactical rifle sling; and the

rechecking of a rifle scope. These firearms are not the factory grade models I was accustomed to; these rifles had distinct modifications – folding-stocks, red dot rifle sights,⁵ camouflage/tactical paint, tactical white and infrared torches mounted on the hand guards and shortened barrels – identical to the rifles used by specialized South African police and military units not only during apartheid but still in use today. These rifle modifications have surpassed their original utilitarian purpose – they have been transformed into tools with purposes other than for the protection of field rangers against potentially dangerous wildlife and the occasional encounter with armed poachers in days gone past.

The ranger corporal sits in the idling single cab pick-up truck, smoking while he fills out the vehicle log sheet; the cabin heater turned on full blast to ward off the biting cold. He has been up since 03h00, a habit which has become his routine since the escalation of rhino poaching in his section some six years ago – mostly thinking about how he will deploy his colleagues this morning and how he can outsmart the multiple groups of poachers coming to hunt in his section – a burden of responsibility and planning that is clearly not equally shared by everyone in the group. Everyone is clad in their characteristic olive-green uniforms,⁶ cold weather jackets and balaclavas - woollen full-faced hats mostly associated with 1970s era television bank robbers that only reveal the eyes and mouth of the wearer. It's *cold*. All these men on this morning who form part of the Field Ranger Corp of the Ranger Services department, are black. The section rangers, on the other hand, who are responsible for all conservation and law enforcement functions in each of the twenty two management units (or sections as they are commonly referred to) throughout the Park, could be black or white; male or female.

On this morning and as with most other mornings that I spend with field rangers during my twelve-month ethnography into conservation anti-poaching efforts in the KNP, the section ranger rarely, if ever, joins us. The task of countering the poaching threat at this everyday, distinctly unspectacular, risk laden and disagreeable coal face of the 'war on poaching' is left to this demographic of men (which also includes a small proportion of women)⁷ - often low paid, black, post-apartheid iterations of migrant forms of labour.

It's hard to think that behind the easy banter and smiling eyes are individuals who are extraordinarily skilled in bush craft – their confidence in traversing extensive areas on foot that is peppered with potentially

dangerous wildlife – buffalo, elephant, rhinoceros, lion, leopard, hippopotamus, venomous snakes – comes with a deep understanding of animal behaviour and having the ability to judge what situations warrant what sort of reaction when confronted by any of these animals. It is a workplace that is mostly traversed without fear, where competence from a senior field ranger, often with an accumulated institutional and bush knowledge of as much of thirty years, is passed on to a junior field ranger; a competence that grows with every encounter until walking into a breeding herd of elephant and being completely surrounded while on foot merely requires a cool head and copious amounts of courage to see how these animals, who are already agitated by the scent of humans in the air, will react. And if the situation requires, they have the rifle competency to protect themselves and stop a charging elephant in its tracks. There are also teams of rangers where this confidence and competence is lacking and the near deadly experiences of past encounters with elephant insinuates an aura of fear of the potentiality that lies waiting every time they step off the vehicle to enter the swathes of the dense bush that lie ahead of them. It is also their almost unfailing ability to orienteer without the aid of a map or compass in an area the size of the state of Israel in places intermittently marked by management jeep tracks or tourist roads in relatively dense bush that repeatedly astounds me. Trees, bends in a streambed, termite mounds, windmills or pans are often the only navigational aids they require in a landscape so flat it rarely offers any topographical clues of where you are.

But most astonishing of all the tools in their bush craft repertoire is their ability to detect and follow human tracks for extended periods. It's a learned skill, an embedded institutional practice that possibly dates back to the inception of the Park at the turn of the 20th century. It is a skill that rangers in those early years most likely developed from following the herds of cattle belonging to their fathers. A skill so refined that some herd boys could discern the tracks of an individual bull in his father's herd in instances where the herds of many pastoralists intermingled. It is a skill that was further honed during the time when field rangers were the frontline agents of the apartheid state in detecting refugees⁸ and job seekers illegally crossing the international border between Mozambique and South Africa, walking across the gauntlet that is the Kruger National Park, risking death by dehydration or being eaten by prides of lion who have become adept at hunting and terrorising the steady flow of travellers;

or risking capture and suffering either the indignities so often meted out to those seeking better lives and at other times death at the hands of a SADF soldier or conscript whose rules of engagement at the time differed starkly to that of KNP field rangers. These groups of people were either fleeing atrocities of the nearly two decades long civil war in Mozambique or simply seeking employment opportunities in the mines, farms or elsewhere; or simply to reconnect familial ties with kin in the borderlands of the Republic. Often these ordinary, mostly peasant folk, would be smeared with the broad-brush stroke of 'terrorist'; members of liberation movements seeking to weaken the apartheid state through striking at its economic and cultural core. Who was peasant, refugee or job seeker and who was insurgent, was not readily obvious. These illegal crossings reached an apogee during the mid 1980s when fighting between the warring parties in Mozambique was at its most intense when thousands of crossings were recorded, quantified primarily through the reading of footprints, or 'spoor' as it is commonly referred to locally.⁹ Despite the density of troop deployment from the then South African Defence Force (SADF)¹⁰ responsible for border security, it was KNP field rangers who repeatedly outdid their military counterparts in detecting and apprehending 'deurlopers' or 'mahambane'. Today that institutionalised bush craft skill of detecting and tracking human footprints or 'cutting spoor' is deeply embedded in the practices of the current cohort of field rangers, both men and women, who are exceptionally talented in this singular art of manhunting. It is this practice of tracking that consistently brings about the means through which the greatest proportion of detection and apprehension of poachers occurs despite the millions of Euro that have been invested in security infrastructure and technology to detect and deflect incursions by poachers. This form of manhunting - relentless pursuit in military parlance - was a central feature of counterinsurgency practices adopted first by the white segregationist regime in Rhodesia and passed on to the apartheid era security apparatus in its bush wars in South West Africa and Angola.

During my twelve-month ethnography and participant observation of field ranger practices in the KNP, the primary activity or *modus operandi* of field ranger teams was to drive to a detection zone well before the sun has risen. As it became light, field rangers would be in position to detect any human tracks as early as possible. These detection zones, which more often than not was a sandy or gravel management track (commonly

referred to as firebreaks) that ran parallel to the Park boundary which poaching teams most likely would have to cross to continue hunting in areas that were frequented by rhino. These management tracks were periodically 'swept' by dragging a thick rubber mat behind a vehicle to 'erase' the accumulation of animal, vehicle and human tracks to ease the detection of fresh human tracks. Field rangers - both men and women - were incredibly skilled at detecting human footprints from the back of a pick-up truck. This was especially so in the case where poaching teams were adept at anti-tracking, a method whereby teams obfuscate their footprints by traversing a road on their hands and knees, walking back-to-front, pulling socks over their shoes, removing their shoes, running on tip toes to simulate the hoof prints of a zebra and many other techniques. Despite these efforts and despite the numerous other signs left on the road by animals, birds and insects, field rangers were more often than not able to detect poacher incursions despite the slight and indistinct clues left at these detection zones. From there they would follow the tracks for a short distance to determine the general direction of the poaching team and inform other ranger teams of a likely area where they might pick up these tracks, typically a dry stream or river bed or another firebreak. Through this technique of leapfrogging, ranger teams are able to gain valuable time on a poaching team who might be as much as six or eight hours ahead of the ranger team when they first detected the spoor. The use of vehicles also allows field ranger teams to be highly mobile and cover a detection zone quickly or continue on to another detection zone if conditions (mainly limited by the position of the sun) and time permit. The height from the back of the vehicle also enabled field rangers to detect spoor away from the road verge into the veld where poaching teams would be less concerned about covering their tracks. This daily repetition and close attention paid to human footprints also enabled field ranger teams to build valuable field intelligence on the different poaching teams in terms of the number of individuals; the imprint of the soles of their shoes allow field ranger teams to determine the make of the shoe - the Converse All Star being the most prolific - whether these individuals have been in the Park before; and predict the possible route such poaching teams may take based on manhunting operations following the same poaching teams that had entered and exited the Park on previous occasions.

This is a routine that is played out *each day* in each of the twenty two sections across the Park in one form or another. There is no respite; no

let up, except for the few days occasional leave during each month and the annual leave of up to 30 days that is accrued every twelve months to each field ranger. It is a wearying routine that takes its toll on field rangers and their managers in different ways.

The adrenaline and the fear simmer at a subliminal level all day; each field ranger in a constant state of readiness expecting to be ambushed and shot at by a poacher or injured by an unsuspecting buffalo bull lying up unnoticed in the shade. A state of constant readiness that inevitably erodes their physical and emotional well-being, culminating in a state of chronic debilitation of varying degrees for different individuals involved in the kind of work that comes with doing the same thing day in and day out, year in and year out. These are the distinct and exceptional pressures faced by those doing this particular type of policing work. These pressures are exacerbated by deep levels of frustration at the never-ending onslaught of the poaching pressure; where the 'othering' of poachers is accompanied with a deep-seated hatred. Additionally, the need to reduce the tally of rhino killed in their respective sections is measured through organizational Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) where their ability to reduce the number of rhino killed is closely linked with remuneration and prestige in one form or another. It also brings about much sought-after respite from the daily reiteration. Reducing the number of rhino killed or reported and deterring poachers even if that deterrence simply means displacing the poaching pressure into a neighbouring section is the unspoken indicator of a job well done. To achieve this, at times, means a complicity of actions that may lead to the use of irregular, disproportionate or even extrajudicial use of force. The impunity of such actions is aided, not only by the sheer remoteness of where these violent encounters take place but also through a normalization of practices that are implicitly and at times explicitly condoned, not only by their immediate supervisors, but also senior managers higher up the organizational organogram. This, together with the added pressure to show results on which rests the much-vaunted international conservation reputation of the South African state, where the incrimination of a ranger for actions conducted in a law enforcement setting will undoubtedly incur not only potentially serious reputational consequences but threaten to derail and delegitimise a response that leans heavily on a policing logic. It is these very same men with the smiling eyes engaged in the easy early morning banter who are also both victims and perpetrators of state sanctioned forms of violence that carries with it

disturbing consequences not only for their adversaries but increasingly so for themselves, their families, the communities they come from and ultimately for conservation practice into the future.

Notes

¹ *Caprimulgus pectoralis* is distributed throughout the African continent south of the Sahara. Its call is characterized by “two slurred notes with a rising tone, ending with rapid, almost trilled series of notes with falling tone, *keo-WEEU*, *keo-WIririri*; also set to the words *good lord deliver us* (hence name of Litanybird)...” (Maclean, 1993: 351). See also Hockey et al, “Ad[ults] mostly call at dusk and dawn and in both periods, 66% of calls fall within a 15 min[ute] window; calling...[c]eases...77-39 min[utes] before sunrise (mean=54 min[utes], n=212)” (2005: 264).

² The spatial and historical configurations of living and working in remote environments during and after apartheid have been etched on the meaning of everyday family life and closely resembled the forms of labour controlled single sex accommodation or compounds that was so successfully used on South African farms and mines to control labour.

³ The R1/R2 is a South African manufactured, licence built copy of the Belgian Fabrique National Fusil Automatique Leger (FN-FAL) that is no longer manufactured and largely withdrawn from general service except in special forces units such as the South African Police Service Special Task Force and other specialized military units. Called a battle rifle instead of an assault rifle as it uses high-powered 7.62x51mm ammunition as opposed to the less powerful ‘intermediate’ rounds of typical assault rifles. See ‘Fact File: R1 Battle Rifle’ [Online] Available at: http://www.defenceweb.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=6249:fact-file-r1-battle-rifle=&catid=79:fact-files&Itemid=159 (Accessed 8 July 2017). When the apartheid-era SAP and SADF transitioned to using the R4/R5/R6 5.56x45mm assault rifles (the LM4/LM5 are semi-automatic variants for civilian/police applications), many R1/R2 7.62x51mm rifles were either destroyed or transferred to parastatal conservation organizations such as the then National Parks Board (NPB and now known as SANParks) and the then Natal Parks Board (also abbreviated as NPB and now known as EKZNW). In anticipation of a regime change at the impending demise of apartheid in 1993, KNP management sought the transfer of 250 R1/R2 rifles from the SADF at a cost of ZAR 106 250 – USD\$ 32 492 at 1993 exchange rates (‘Exchange Rates and Inflation Rates, 1981-2008’ [Online] Available at: <http://www.goldavailability.com/webpage5.html> Accessed 15 August 2017) (see Skukuza Archives NK/13/4 1990-1995, Internal memo from Head: Conservation

to the Executive Director: KNP dated 7 October 1993 and Letter from Executive Director: KNP to The Commanding General: Eastern Transvaal Command dated 19 July 1993). Conservation practitioners adopted the R1/R2 7.62x51mm because the high-powered rounds were capable of being used for protection against mega herbivores such as elephant and buffalo. These rifles were also used in culling operations of breeding herds of elephant because of the penetration capability of the calibre; the low/zero cost of ammunition (thousands of rounds of 7,62x51mm ammunition must also have been transferred from the SADF and SAP to conservation authorities) and the self-loading nature of these firearms which made them ideal for such wildlife management applications. The R1/R2 was adopted into general use in the KNP around the beginning of 1991, replacing the .303 calibre bolt action rifle (see Skukuza Archives Ranger Diary Shangoni, 23 February 1991). Some of the field rangers in many of the 'hotspot' poaching sections and all of the members of special ranger unit are issued with R1/R2 rifles adapted to include some or all of the following modifications: shortened barrels (for tactical use in confined spaces such as house penetrations and easy transport in helicopters), folding stocks, tactical lights mounted on the hand guards, red dot sights mounted on modified rails with either brown, green or camouflaged tactical paint and cloth/tape to better aid in camouflaging their positions in ambushes or to prevent reflections.

⁴ Xitsonga or Tsonga (erroneously conflated with Shangaan – the Amashangane Traditional Authority established themselves in the Bushbuckridge area under the Nxumalo Royal family after they were ousted by Portuguese settlers and thus the Shangaan are a component of the Vatsonga not its equivalent) is predominantly spoken in the peri-urban areas to the west of the Kruger National Park in the former homelands of Giyani, north of Phalaborwa; the Makuleke people who were evicted from the area between the Luvuvhu and Limpopo rivers in the Pafuri region of KNP and relocated to the Mhinga Traditional Authority; and Gazankulu, to the west and north west of Skukuza. It is one of eleven official South African languages. Historically the language was spoken from St. Lucia in northern KwaZulu-Natal, the areas in South Africa mentioned above, up to the Save River in Mozambique, southwestern Swaziland and southeastern Zimbabwe, comprising approximately eight dialects. It is the *lingua franca* of the field ranger corps in the KNP, although tshiVenda, siSwati, sePedi or Northern Sotho and English (the latter spoken mostly by high school graduates) are also spoken. Afrikaans is a language that is spoken mostly by an older generation of field ranger staff, which was acquired at a time during apartheid when it was once the *lingua franca* and the culture of the KNP was distinctly Afrikaner. See also 'Tsonga History Discourse' [Online] Available at: <https://vatsonga.wordpress.com/about/> (Accessed 7 July 2017). Terms such as Shangaan and Tsonga are highly complicated, the idea of Shangaan identity is closely associated in the Kruger Park with notions of loyalty,

of people who have given up external political rights for the citizenship of the Park (Bunn (2001).

⁵ Red dot optics are non-telescoping optics mounted on a number of field ranger rifles in the KNP. The red dot replaces the reticle - the crosshair lines or grid markings built into a sighting device such as a telescope or binoculars. The use of red dot optics allows even novice shooters to quickly acquire a target and accurately hit a target even if the shooter is rushed and does not have perfect alignment – essentially, if you can see the dot you can hit the target. It thus gives a shooter a precise aiming system and quicker first shot advantage see [Online] Available at: <https://www.burrisoptics.com/blog/sights/how-a-red-dot-sight-works> (Accessed 28 June 2020).

⁶ Sometime in 2017, the ranger corps in the KNP adopted a camouflage uniform, eerily similar to that worn by the notorious Internal Stability Unit (ISU), a specialized police unit to counter internal unrest in the townships during the latter part of the apartheid years.

⁷ It is not known what proportion of field rangers in the KNP are female due to the lack of transparency by officials. In my year-long ethnography, I encountered two black female field rangers who were based in a ranger outpost in anti-poaching roles.

⁸ Trespassers or illegal immigrants were, and are still, referred to as ‘Deurlopers’ in Afrikaans (literally ‘to walk through’) and ‘Mahambane’ in xiTsonga.

⁹ By 1989, 5 000 illegal immigrants were being repatriated back to Mozambique, a figure thought to be a fraction of the total number of illegal immigrants passing through the Park, based on spoor or footprint counts. See Skukuza Archives/13/4 Stafteiken Herbenaming Krugerwildtuin Kommando (KWK) na: Krugerwildtuin Eendheid (KW Eenheid) en uitbreiding van die Eenheid Sterktestaat [Renaming of Kruger Commando to: Kruger National Park Element and expansion of Element Strength], Letter dated 31 August 1990 on Kruger Commando letterhead.

¹⁰ The South African military apparatus during the apartheid era was amalgamated under the South African Defence Force (SADF) – its post-apartheid iteration is the South African National Defence Force (SANDF).

6

Warrior Politics and the ‘Dirty Work’ of Anti-Poaching: Institutional Collusion, Ranger Misconduct and the Perversity of Intelligence

6.1 Introduction

The preceding ethnographic interlude highlights the fears, daily repetitions and frustrations experienced by field rangers engaged in manhunting operations in the Kruger National Park. It also demonstrates that the measures put in place by Park management and the daily and relentless efforts by field rangers is not enough to bring a stop to rhino poaching. These daily repetitions and frustrations point to a limitation of police, that something more is required for policing to be fully effective.

Simon Dalby (2008), directs our attention to a need for greater scholarly attention to the figure of the warrior and terrains of combat. He posits how warriors are key figures in securing the West as a “repository of virtue against the barbaric threats to civilization” but that this virtue “is compromised precisely ... [by the] ... need to act in very uncivilized manners” (ibid.: 440). The previous chapter has already demonstrated how the field ranger in the Kruger has been reconfigured into this figure of the warrior. Dalby (2008) also asserts that the figure of the warrior provides an alibi to use exceptional licence under exceptional circumstances in exceptional places. Leaning on the insights of Dalby, this chapter investigates in what ways the invocation of the figure of the warrior has provided an alibi for the use of exceptional and irregular measures to combat rhino poaching in the Kruger Park and what those irregular measures look like in practice. Foucault (1980) argues that it is not the claims of the state to restore order that is at stake but the methods employed that need to come under scrutiny. Here, this chapter seeks

describe what these measures entail and to locate these actions in their wider meaning and historical context (Ahmed 2012).

This chapter is divided into two main parts. The first part deconstructs the use of deadly force or the rules of engagement (ROE) as it is commonly called. It firstly lays out the constitutional parameters in the use of deadly force as prescribed in the Act and how KNP managers see it as a constraint in curbing poaching, hence the ever-present preoccupation with the concept of shoot-to-kill. This section also traces the early development of ROE's in the Park and how its initial precautionary approaches adopted in the early days of Kruger's existence became increasingly broad and permissive in the use of deadly force as the Park developed more intimate relations with the apartheid era military through its joint operations. It also shows that this interoperability and blurring of functions of rangers in joint operations with the apartheid era security forces created an increasingly permissive environment for the disproportionate or excessive use of force. It uses this historical insight to demonstrate that these relations of complicity between key law enforcement institutions continue in its efforts in the 'war on poaching', where the threat of prosecution of KNP anti-poaching officials threatens to derail the state's rhino protection efforts. It also sketches how the use of deadly force becomes reinterpreted by rangers and their supervisors in practice and how its use is in constant tension with the KNP's own discursive pronouncements of a precautionary, lawful and responsible approach to its use.

The second part of this chapter examines the use of intelligence gathering as a central pillar in the Park's arsenal to combat rhino poaching. It shows firstly that communities adjacent to the Kruger have historically been at the centre of the apartheid state's efforts to wrest their loyalties away from revolutionary influences that sought to overthrow the state. These modes of human-centred warfare central to counterinsurgency from the past are revisited in its efforts to curb rhino poaching where communities are modelled as 'partners' but that their only utility lay in being a source of information. It further highlights the hidden violence of intelligence gathering operations and the ways in which the use of torture to extract information becomes normalized in conservation policing. It also shows how the use of entrapment as a key tool to apprehend offenders becomes disturbingly perverted and that interdictions are not as a result of the supremacy of intelligence gathering

as a tool in crime prevention but instead that there are indications that a proportion of the successes ascribed to police actions are manufactured.

6.2 The Use of Deadly Force: Rules of Engagement in Anti-Poaching Operations

Of the range of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) in conservation law enforcement, the use of force or what is referred to more commonly as the ROE,¹ rank as probably the most important in contexts where field rangers are required to carry firearms to carry out their duties. Foremost, in prescribing the lawful use of force by law enforcement officers set out in Section 49 of the Criminal Procedures Act (CPA), Act 51 of 1977, its use is subordinate to the Founding Provisions and the Bill of Rights enshrined in the Constitution of South Africa, 1996. It recognizes and values the integrity of human life including, amongst others, the right not to be deprived of freedom and arbitrary detention; not to be tortured or punished in a cruel, inhuman or degrading manner; the right to privacy and not have their person or home searched arbitrarily.² Thus, human rights and the right to life was not conceived as a tangential project in the construction of a post-apartheid polity, it was positioned to *embody* the guiding principles of the South African constitution and not, as many KNP managers are wont to view the issue of rights, as an inconvenience or an obstruction to achieving their single-minded goal to 'save the rhino'.

The use of deadly force is listed as last in the continuum of force, preceded by officer presence; verbal commands; control and restraint, using open hand techniques on passively resisting suspects; use of chemical agents such *Oleoresin capsicum* or pepper spray; and temporary incapacitation using a baton (EKZMW 2003). The use of deadly force may only be used in the event of "[d]efending yourself or another person from an unlawful attack that may cause serious injury or death" or "[w]hen it is necessary to effect an arrest of persons reasonably suspected of having committed serious violent crimes" (ibid., Part B §1:5-6). Furthermore, the Act also stipulates that in order to justify the use of deadly force, the attack must constitute a positive action, the attacker must have the opportunity, intent and ability to injure or kill a law enforcement officer and that the attack must have commenced, be imminent and be unlawful (ibid.). The defence on the part of the law enforcement officer must be aimed at the

attacker and not a third party, the amount of force must be reasonable and in proportion to the attack and the defence must stop once the attack has ceased (ibid.). The fact that suspected poachers carry a firearm does not automatically mean that these criteria are met, unless the suspect makes a positive action such as pointing a rifle in the direction of law enforcement staff. Furthermore, it also means that accomplices, who are unarmed cannot lawfully be the object of private defence. However, as Ahmed (2012) asserts, policy, or in this case SOP's or law, is often construed as a substitute for action, that its desired outcomes are too often assumed to be achieved in the mere production of these guidance notes and regulation.

These rules of engagement outlined in a SOP of an organisation may incorporate not only the precepts of the law but also additional precautionary measures that exceed the requirements that are laid down in law. This could include the use of restraint and at all times privileging the preservation of human life and to minimize injury and damage to property as far as possible; ensure the assistance of medical aid to injured persons and that the arbitrary or abusive use of force is a punishable offence in terms of the law.³ In the light of the absence of documentary evidence from KNP, it is not possible to say whether the KNP has incorporated such additional precautionary measures into its SOP on the use of deadly force. Nevertheless, it can be reasonably assumed that SANParks, at a minimum, adheres to the requirements laid out in the law in the drafting of its SOPs.

However, much of this carefully crafted SOPs can be undermined by advanced tactical firearms training courses that are fashioned on military tactics that were developed by the South African security forces during its 'bush wars'. In a contact situation, specific 'battlefield drills', 'immediate action drills' or 'fire and movement drills' are entrenched into field ranger staff in a repetitive manner so that the actions required become automatic where learners rely purely on muscle memory when it comes to making their firearms ready and to move in a coordinated and automatic fashion when advancing on an enemy position. It reminds of Foucault's reference to the soldier and the disciplining of docile bodies where "the soldier has become something that can be made...making it pliable, ready at all times, turning silently into the automatism of habit" (Foucault 1977: 135). It is a methodology of training that is not premised on the right to life and a

considered evaluation of the events unfolding in the field but on immediate, aggressive actions.

In this respect, many KNP field rangers have undergone advanced tactical firearms courses offered by an external service provider, Ntomeni Ranger Services, founded by former KNP section ranger and decorated special forces soldier, Jack Greeff.⁴ These advanced tactical firearm handling courses already assume that a deadly assault has commenced and that the reaction of field rangers necessitates lethal force. In effect, the starting point of this type of training is not the continuum of force, but premised on an assessment that the threat is imminent or has already commenced. Consequently, this type of training emphasizes 'suppressing a target' and 'overrunning a target'.⁵ The former refers to the use of an overwhelming amount of firepower, in much the same fashion that manhunting teams on IFV's on the border with Angola used (see Chapter 4). Its aim was to force the enemy to take cover, prevent them from returning fire and thus nullifying the threat to South African manhunting teams. The latter refers to the practice of tactically moving through a 'kill zone', shooting at any enemy combatants that are encountered and to 'neutralize' any threats – effectively shooting suspects at close quarters irrespective of whether they are wounded or already dead. These operational tactics drawn directly from apartheid era counterinsurgency handbooks are in tension with the use of deadly force as prescribed in the Act. These training modalities premised on military doctrine also further foment a 'warrior mentality' (Vitale 2017). This imperative to react with lethal force is further pre-empted by a common practice by KNP field rangers in adopting a carry condition with the chamber loaded.⁶ It is only when a deadly force situation exists or is imminent that it is necessary to load a round into the chamber in the case of shoulder weapons (EKZNW 2003). By adopting this carry condition, field rangers in the Kruger already anticipate that deadly force will be necessary long before they come into contact with suspects. The following sections will demonstrate that these training modalities premised on aggressive tactics, together with the structural features of the labour process, unequal social relations and the intense political pressure, effectively undermine the precepts of the constitution and its founding principles of the right of life.

When the Rigidity of the Rules that Guide Police Actions Become an Obstacle: The Allure of Shoot-to-Kill

Despite the aspirational tenets inscribed in the constitution that privileges the right to life, it is often seen as an impediment to effective law enforcement actions. The question of shoot-on-sight is a subject that continues to rear its head in debates raging around effective measures to curb wildlife crime (Humphreys and Smith 2018, Mogomotsi and Madigele 2017). A prominent South African adventurer and conservationist, Braam Malherbe, has also gone as far to direct an open letter to the minister, urging the state to allow rangers more freedom in the use of deadly force.⁷ Malherbe posits that rangers are only able to effect an arrest in a fraction of encounters with suspected poachers and they can only use deadly force if they are shot at first. Where poachers habitually evade arrest because they know rangers cannot shoot-on-sight, Malherbe - paradoxically on behalf of the Institute of Accountability in Southern Africa (IFAISA) - urges that every effort should be made to enable “rangers to resort to whatever measures are deemed necessary to apprehend poachers in the KNP”.⁸ Most recently, in May 2021, a formal proposal by SANParks CEO, Fundisile Mketeni, was made to the Parliamentary Committee Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, to insulate rangers from prosecution.

Lastly Chairperson and Honourable Members, is legislation enough to protect these rangers? Do we need a special legislation where a ranger in a contact, might have...at night...led to a fatality of a poacher? Are we protected enough as rangers? We don't want to end up now a ranger going to jail because the legislation is not covering you [sic] hundred percent. . . is it protecting them enough or must we have a special legislation to make sure they are safe?⁹ [emphasis added]

SANParks is strategically positioning to insulate itself and its employees from prosecution. It seeks to present its actions as within the parameters of the law and where the exigencies of the bush or making arrests at night results in the unintentional death of a suspect, the organization is seeking legal protection for itself and its employees. Where it is positioned as an attempt to more effectively offer protections for its anti-poaching staff under conditions where they only use force in self defence, it is not only a misrepresentation of care (see Chapter 3 and 7), it is an attempt to obfuscate its role in structuring the disproportionate and irregular use of violence in its performance metrics. By seeking ‘special legislation’,

SANParks is in effect seeking the same protections offered to rangers in Zimbabwe under Operation Stronghold or rangers in India's Kaziranga National Park (see Chapter 1) that insulates them from prosecution in the event of the use of deadly force in all instances. Thus, formally instituting measures to protect anti-poaching staff from prosecution will give them a wide latitude of discretion in the use of deadly force and in effect provide legal protections for anti-poaching staff, not only when the use of deadly force is applied injudiciously but also in instances where field rangers willfully kill suspects. In effect, the rigidity of rules that guide the actions of law enforcement personnel is in itself an obstacle and instead it is flexibility or rather *irregularity* that facilitates 'effective' policing (Harcourt, 2001). In many instances, the actions of police officers that can be described as enforcing the law often involves "taking informal or extralegal steps...things [that] probably would not withstand a legal challenge" (Wilson and Kelling 1982 in Harcourt 2001: 128). Thus, as Harcourt argues, "the desired order depends on a lot of disorder, irregularity and brutality" (ibid.: 127).

That such irregular and informal methods are necessary to curb rhino poaching also emerged in my conversations with KNP managers and their own reflections on the question of shoot-to-kill.

I quite strongly believe in a shoot-to-kill policy, for one reason I know it erodes the morality of the community but I think it will stop this long term killing and make it into a short term killing. The environment will become too dangerous for the people to come in here anymore and it will stop... when they know this environment is becoming a huge huge risk to come into here, we talking about the possibility of being sniped [shot at a distance where the suspect poses no risk to the officer] and things like that, he might reconsider coming in here at all or he will put his price that he wants for horn up by so much that these people might consider to come here themselves instead of sending them [the level 1 poachers who are mostly peasants] in and then we get to the right person, that's the people we want to kill.¹⁰ [emphasis added]

In this exchange, this Kruger section ranger proposed that a shoot-to-kill policy would create an environment of fear and increase the risk for poachers to such an extent that they would either refuse to enter the Park or that the recruiters would find it too difficult to recruit third parties willing to poach. That it is the killing and not the apprehension of these recruiters that is desired is clear. What he proposed was a form of

exemplary violence that has been at the centre of the Park's law enforcement reasoning since the days of Stevenson-Hamilton (Dlamini 2020a). It sought to make punishment legible to all (Foucault 1977) or, as a KNP section ranger commented, that maintaining the perception of shoot-to-kill is what is important.¹¹ It is the "illusion of the law being omnipresent and effective" (Hansen 2006: 282) and that the "actual proof of individual guilt was less important than the performance of a severe punishment of a black or brown body" (ibid.: 284). For policing to be 'more effective' it has to surmount the limits of restraint (see Foucault 1980). It is precisely the constitutional precepts to the right to life that act as a hinderance, hence the need to garner political support (see above) that legitimizes shoot-to-kill so as to provide protections for field rangers engaged in anti-poaching operations.

In the absence of such political and legal caveats, Kruger has cultivated a *de facto* institutional practice that permits shoot-to-kill through four distinct ways. Firstly, its historical relations with the police, military and officers of the court created an environment that was permissive of wide latitude of discretion in the use of deadly force in the face of a real or perceived revolutionary onslaught (see Chapter 4) and that those relations continue to tacitly condone its use of deadly force in its 'war on poaching' (this chapter). Secondly, its own perverse reinterpretation of the use of deadly force is predicated on its own training modalities that privilege aggressive tactics. Thirdly, Kruger management have the ability to obfuscate these practices from outside scrutiny due to the remote locations and the physical features of the Park where these contacts take place and, lastly, it is able to control the narrative of 'what happened' in its production of sworn affidavits that omit crucial information related to the manner events unfolded.

The Historical Use of Force and Joint Operations

The first evidence of SOP's guiding field ranger use of force in the KNP comes from an assessment of native field ranger services in the Park, dated 1967. It demonstrates that the organization had incorporated additional precautionary measures that governed the use of deadly force. While the law at that time did authorize officers to use deadly force in the event of an escape by a suspect, it cautioned against such practices and that the level of force did not fit the seriousness of the crime, which would most

likely comprise the killing of wildlife. While the discharge of warning shots would still constitute the use of deadly force today, the intention then was clear, that killing offenders guilty of wildlife crime was not the intention of the organization.

In the event that a person resists arrest, only sufficient force necessary must be used to restrain such a person. The idea of 'minimum force' is thus applicable. Except when the prisoner attacks the arresting officer or tries to escape, after an arrest, under no circumstances may the use of force be used. An offender may only be shot when he, through his actions, threatens your life...[i]n the event of escape after an arrest has already been carried out (warn three times). For all practical purposes, a field ranger can only shoot if his life is in danger. In other words, in the event that a shooting occurs, the round must strike the person in the front. Where possible, an attempt must always be to wound or render the threat harmless instead of killing. The course participant must remember that in comparison to, for example, murder or any capital crime, that the normal offences in the KNP are of a relatively insignificant nature.¹² [own translation, emphasis in original]

Where the use of deadly force was used, the KNP SOP required that evidence must show that the suspect was struck from the front, indicating that the suspect was facing the field ranger and be reasonably assumed to have posed a direct physical threat to the arresting officer. In fact, in a survey of field rangers, the assessors found, to their dismay, that the general understanding amongst field rangers was that it was prudent *not* to use their firearms even when they were attacked by poachers or when they were threatened by armed poachers.

Fast forward a few decades, the situation in South Africa had changed dramatically and it was in a grip of fear – real or imagined - of an imminent overthrow of the apartheid government under a state of emergency. Regardless of whether these threats were overstated or not (see Rousseau 2014), there was no question that under the National Management Security System (NMSS) that the country was on a 'war footing'. This culture of a precautionary approach instituted by Park management was quickly being eroded by the aggressive practices of the SADF stationed in the Park and their unsympathetic stance toward refugees or trespassers who they collectively framed as insurgents or terrorists. It also bears being reminded that these soldiers at times operated in joint operations with KNP field rangers who were officially seconded to the SADF as members of the KNP Commando, a civilian

military unit that the state security apparatus could call on to supplement and bolster the permeant force units. The use of deadly force by soldiers was becoming increasingly common. In a summary overview of crime incidents in the KNP over the period May to June 1987 two charges of murder and attempted murder was brought by the SAP against members of the SA Army.

Murder: Black by White. Three unknown black men presumably from Mozambique are killed in an ambush by members of the SA Army on the 1987/05/06 at Apollo powerline. Outcome: Dossier referred to Attorney-General. Attempted murder. An unknown black woman is wounded in her upper thigh during an ambush at the Apollo powerline by members of the SA Army on 1987/04/28. Outcome: Dossier referred to Attorney-General for a finding.¹³ [own translation, emphasis added]

The fact that murder and attempted murder dockets were opened suggests – aside from the fact that there were persistent tensions between these two agencies - that it was not the first time unarmed refugees were shot by members of the SADF. It points to a growing impatience by the SAP and that these charges were most likely brought after a number of similar instances and the reluctance of the SADF to address its continued reoccurrence. The victims in the above crime report were most likely refugees fleeing the civil war in Mozambique, commonly referred to as ‘*deurlopers*’ (literally ‘through-walkers’ referring to walking through the Park) in Afrikaans or ‘*Mabambane*’ in xiTsonga. If this was indeed the case, they would most certainly not be armed and the police report would have noted the presence of firearms as evidence of increased ‘terrorist’ or insurgent activity in the borderlands. The illegal smuggling of firearms from Mozambique into the Republic was a priority crime that would have been noted in the summary report (see Chapter 4). It can therefore be reasonably assumed that the victims reported on in the above report were unarmed. The archives do not reveal the eventual outcome of these inquests only that they have been referred to the office of the Attorney-General. It is highly unlikely that these soldiers or commando members would have been prosecuted and that in the absence of any corrective measures, such practices continued under a culture that was becoming increasingly permissive. This killing of unarmed refugees was also brought up in other correspondences between Park officials voicing their concern.

Eight shooting incidences have occurred over the past year (north of the Olifants [River]) during which civilians, including women and children, were wounded or killed by members of the SADF.¹⁴ [own translation, emphasis added]

It points to a disturbing departure of the rules of engagement that Park management tried to instil in their own field ranger corps in the use of deadly force. It was not only armed insurgents who were the object of the deadly actions of the SADF but also unarmed women and children. Crucial for the purposes of this thesis is to what extent these problematic practices filtered into the practices of KNP rangers involved in border security. At a joint management committee meeting, concern was being raised at the shooting of illegal immigrants and there was a general feeling by the meeting that shooting incidents needed to be defensible in a court of law and also be morally justifiable.¹⁵ However, the continued use of deadly force culminated in the SADF command spelling out its standard operating procedure for the use of deadly force.

Command Eastern Transvaal which accepts the responsibility for the protection of the international border considers the security of the RSA [Republic of South Africa] as its greatest responsibility. Within these parameters, the use of force must be handled with the greatest circumspection [*omsigtheid* ~ diplomacy] ... In order to supply the soldier on the ground with clear guidelines, particularly because this headquarters appreciates the difficult circumstances on the ground [...] this document clearly demonstrates that the soldier should at all times act within the law and that he should be able to answer for his actions in a court of law.¹⁶ [own translation]

Despite the seeming unambiguity of this position statement, that it instilled in its soldiers on the ground to act responsibly and that the military will continue to act within the parameters of the law and prosecute those service members who defy the law, the author continues to add a caveat that the SADF has taken a legal opinion stating that

[t]his headquarters has consulted high level legal opinion that in terms of international law [*volkerereg*], the state has the right to protect its international border [and] in terms of the abovementioned, the command continues to uphold the status quo in respect to the use of force.¹⁷ [own translation, emphasis added]

This caveat to the SADF's position vis-à-vis the use of deadly force defends the actions of soldiers in terms of the right of a state to defend itself under conditions of war. It sought to justify its actions in terms of *Kriegsraison*, a military doctrine which places the supremacy of the security of the state above all other considerations, including the state's international and domestic legal obligations (see Connolly 2019). Connolly (2019) contends where states invoke *Kriegsraison*, it legitimates the use of military action to threats – whether real or perceived – and it can operate at both a political level and the level of military action. At a political level it can operate “less as a ‘doctrine’...and more as a modality – a pattern of argument and reasoning” (ibid.: 11). This legitimising language then gave the SADF broad powers in its use of force and it explains many of the nefarious military actions in contravention of international law that became a hallmark of apartheid era COIN practices (see Gossmann 2006). The military command who oversaw military operations in the KNP were aware that soldiers on the ground encounter a number of people who could range from actual combatants linked to the range of anti-apartheid armed movements as well as refugees, job seekers or illegal immigrants and it acknowledged that its soldiers acted with excessive force at times. Despite its SOP to act within the rule of law it was still not possible for commanders to enforce its own policy, hence it invoking its rights to defend itself in a time of war, a far cry from the precautionary approach adopted by KNP management decades earlier. It was not only the actions of SADF soldiers that should be looked at in isolation. SADF soldiers in the Park fell under the authority of the Head of Kruger Security, individuals like Otch Otto (see Chapter 4). Otto therefore not only directed the actions of soldiers stationed in the Park but also members of the Kruger Commando, Park employees, who operated in joint operations with SADF soldiers. Thus, KNP rangers were not insulated from the problematic practices of soldiers in the Park. It is therefore inevitable that the use of excessive force and killings that marked the actions of the military in the Park began to infuse KNP ranger practices. This became evident in the minutes of a mini-JMC or joint security meeting.

Shooting Incidences: Col[onel] Herbst expressed his concern over the number of shooting incidences that occur in the KNP. The meeting is of the opinion that the situation needs to be remedied in-house and that the meeting not be involved. Col[onel] Otto reports that shooting incidences

in the KNP are indeed decreasing. He regularly addresses the troops in this regard and there will be an attempt to curb shooting incidences to a minimum (accountable incidents). The Chairman [KNP park warden] assures Col[onel] Herbst that he will do everything from his side to ensure that this situation is dealt with in the right manner and that all possible cooperation will be given but that there are certain aspects outside of his control and that he gladly accepts Col[onel] Siebert's recommendation that this matter be dealt with in-house.¹⁸ [own translation, emphasis added]

The concern was raised by a member of the SAP and it pertained directly to the use of excessive force not only by soldiers stationed in the Park but also KNP rangers, in their capacity as Kruger Commando members. The KNP Head of Security, Colonel Otch Otto, undertook to deal with the unnecessary killing and injuring of trespassers 'in-house', meaning there was no judicial oversight to evaluate these actions. Where the use of deadly force was slowly becoming increasingly permissive, it is questionable that these 'in-house' remedies substantially altered the actions of security personnel in the Park. Any 'remedial actions' may have been limited to merely imploring field rangers and managers to be more circumspect when using deadly force and not to unnecessarily attract the attention of the senior SAP management sitting on joint security committees. Essentially the irregular and arbitrary use of deadly force was swept under the proverbial rug. That the use of deadly force was becoming increasingly permissive is further supported by another confidential directive regarding the use of force and the accountability soldiers and commando members would face pertaining to its continued use.

The South African Army will look after its people when they do their duty within the requisite orders. We should also be prepared to do what is expected from us as soldiers. Just remember that whatever you do you will have to live with your conscience. The fact that the South African legal system determines that an investigation will be conducted when [deadly] force is used, must not deter us. The investigation is to ensure that the soldier fulfilled his duty in a responsible manner. Never has a member of the SA Army been found guilty where he executed his duties according to his instructions, but the investigations process is always there. The investigating officer is our friend – the legal system has not yet and will never leave its security forces in the lurch.¹⁹ [own translation, emphasis added]

The above excerpt from an SADF SOP makes clear a number of concerning issues that governed the use of deadly force in the KNP. Firstly, the actions of soldiers (and field rangers who were members of the KNP Commando) would always be protected if they acted within the scope of their orders. Where those orders were founded on *Kriegsraison* - the right of a nation to protect itself under conditions of war - soldiers and KNP Commando members would automatically be insulated from prosecution because their actions fell within the scope of their orders. Secondly, the instruction seems to allude to the fact that soldiers are expected to kill only when it is necessary and in instances where they use deadly force outside of the law they individually have to live with their own conscience. In effect, it would be their individual conscience and not judicial prosecution that would be the overriding arbiter of justice. Colleen Bell shows that traditionally military institutions were governed, generally speaking, by rigid command and control protocols which serves to constrain initiative by soldiers in lower ranks. The purpose is to exercise control within the military institution in the “proverbial chaos of the ‘fog of war’” (2015: 22). However, in countering non-state actors, military institutions have had to adapt, and soldiering under COIN has increasingly become associated with greater individual discretion (ibid.). Where discretion has become the hallmark that delimits officer actions in the use of deadly force, Wilson argues that “one cannot formulate a meaningful policy for how police should behave in all cases” (1968 in Harcourt 2001: 129). In other words, where irregularity is *necessary* in police actions, and where it is undesirable to burden police with cumbersome ROE’s, discretion forms the basis of police actions (Harcourt 2001). Where there is often a clear conceptualization between order and disorder in criminology, Harcourt asks why it is that police require so much discretion (ibid.). Furthermore, Schrader (2019) argues that street-level discretion serves to insulate those in senior positions from responsibility where the situational actions of low-ranking police officers are deemed despotic.

Crucially, it is clear that where the SADF was in the midst of a counter revolutionary strategy, it was reluctant to prosecute a soldier where discretionary powers exceeded the SOP. Prosecuting its own soldiers would effectively undermine its entire war effort. Furthermore, the directive also confirms that the SADF has never brought charges of murder against any of its soldiers for the use of excessive or extrajudicial force and refers to the intimate relations - or as is more likely the immense

political influence the military held over other institutions through the NMSS - the security forces had with both the SAP investigators and officers of the court to shield its soldiers from prosecution even in cases where they exceeded their powers. That the investigating officer was seen as a 'friend' speaks volumes of the close-knit social relations between the state security apparatus and the SAP on the one hand and the confidence the SADF had that the legal system would continue to support the security forces in its war effort by declining to prosecute SADF soldiers. In the South African legal context, the discretion to prosecute and bring formal charges against an offender lies entirely in the hands of state prosecutors and the danger of such an institutional arrangement lies in the fact that the incorrect exercise of prosecutorial discretion can have obvious detrimental consequences to the criminal justice system (Watney 2019).

Contemporary Use of Force and Interagency Complicity

Contemporary Kruger management is beset by the same dilemmas of accounting for the injudicious use of deadly force amongst its field ranger corp. Despite its much vaunted 'road shows' (see below), information sessions, expert advice from an advocate and SOP's guiding the use of deadly force, it simply cannot prescribe exactly how field rangers should conduct themselves in the field. Like the SADF of old, Kruger management invoke justifiable self-defence in almost every instance in which deadly force is used, a defence commonly invoked by the South African Police Services (SAPS) even in incidences where it is not necessarily the case (Bruce 2011). To concede otherwise would mean the prosecution of field rangers, section rangers and managers further up the leadership ladder, with serious, far reaching implications for the reputation and legitimacy of SANParks as an organisation. In fact, one of the highest threats identified by KNP management to its counter poaching agenda is the prosecution of field rangers.

A ranger being convicted is one of our highest risks ...the second risk is a ranger being killed. Now we understand...we lose a ranger who is fatally shot in a contact, one understands it because of the tempo, its just relentless, the aggressive attitude of the poacher is increasing...it is almost an expectation. But losing a ranger to being convicted for murder is another thing that has an impact on the rest of the morale of the rangers that we will not recover easily from...the professional support that we get from legal,

and it doesn't come without its challenges and the pressures from outside having your own advocate assisting you particularly when you dealing at close quarters with the police at crime scenes its not always easy but its an absolute necessity to do that otherwise we will be in a situation where the rangers will not go out to work.²⁰

Publicly, KNP management position the greatest threat to its counter poaching efforts as the death of a field ranger in an armed confrontation with poachers. It is a rhetorical tactic to present itself as an institution that cares for the well-being of its employees. This notion of SANParks as a caring organization will be critically analysed in Chapter 7. In reality, in the fraternal setting such as the GRAA AGM where this comment was made, the greatest threat is the prosecution of a field ranger for murder, a development that will invite uncomfortable scrutiny into its anti-poaching operations and compel the organization to transparently account for not only the large number of suspects that have been killed in the Park but the circumstances under which they were killed (see Chapter 1). It is something the organization cannot 'recover from'. Furthermore, it is the legal protection afforded to KNP management in the retention of an advocate that shields field ranger actions in their confrontations with poachers. It speaks of a tension between the police and KNP management and without the legal protections offered by an advocate, there is also a fear amongst KNP managers that it will impact on the productivity of field rangers.

These anxieties over the prosecution of field rangers for the use of deadly force and the impacts that such prosecutions will have on productivity also has a historical precedent going back as far as 1939 when Stevenson-Hamilton was still the park warden.

I am always nervous of the effect of our native rangers getting convicted for actions performed while carrying out their duties in making them careless and slack. It is so much easier for them to take the easy path, especially when they are near a crowded district and do not desire to be ostracised".²¹ [emphasis added]

Park authorities feared that where native field rangers were prosecuted for assault, attempted murder or murder in the execution of their duties, even in instances where it seems field rangers acted in genuine self-defence, that they would become 'slack' and 'take the easy path', meaning that they would avoid confrontation with suspects out of fear of possible

conviction. Stevenson-Hamilton lobbied the Board to provide the necessary legal aid to provide a 'proper defence' in the event that field rangers were summonsed before court in the execution of their duties.²²

Aside from operating at night or in low light conditions, the dense vegetation in certain parts of the Park also further impedes the ability of field rangers to make calculated decisions in every instance. Because of these complexities in violent confrontations with poachers, a draft SANParks *Strategic Rhino Management Plan 2016-2020*, under its strategic objective 3 relating to support for law enforcement staff, emphasises that "law enforcement staff [be] legally protected" (SANParks, undated).

This tension is also expressed in the understanding that if a field ranger or other staff member is ever prosecuted for murder, that it will not only bring into question not only the moral legitimacy of saving a species under threat and undermine the political legitimacy of its anti-poaching efforts but that it would negatively impact on field ranger productivity. This was a concern that has plagued KNP management for decades, as this excerpt from a National Parks Board (NPB) Annual Report from the mid-1990s alludes to.

There were various contact situations during the year in which some of the poachers were killed. In one of these cases a ranger was charged with murder...[h]e was found guilty of on the charge of manslaughter and was given a suspended sentence. Instances such as these have a negative effect on the morale and motivation of the rangers (NPB 1994: 10, emphasis added).

In this instance a field ranger was convicted for the excessive use of force but it is clear that the prosecution of ranger staff, in conducting their duties, even where those actions are injudicious or even extrajudicial, would negatively impact on not only their morale but the productivity of its field ranger corps. While this concern was raised in the mid-1990s, it was reiterated by a senior KNP manager during the course of this research.

The second, which we think will be demoralizing, is if one of our rangers can be charged for murder and prosecuted and imprisoned for murder that will destroy the spirit of the rangers and we are worried about those things.²³

It is part of a deep-seated anxiety over field ranger productivity as explored in Chapter 5. While there is a historical precedent that rangers have been prosecuted for injudicious actions, criminally charging staff is a

dilemma that continues to haunt KNP management. That the prosecution of rangers would undermine the collective effort to curb rhino poaching, is very much part of the contemporary debates amongst law enforcement partners. The National Prosecutions Authority (NPA) form an indispensable part of the state's efforts to counter rhino poaching to strengthen the criminal prosecutions component of the state's collective effort. Here a special prosecutor of the NPA expresses her concerns at the annual section rangers meeting held in the Park.

please don't practice this ... please don't talk unresponsibly [sic] about this shoot-to-kill thing...its going to kill our credibility in courts...I know its being preached ... [we have a] reputation of credibility and truth on [our] side.²⁴ [emphasis added]

This response by a senior special prosecutor who works closely with KNP staff in prosecuting rhino poaching suspects points to a clear knowledge that there are incidents where KNP anti-poaching efforts do indeed exceed their powers, that there is an awareness that 'it is being preached'. Despite the gravity of the possibility that such irregular actions could be taking place in the Park and given her position as senior special prosecutor to dispense justice and the notion of rights enshrined in the constitution, she continued to express her affection for KNP rangers saying that "SANParks rangers have taken the place of SAPS members in my heart [and] you guys are my family, the rhino issue has taken over my life [...] I also think to myself emotionally 'shoot the bastards'".²⁵ That an officer of the court in the form of a senior special prosecutor is aware that 'shoot-to-kill' is discussed informally – if not practiced - amongst KNP management and that she secretly concurs with the sentiment to 'shoot the bastards', speaks to a concerning phenomenon of her own ideological positionality and the notion of objectivity in applying the law on the one hand and on the other hand collusion between officers of the court and law enforcement officials on the other. It points to taking seriously the formation of social relations between law enforcement officers and officers of the court in the KNP, in the same way that the apartheid era SADF were confident that they had the full support of investigating officers and the courts.

David Bruce (2011) expands on this broader culture of collusion and a closing of ranks as a common feature in relations between the police officers and officers of the court. He points to how these close working

relationships often result in prosecutors 'soft-peddling' cases against police members (ibid.: 6). Vitale (2017) also highlights that the close working relationship between police and prosecutors in solving criminal investigations poses a fundamental conflict of interest when prosecuting police misconduct. In my informal conversations with another special prosecutor,²⁶ she alluded to the close knit ties her colleague, the speaker quoted above, has with KNP rangers and management and that she constantly has to remind herself to remain socially distant when being invited to social events such as braais (barbeques) with KNP management in order to remain 'objective'. Furthermore, she also showed how these social relations are further fomented in a small, close-knit, semi-rural white community living in that part of the country through the fact that the children of KNP managers, SAPS officers associated with the Park and prosecutorial staff go to the same schools and they meet socially at events such as golf days and school fundraising gatherings and are bound by a mutual passion to 'save the rhino'. She pointed to how these close social ties permitted un-procedural practices such as releasing prisoners into the custody of investigators (both SAPS and KNP investigators) to 'point out' (*uitwysing* in Afrikaans) locations, including those across the international border in Mozambique, such as cached rhino horns, firearms or other pertinent information to the case, a practice commonly used by the apartheid era police. Despite her awareness that such social relations can undermine the course of justice, when I asked her about extrajudicial killings in the Park, she referred me to a KNP regional ranger who she thought was reflexive about the violence implicit in anti-poaching operations and the book he shared with her outlining the moral and pragmatic dilemmas faced by soldiers in the theatre of war when it came to killing. The book by Dave Grossman, *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society*, is largely a study in justifying killing in war and learning to overcome the guilt when killing is framed as a justifiable act. In this way, this KNP manager was in some way grooming this special prosecutor to the dilemmas faced by rangers in the field. It inculcated an empathetic view of the challenges faced by rangers and that the use of deadly force by rangers are unquestionably justifiable. This view precludes any notion, in her mind, of irregular actions on the part of anti-poaching staff.

Encoded in this is the legitimacy in using deadly force - that acts of killing in the Park were unquestionably justified and always within the

ambit of the legal use of force. The use of deadly force that falls outside the prescripts of the Act is not something that entered into her frame of understanding field ranger and poacher contacts. That the contents of the docket represented the ‘facts’ of the case was explicit in our conversation, she never questioned the veracity of these ‘facts’ and that she was a “prosecutor not an investigator”.²⁷ It is through these social interactions with this KNP regional ranger that shaped her understanding of the emotional trauma KNP rangers are exposed to in violent encounters with poachers and it brings into question the manner in which she, despite her own attempts at distancing herself socially, is able to objectively interrogate the actions and the veracity of the evidence presented by KNP rangers and the nature of justice in prosecuting wildlife crimes in the KNP.

6.2.1 The ‘Dirty Work’ of Anti-Poaching: Reinterpreting the Use of Deadly Force and Institutional Complicity

Institutional Mitigation Measures: The ‘Roadshow’

In the contemporary ‘war on poaching’, where the nature of field ranger actions, especially in their use of deadly force, has come under increasing scrutiny in accounting for the deaths of suspected poachers (see Chapter 1), KNP managers conduct a series of interventions to demonstrate that the use of deadly force is used in a responsible manner and that its employees only do so in incidences of private defence as stipulated in the Act. Part of its range of demonstrable interventions include a bi-annual ‘road show’ in which senior and mid-level KNP management - including the presence of an advocate that is retained by SANParks - traverse the length and breadth of the Park to conduct information sessions with field rangers and their section rangers.

There are fatalities. We instituted a formal programme where we train and retrain in the rules of engagement. We drew up an SOP, guidelines, translated it into the local language and at least twice a year, we do a road show where even by register we check attendance and we go to every one of the twenty two ranger posts with our lawyer [name omitted] who is revered and respected by the rangers and then one or two of the leadership themselves and every time through case studies the rules of engagement are explained over and over.²⁸ [emphasis added]

What these rules of engagement entail seem fairly clear, that field rangers may only shoot or use deadly force in self-defence as stipulated in the Act. However, it is infused with the caveat that the conditions under which field ranger encounters with poachers occur add a level of complexity - that it is not always easy to apply the letter of the law under an unpredictable, kinetic and quickly evolving situation, as the following quotation reveals.

You may only shoot in self defence but that presents itself in so many forms. Often contact happen [sic] at night, 'I see in the dark you picking up your .458[rifle] what is the call?' What exactly is the call? Nobody can tell.²⁹

Scholarship on the use of force by the SAPS allude to the widely different interpretations of the Act in practice (Bruce 2011). In the quotation above, it is not so much a misreading or narrow interpretation of the Act but a concerning reality that the use of deadly force is not always foretold by an unambiguously aggressive act on the part of armed poachers. It points to the fact that in many instances field rangers can't even tell whether the attacker has the opportunity, intent and ability to injure or kill them or whether the attack is imminent or has commenced as stipulated in the Act. This is because in many instances they simply cannot see which poacher has the rifle³⁰ or whether the rifle is being pointed in their direction because of the low light conditions or the dense vegetation. Consequently, KNP managers are in no position to assertively prescribe how field rangers should act in every situation. Furthermore, many wildlife managers point out that the spectre of disciplinary hearings or prosecutions will have the unintended effect of field rangers showing reluctance to engage with poachers in the bush and deliberately delaying their responses to incursions.³¹

Situating 'Dirty Work'

The continued use of militarized responses and the use of deadly force to counter rhino poaching in the KNP has also drawn an increasing level of criticism from detractors (see for example Lunstrum 2014). In response SANParks and KNP managers have dismissed these criticisms as ill-informed.

...and then again, I say and come back to all those that level criticism will you go there, are you prepared to do the dirty work.³² [emphasis added]

The senior SANParks manager quoted above recites a common line of argument in explaining and defending the action of field rangers. It mirrors the explanation in defence of soldiers implicated in the commission of war crimes documented in the Breton Report on atrocities committed by members of the Australian Special Operations Task Group in Afghanistan (IGADF 2020). This line of defence argues that critics in the civilian sphere can never fully understand the pressures and exigencies of war. However, the Breton Report counters that such defences are specious, that they are alluring, but ultimately misleading and that the overwhelming majority of soldiers *are* able to fulfil their roles without resorting to the murder of unarmed civilians (*ibid.*). Furthermore, the report contends, that many killings did not occur in the ‘heat of battle’, that murders took place *after* an armed contact or a raid. It is a line of argument that KNP managers continue to deploy to deflect any criticism of the actions of its field rangers. It is unclear exactly what this senior SANParks manager above alluded to when he referred to the ‘dirty work’. It, however, raises crucial questions that derive from the literature on dirty work – that dirty work is unevenly distributed and is often carried out by migrant/black/poor/gendered workers and that these features of *who* does the dirty work is pertinent to anti-poaching work in the Kruger (see Simpson and Simpson 2018). While the literature on dirty work includes a range of conceptualizations and contemporary expansions, there is still utility in revisiting the early conceptualization of dirty work that focused on deviance (Shaw 2014) and the manner the nature of the work degrades an individual’s dignity and moral values (Dick 2005, see also Chapter 7). This notion of dirty work also resonates with Hansen’s (2006) study of private security firms who were contracted by various Rate Payer’s Associations in the Indian township of Chatsworth in KwaZulu-Natal in the face of a real or perceived increase in crime. Where the burden of proof was often an obstacle in bringing formal charges against suspects rounded up by these private security firms, security guards resorted to beating suspects as a means of meting out justice stating “[w]e have to show them who is boss around here...someone has to do the dirty work” (*ibid.*: 290). It is also a reminder of the police seeing their position as marking the boundaries of social order and their mandate to “keep the streets clean...[that] they seek to stand between the higher and the lower...the clean and the dirty” (Neocleous 2014b: 10). What is clear in the comment of the senior SANParks manager is a tacit admission that

the nature of the work conducted by field rangers in anti-poaching operations is marked by 'dirt' and it becomes necessary to fully understand the nature and extent of this dirty work in the KNP.

Justifying 'Dirty Work'

In my informal conversations and semi-structured interviews with Kruger anti-poaching staff, these employees were *unequivocal* that deviance *does* form part of *some* law enforcement actions by field rangers and other anti-poaching staff in the Kruger Park. Manhunting operations and encounters with suspected poachers offer the most visceral aspect of dirty work in anti-poaching operations and it is here that deviance is most likely to come to the fore. How exactly field rangers should respond is a matter that is still ultimately left to their discretion despite the series of SOP's and 'roadshows' that seek to delimit field ranger actions in such instances.

...the rules of engagement? Emile you know the rules of engagement, the rules of engagement change in the bush you know that. Have you seen some of the contacts that happen here...I mean we all know the rules of engagement they all get drummed into us... but if you talk to the field rangers involved with the contacts and when you on the ground at night the ball game changes big time, big time... people don't understand, people who have never done it, the lawyers, they not in that situation...its not half as easy as people think... you hardly see the guy, its in the bush, you can't even see him properly, you see something there [that] you think is a poacher.³³

Here, this KNP section ranger falls back on the flawed reasoning that civilians, even the lawyers coaching them on the use of deadly force, can never fully comprehend the exigencies of combat and that it is the geography of the 'bush' and the 'heat of battle' that reconfigures the use of force. Where senior managers extol the responsible and mitigating measures the organization has put in place to ensure compliance in the use of deadly force in hosting information sessions - or 'roadshows' as they are called in the KNP - operational managers such as the section ranger above question its usefulness. Despite these twice-yearly sessions reinforcing the legal use of force, the uncertainty of knowing exactly what constitutes a threat remains. The poor visibility, either as a result of dense vegetation or low light conditions, precludes the ability of rangers to determine exactly who and what constitutes a positive threatening action.

Furthermore, the fears, tensions and frustrations explicated upon in the preceding ethnographic interlude together with the combat readiness inscribed in the advanced weapons handling training that requires field rangers to ‘suppress a target’ and to ‘overrun a target’ (see above) preclude restraint. These training modalities largely undermine the precautionary approaches that should privilege the right to life in the organization’s legal use of deadly force. Furthermore, it is the exigencies of the ‘bush’ that necessitates a change in the ROE’s and it is here that the ‘ball game changes big time’.

The Use of Disproportionate Force

These advanced weapons handling courses for KNP field rangers focused on ‘suppressing a target’, can easily lead to the use of excessive or disproportionate force. This is often quantifiable in the number of rounds of ammunition used by field rangers in a given contact. The Act prescribes that the use of deadly force should be proportional to the threat and that that the defence should stop once the attack has ceased. Field rangers carry multiple magazines of ammunition which hold up to 20 rounds of ammunition each. In raw data from a disused field ranger logbook left in a patrol vehicle from one section I conducted ethnographic research in, field rangers expended on average 12.63 rounds of ammunition (with a high of 36 and minimum of 3 rounds per contact with around 18 percent of the contacts using 20 rounds or more of ammunition) in 38 separate incidents or contacts with poachers. According to this data – bearing in mind field rangers do not fill in the logbook on every occasion and that this was only one logbook in one of the small fleet of vehicles used on the ranger outpost - field rangers in this one section expended a total of 480 rounds of ammunition in contacts with suspected poachers in the period between June 2014 and January 2016.³⁴

In an informal conversation with a trails ranger whose wilderness trail group was shot at by field rangers, he relayed that in the ensuing engagement by Park management, to allay the fears and shock of the tourists involved, the KNP section ranger who accompanied other senior managers, commented that the group was lucky that the field rangers involved were from an older generation of field rangers. He posited that younger field rangers would have been more aggressive and ‘when they come back (to the ranger outpost) you have to replace 35 rounds’ (of

ammunition).³⁵ It confirms the disproportionate use of force by field rangers and that its use is, if not encouraged by Park managers, they are certainly aware of the use of excessive force.

This stands in sharp contrast to the capability of poaching groups and raises important questions around the proportionality in the use of force by field rangers. In a parliamentary committee meeting report for 2015/2016, 581 rounds of ammunition were confiscated together with 117 firearms within the KNP.³⁶ The number of rounds of ammunition carried on average by each poaching team, based on this data, is 4.96 rounds per firearm. In my conversations with field rangers they also confirm that on average poachers carry around four rounds of ammunition.³⁷ My own observation when arrested poachers were searched in October 2016 confirms this comment by field rangers when an investigator found two rounds of ammunition in the magazine of the rifle and an additional two rounds in the pocket of one of the suspects.³⁸ A SANParks Environmental Crime Investigations (ECI) investigator based in the KNP also confirmed that in his experience poachers carry five to six rounds of ammunition with the intention to only shoot rhino and not engage in a firefight with rangers.³⁹ The amount of ammunition confiscated in relation to the number firearms confiscated also matches historical data from a National Parks Board Annual Report (1995) where it reports on a total of thirteen firearms and 49 rounds of ammunition recovered in the KNP, a ratio of 3.7 rounds of ammunition per firearm. This would suggest that poachers are not intent on engaging in a firefight with rangers and it is conceivable that they only do so (shoot first in some instances) because they are aware of the *de facto* shoot-to-kill or zero tolerance approach of ranger staff and other security forces in the KNP. It also demonstrates that this data has been available for over two decades and that Park management have not used it to temper the responses of its anti-poaching teams. When I pointed this out to a section ranger in the KNP, he replied

Ja [yes], but we don't know that [when we engage them].⁴⁰

The standard of 'reasonable belief' or 'reasonable suspicion', however, is not sufficiently high considering the far-reaching consequences of using deadly force (Bruce 2011). The result is that field rangers do shoot despite the capabilities of poacher groups in terms of fire power and it is

conceivable that their actions in using excessive force, inculcated by their training, has created a practice that has become institutionalised.

Furthermore, many shooting incidents also take place without adequately identifying a target and whether that target poses a threat to themselves or their colleagues as stipulated in the Act. This is evidenced in the many ‘friendly-fire’ or ‘blue-on-green’ incidents where KNP rangers, SANDF soldiers and SAPS members have shot and either injured or killed other law enforcement personnel in anti-poaching operations in the Park.⁴¹ In addition, staff in the Park have relayed two incidences where field rangers have shot at tourists participating in multi-day backpacking wilderness trails, mistaking them for poachers.⁴² Where it is clear that anti-poaching personnel from a range of law enforcement agencies operating in the Park omit this vital step in the use of deadly force, that of identifying a threat, including those who show no intent even if they are armed or those who are unarmed as prescribed in the Act.

Post-capture Shootings

It is also not always the ‘heat of battle’, the pressure to make ‘split second decisions’, the geographies of the bush that limit the vision of field rangers or injudicious actions that characterize field ranger actions in their encounters with suspected poachers. At other times they wilfully kill suspects after capture.

...sometimes its not even the case of poachers running away, sometimes field rangers will shoot them [poachers] after they have already been arrested.⁴³

This feature of killing suspects after they have been arrested was also confirmed in my discussions with a senior KNP manager⁴⁴ and with another KNP section ranger, when the latter explicitly stated “there are some unsavoury things, there’s post-capture shootings”⁴⁵ (emphasis added). Another respondent⁴⁶ shared that these ‘post capture shootings’ were a feature of joint operations with SANDF special forces operators who were based at a section ranger outpost prior to 2015. In these joint operations, one or two field rangers would accompany these operators on ambushes and patrols and where suspects were arrested, field rangers and special forces operators, especially in cases where these rangers and soldiers were young and inexperienced, were ‘blooded’. This mirrors the

deviant behaviour of Australian special forces operators who used the practice of “blooding” where junior soldiers were required by their commanders to shoot a prisoner in order to notch their ‘first kill’ (IGADF 2020: 29). In the Kruger, it involved lying a handcuffed suspect on the ground, walking approximately twenty paces away, shooting the suspect and then uncuffing the individual. By shooting the suspect from a short distance, it would not be obvious in post mortem forensic examinations that suspects were shot at point-blank range, raising obvious suspicions of murder. In other instances, this forensic evidence may indicate irregularities, as the case with entry wounds on the tops of shoulders, indicating that suspects were in a prone position when they were shot.⁴⁷

Misrepresenting the Truth: Crime Scene Manipulation and Controlling the Narrative

As a result, KNP managers seek to control the ‘narrative’. They seek to control what is understood when asked ‘what happened’ at a particular crime scene that involved the shooting of a suspect. The overwhelming majority of contacts take place in remote locations and any SAPS investigators seeking to secure the crime scene in the aftermath of a contact, especially where a suspect has been killed or injured, will *always* be dependent on Park management to access those crime scenes. They have no capability to visit these crime scenes independently of Park management, especially at night. As a result, KNP managers, specifically section rangers, will always be the first to respond and arrive at a crime scene.

there was an incident that was very dodgy and I will always protect my guys obviously so I'll always make sure I'm first on the scene, always. I don't call the police, I don't do anything I want to go look, I want to be satisfied with what has happened and then I'll...I mean it sounds horrible but I'll always do that, its just what I do and if I see something that I think is not right I will tell my guys listen you guys are looking for trouble and you can't just shoot them or whatever.⁴⁸ [emphasis added]

It is clear from the response of the KNP section ranger above, that his primary concern is to ‘protect his guys’ and where field rangers acted injudiciously and even illegally, his only course of action was to verbally chastise the offending field ranger or team. This procedure of ‘protecting

their guys' is also reflected in conversations with conservation law enforcement staff in EKZNW.

you let the guy [field ranger] do his job and you do the damage control.⁴⁹

As far as I am aware, no field rangers or other anti-poaching personnel employed by SANParks has been subject to a disciplinary proceeding for misconduct in their law enforcement duties during the course of this study. Where these efforts by KNP managers to 'protect their guys' become increasingly common-place, it has become virtually impossible for KNP leadership to institute corrective measures because of the weight of precedent. As a result, KNP management have become complicit in condoning the illegal actions that have become a feature of *some* shooting incidents with suspected poachers.

In her work on the social history of the KNP, Jane Carruthers (1995) highlights a long-held reluctance by KNP management to prosecute members of its field ranger corps in the fear of losing some of their best field rangers to what Park administrators considered misdemeanour offenses. White rangers in the KNP declined to report the cultivation of marijuana and poaching activities of African rangers to their headquarters in 1941, effectively colluding to obscure these illegal activities (ibid.). In one incident,

Wolhuter, for example, omitted to have a group of Africans who were charged with assaulting the African police, properly identified and the case fell away. (ibid.: 39)

It has its origins in Stevenson-Hamilton's own tolerance in overlooking the indiscretions of loyal African field rangers. In a short description of the character traits and bravery of a handful of notable field rangers, he recounts his memory of a certain African field ranger named Mubi, who "possessed many admirable qualities, [but] I'm afraid...was hardly up to our civilized conception of a good citizen" (Stevenson-Hamilton 2008: 422). Stevenson-Hamilton recalls Mubi's notoriety and penchant for the illicit with a certain fondness, "that highway robbery had figured no inconsiderable extent" in his life prior to his appointment as a native ranger (ibid.: 423). These traits in Mubi as a brigand informed a principle of employment, that of "setting a thief to catch a thief" and Mubi's own proficiency with a firearm meant that "he took his own toll of the animals he protected" (ibid: 421). However, he's resourcefulness in catching other

poachers meant that poaching on the part of anyone else in the area under his control had ceased and “so under our primitive conditions, it seemed the best policy to be a little blind” (ibid: 422). This penchant to ‘turn a blind eye’, points to an institutionalized practice of obscuring the illegal activities of its staff when it suited their own agenda, especially where those field rangers involved were considered ‘special’, in effect those field rangers who were most loyal to the Park. However, these same ‘misdemeanour’ offenses were fervently pursued in the case of problematic staff members, those who were considered ‘lazy’ or disloyal. Park administrators did not hesitate to dismiss them and, in cases where it was relevant, to deport or evict them and their families, sanctions that by far exceeded the nature of the offence.

This penchant by Park management to continue to collude in obscuring the injudicious and illegal actions by its staff members was most starkly demonstrated in the following comment by a field ranger who was stationed in one of the hotspot areas in the Park.

After that he became a professor at writing statements.⁵⁰

This field ranger was recounting an incident of a newly appointed section ranger who was appalled at the actions of a senior field ranger at a crime scene where an unarmed poacher was shot and killed. In the immediate aftermath of the shooting, it was apparent that the body of the deceased was too far from the position of the rifle to suggest that he was indeed armed and that the actions of field rangers to use deadly force was justified. The senior field ranger proceeded to put on surgical gloves so as not to leave his fingerprints on the rifle and placed the rifle in proximity to the body. Here, despite his seniority, being new to the section this section ranger understood that he needed to gain the trust of the field rangers under his supervision if he was to gain any measure of success during his tenure. In this instance, the surest way to gain that trust was to be complicit in manipulating the crime scene and it is after this experience that he became a ‘professor at writing statements’, that he wilfully either lied in his statement in the official police docket of what happened or, as was more likely, omitted vital information pertinent to the case that would otherwise implicate field ranger staff in illegal acts.⁵¹ David Bruce also notes that “it is not unheard of for police to plant weapons or otherwise tamper with the scene, and then claim that they were acting in self defence” (2011: 6). This is one key reason why SANParks has retained

the services of an advocate – at a cost of approximately ZAR 1 million per year⁵² - to take down sworn affidavits from field rangers to include in the SAPS docket.

when [SANParks appointed advocate] comes to take my statement, I tell him everything, the real truth and then its on them [the organization].⁵³ [emphasis added]

Crucially, the ‘real truth’ includes acts of deviance on the part of the field ranger. When I asked what they write in the statement and why it is that he has not been prosecuted when he confessed to deviant acts, he just shrugged. In my conversation with another field ranger in a completely different section, who was relaying his frustration when suspects run away, particularly at night, confirmed that he and his team would ‘just shoot them’. He emphasized that he would not get into trouble because “[the advocate] will write the statement”.⁵⁴ Where the appointment of an advocate is positioned by SANParks as an act of care (see also Chapter 7), it again is a misrepresentation of care (see Chapter 3). The organization is merely seeking to protect its reputation and to insulate itself from criminal prosecution and not, as it likes to purport, an organization that cares for its field rangers. While I am not suggesting that the organization or the advocate is lying in terms of the content of the sworn affidavit, what is clear is that there are substantive omissions. A senior prosecutor⁵⁵ from the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) also confirmed that Park authorities are not lying in their sworn affidavits, they omit crucial details. This was most clearly demonstrated in the case of the killing of Sibusiso Dlamini (Chapter 1). In this instance, in the sworn affidavit by the section ranger, it merely stated that when he arrived on the scene - two hours before the arrival of the police - the deceased was ‘lying in a pool of blood’. The statement was thus not untruthful but omitted crucial information relating, for example, to the contextual setting, the field ranger actions leading up to the shooting, the fact that the field ranger concerned was not an anti-poaching or qualified law enforcement/Environmental Management Inspector (EMI) field ranger but a Biodiversity Social Project (BSP) field ranger, employed primarily to guide researchers, alien plant clearing teams and contractors in the field. Neither did the police docket make any mention of the actions and purpose of the contractors the field ranger was accompanying, or the actions of Dlamini or any of his friends who with him on that day. Furthermore, the docket contained no post mortem report, no crime scene photographs, no mention of co-

conspirators or witnesses (the friends who were with Dlamini when he was shot), or a statement by the field ranger involved in the shooting. The docket was also initially handled by a junior and inexperienced police constable to further thwart any meaningful progress in the investigation of the case.⁵⁶ In addition, although the incident happened in August 2016 and the identity of Dlamini was well-known to KNP management evidenced by the fact that the Park paid the family a sum of money to ostensibly assist with funeral expenses, by November 2016 the police docket still referred to the deceased as an “unknown male”.⁵⁷ It speaks of a broader interagency collusion that seeks to obscure any suggestion of irregular actions on the part of KNP rangers. Any such suggestion would derail not only SANParks’ position of legitimacy in its fight against rhino poaching but would bring into question the deeply seated logic that the function of police is to restore order.

It is also not the first time that the veracity of claims by Park authorities have been brought into question. Dlamini (2020a) recounts a number of instances where higher courts have reviewed the sentences meted out by Stevenson-Hamilton in his capacity as sub-native commissioner and come to the conclusion that “it seems to be a constant trouble that the charge is improperly framed and the case not dealt with in strict relation to the charge, the evidence given and the provisions of the [A]ct...[i]n other words, sub-native commissioner and park rangers were making things up as they went along” (Dlamini 2020a: location 967, single column view). However, here, in stating that ‘park rangers were making things up as they went along’ Dlamini (2020a) seems to be referring to the fact that these mistakes were as a result of the zealotry of the colonial authorities, that these mistakes crept in because they themselves did not fully understand the complexities of a new legal order and that Park officials were “not particularly concerned about legal niceties” (ibid.: 974 and 981, single column view). What is not considered by Dlamini (2020a), is the possibility that Park authorities wilfully misrepresented what happened.

Controlling the narrative also takes on other forms. In the immediate aftermath of a shooting and killing of a suspect, field rangers are not expected to make an immediate statement to the police. In such instances, the organization claims that field rangers involved in the shooting are under extreme stress and need time to process the events surrounding the shooting. This can vary from between a few hours up to a couple of days after the event. This is contra to conventional wisdom that statements

made immediately after the event offer the greatest opportunity for recall and minimizes the opportunity to fabricate a story.⁵⁸ Moreover, it differs from the practice of questioning civilians immediately following a violent event.⁵⁹ In reality, KNP managers fear that field rangers may ‘misspeak’ or offer information in the official police docket that would implicate the employee or the employer in any wrongdoing. To shield the organization from any suggestion of impropriety, KNP management has ensured that any statements made to the SAPS investigator can only be made in the presence of its advocate. As demonstrated above, these statements wilfully omit crucial evidence of what happened and occludes any suggestion of irregular actions on the part of KNP anti-poaching personnel.

Institutional Complicity at the Highest Levels

Collusion is not only evident in the actions of mid and senior level managers in the Park. The complicity extends all the way to SANParks headquarters in Pretoria. A respondent recounted an incident when, relatively early in the protracted ‘war on poaching’, a team of field rangers came across a group of poachers resting in a river bed. The field rangers approached as silently as they could and when they came within sufficient distance of the unsuspecting group, they decided to shoot into the sand close to the suspects to scare them and then arrest them in the ensuing confusion. They had no intention of shooting any person. They were able to carry out this plan and successfully arrest all three suspects without causing injury, including successfully seizing hunting paraphernalia and the firearm. In those early days – events that have subsequently become everyday - such an isolated event was relayed to senior managers not only within the Park but also executive managers at its head office in Pretoria. The response from an executive manager in Pretoria, according to this respondent was

...tell him to go and take his guys back to the shooting range.⁶⁰

Implicit in this response is that the respondent, who is a section ranger, should have instructed his field rangers to shoot and kill the poachers and the reason why they ‘missed’ is that they required additional shooting range practice to improve their rifle competency. Such unconsidered remarks by an executive manager is symptomatic of the permissive

attitude fomented at the most senior levels in the organization. It is an attitude that is directly linked to the intense political pressure SANParks managers are under (see Chapter 5). It is also an attitude that has been fomented as part of an institutional culture premised on exceptionalism and further fuelled by evolving rules of engagement and institutional permissiveness in the use of irregular or excessive force nurtured in its close association with the apartheid era security forces.

6.3 The Hidden Violence of Intelligence-led Policing: Communities, Counterintelligence Operations and the Perverse Use of Entrapment

Long before the height of civil military relations in the Kruger during the 1980s (Chapter 4), Kruger administrators like Stevenson-Hamilton were already drawn into roles related to matters of national security and intelligence gathering. In June 1940, Stevenson-Hamilton was urgently summoned to the office of the chief of the General Staff of the Union government after concerning reports emerged of a sizeable contingent of German soldiers, numbering nearly two thousand, were said to be amassing on the Kruger border within Portuguese held Mozambique (Stevenson-Hamilton 2008). Stevenson-Hamilton was highly sceptical of such reports and, in displaying his ethnographic acuity, knew that anyone “who lives among tribal natives must know [...] that the arrival of even one strange European in a purely native area [will] be known and discussed for fifty miles around” (ibid.: 443). Stevenson-Hamilton was quite scathing in his assessment of the capabilities of military intelligence but nevertheless agreed to “act as chief military intelligence agent [...] of the Portuguese frontier as adjoined the Kruger National Park” (ibid.: 444). The gathering of intelligence, whether it was related to the availability of migrant labour or threats to its own or national security, has long been a preoccupation of Kruger administrators. Crucial for the analysis here is that communities living adjacent to the Park were a vital source of information necessary for the security of the Park and it was a concept that was well understood since the inception of the Park.

Communities as a Source of Intelligence

Communities living adjacent to the Park continued to be at the centre of the Park's attentions when it came to issues relating to its security. During the 1980s when the Park was integrated into the apartheid state's counter revolutionary strategy (see Chapter 4), the communities adjacent to the Park, both on the South African side and those communities in the Mozambique border areas were central to this strategy.

Infiltrate the KNP population and provide information for a proactive counter revolutionary action.⁶¹

This meant that the KNP and its security partners in the SAP and SADF placed informants within communities – both its own resident population as well as populations adjacent to the Park – to actively gather information related to threats to the Park or the state. Gathering of intelligence from the general population was often accompanied by an overt effort to ameliorate some of the socio-economic hardships suffered by those populations. In fact, it was a central tenet to the manner in which counterinsurgency (COIN) strategy was conceptualized. Broadly speaking, COIN is characterized by two central pillars, namely a 'hard' or military intervention and a 'soft', human centred intervention focused on socio-economic upliftment to win over the allegiances of a given population and to steer these communities from supporting an insurgency. The KNP did this, with financial backing from the state security apparatus, by operating supply stores at established border crossings such as N'wanetsi and Pafuri to provide essential food such as maize meal in exchange for firewood and information relating to threats to the Park (see Chapter 4). It also used job creation as a strategy to placate disaffected communities on either side of the border and to win over allegiances (see Chapter 3). In addition, its community strategy also included a focus on non-military activities and interests through the establishment of cultural, sports, social and youth clubs. Effectively, the purpose of its information gathering and communication operations (CommOps) was to garner the support of the population in and adjacent to the KNP and to court the loyalties of these populations away from supporting individuals and organizations who sought a revolutionary overthrow of the existing order.⁶² However, these socio-economic interventions were in no way meant to address the structural political economic underpinnings that gave rise to these dire socio-economic conditions in the first place. Thus, the

'soft' approaches of COIN were counter-development at its core, it was a human centred form of warfare that never had the 'development' of populations as an authentic concern.

These 'soft' approaches by the SADF in operationalizing COIN in the SWA/Angola border regions made an indelible impression on the park warden, Dr S.C.J. Joubert and it was an approach that he sought to replicate in the Park's own interventions in communities neighbouring the Park in order to gain their allegiances. On an experiential trip to SWA/Angola border area to observe the SADF's own activities related to integrating security measures and co-opting populations, he made the following observations:

It is with pleasure that I would like to sincerely thank you for the opportunity that you have granted me from the 2 to 4 September 1987 together with a group of invited guests to visit the operational area in South West Africa. The visit was of particular interest for me and gave me a much broader perspective of the Army's total involvement in the northern areas of South West Africa. Besides the military readiness and the noticeable motivation of all the military personnel we came in contact with, what was very clear to me was the socio-economic aspects of the strategy that was applied and that it enjoyed a high priority. As a result of our unique situation, I observed these aspects that we were exposed to with intense interest and believe that my own understanding of such circumstances has been appreciably expanded.⁶³ [own translation, emphasis added]

That Joubert was impressed by the SADF's so-called socio-economic interventions and believed that the Park could learn valuable lessons from this component of the SADF's COIN strategy speaks of a complete disconnect by what is envisioned by human development. That the trading stores selling or bartering basic supplies amounted to the fullest extent of this 'upliftment' demonstrates yet again the observation by Lynn Meskell, that it reveals a staggering degree of blindness, where their limits of care only extended to Europeans and nature (Meskell 2012). That the SADF's human centred approaches failed spectacularly was most overtly demonstrated in the first democratically held elections marking the independence of the Namibia where the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) won 57.3% of the vote in March 1990 (Simon 1995).

This blindness to what human development could encompass continues to inform contemporary attempts by Kruger management at

incorporating community development into its broader security strategy to counter rhino poaching. It should come as no surprise then that communities have again become positioned as a central pillar in the KNP's strategy to counter rhino poaching. This turn to communities as 'partners' was a central theme of the South African government's co-ordinated response to wildlife crime at the CITES CoP17 conference on wildlife trade and it is one that is widely acclaimed as an approach that is progressive in nature and brings long-awaited benefits to communities by integrating them into the wildlife economy⁶⁴ (see also Massé et al. 2020). The national Department of Environmental Affairs' (DEA), through its People and Parks Programme (PPP), seeks to "promote conservation for the people with the people" where communities can benefit from the broad economic stimulus that is purported to be derived from its national Biodiversity Economy Strategy (BES).⁶⁵ This strategy includes, inter alia, "upgrading and developing new infrastructure in protected areas to boost tourism; developing commercial assets for communities owning and/or living around protected areas; and supporting related industries".⁶⁶ The tangible expression of this form of human development for Park managers came in the form of food parcels and water tanks for households during what was considered one of the most persistent and intense droughts for decades.⁶⁷ Under these 'new' modalities, communities are being (re)positioned as equal partners in an inclusive and progressive conservation/society collaboration. In reality, communities are constructed as the 'first line of defence' for animals and protected areas.

The centrality of community in playing a role in countering rhino poaching is instead configured in terms of their utility as a source of information in the fight against wildlife crime. Kruger has adopted an approach to 'clear the park from the outside', an aggressive strategy to identify and arrest poachers on the outside of the Park before they enter to poach.⁶⁸ This language of 'clearing the park from the outside' also matches the language of community policing approaches in the U.S. that look to 'clear a neighbourhood' – to clean it up - using both coercive and 'soft' approaches that is a hallmark of counterinsurgency-style pacification (Kienscherf 2016). Büscher and Ramutsindela (2016) contend that this means that KNP is massively invested in informant networks creating new forms of surveillance and mistrust within those communities (see also Sithole 2018). In effect, the police seek to enlist members within a targeted community as the "eyes and ears", to become ...auxiliary police officers

gathering the sorts of intelligence that those in uniform cannot hope to acquire” (Kienscherf 2016: 1188). O’ Brien contends that “intelligence is the primary asset for counter revolutionary warfare and it needs to be gathered from the population, as this is where the insurgency operates” (2001: 30). It is this intelligence gathered to counter an insurgency that is known as counterintelligence (ibid.).

Communities as a Target of Surveillance

Further evidence that Kruger responses to rhino poaching mirrors classical COIN praxis, is in the establishment of a centralized intelligence nerve centre (see O’ Brien, 2001) or joint intelligence centres (known in Afrikaans as *gesamentlike inligtingsentrum* or GIS).⁶⁹ In 2015, the Park unveiled its Mission Area Joint Operations Centre (MAJOC)⁷⁰ to coordinate, centralize, analyse, collate and process all police, military and state/private conservation intelligence gathering. It is in these “small war rooms” where intelligence is operationalized and it is this “joint collection of intelligence [that] becomes the foundation for unity of effort [in] counter revolutionary operations” (O’ Brien 2001: 32). Some of these intensified surveillance activities includes tracking the movements of people of interest, including the invasion of privacy rights such as accessing private financial records, mobile phone geolocation data and in some cases text and voice data interception. In this regard, it is instructive that SANParks officials participated in the 2014 iteration of the Intelligence Support Systems for Lawful Interception, Criminal Investigations and Intelligence Gathering (ISS) conference related to the interception of private telecommunications (Swart 2016). In effect, the Park had obtained a ‘grabber’, a device that intercepts telecommunications traffic from specific communications towers and networks.⁷¹

Such capabilities raise serious questions about privacy and surveillance without a court order or warrant, especially of citizens who are not targets of an investigation but whose private communications are also intercepted under the broad web of surveillance. It brings into question SANParks own corporate values based on the principles of transparency and accountability. Other interventions in communities include - intimidation, the most blatant being the hovering of helicopters over the homes of suspects⁷² (see also Sithole 2018); questioning people about their sources of income for home improvements and car purchases; night-time raids

often accompanied by beatings; forms of torture and damage to property or food stores; arrests without charge only to be released at a later date; illegal stops and impeding the freedom of movement of residents in villages (Sithole 2018); the killing of an unarmed fisherman in one instance; and in many instances people suffered the indignity and shame of being labelled as a suspected criminal. These aggressive techniques of order maintenance policing combine a number of historical modalities of policing, “such as classical strategies of excessive force and modern disciplinary mechanisms of surveillance and spatial control” (Harcourt 2001: 18). These concerning developments justify further critical investigation but space unfortunately does not allow to expand on these serious impacts of intensified policing on communities adjacent to the KNP. Far from making communities safer as SANParks purports, it further alienates the very communities the organization should be building partnerships with and undermines long-term relations (see Duffy et al. 2015). Moreover, Harcourt (2001) argues that where entire communities are regarded as the source of disorder, that it shapes the way those communities are perceived and what punitive practices are permissible within those communities. This category of the ‘disorderly’, the ‘wicked’ or the ‘lower-class’, as mid 20th century scholars on order-maintenance policing were wont to label those neighbourhoods where disorder proliferated, along with being racially biased, legitimised order-maintenance policing as a state function that is ‘natural’ and ‘necessary’ (ibid.).

The Hidden Violence and Perversion of Intelligence Gathering

What most animates crime prevention in policing is knowing where and when criminals plan to perpetrate a crime. This necessity to ‘know’ is what lies at the centre of intelligence gathering operations or what is increasingly called actionable intelligence - that intelligence which can lead to the successful arrest and prosecution of suspects. Perhaps it is already an indicator that ‘intelligence’ in itself is not sufficient - that it is infused with limitations – which requires that it needs to be qualified with being ‘actionable’. The KNP has an astounding intelligence gathering and analysis architecture at its disposal, ranging from the military and crime intelligence arms of the South African security apparatus in the form of the National Joint Operational and Intelligence Structure (NATJOINTS);

securing the services of private intelligence companies such as Quemic and Pathfinder Corp;⁷³ as well as the international intelligence capabilities of police associations such as Interpol or agencies such as the U.S. State Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). This is beside their own information gathering capabilities.⁷⁴ This is also not the first time in its history that KNP has deployed the use of covert intelligence gathering tactics. Stevenson-Hamilton is also purported to have sent an African spy into Mozambique in May 1912 to ostensibly buy arms and ammunition in an attempt to show the ease with which Africans could procure firearms and to lobby the Portuguese colonial authorities to clamp down on these practices (Dlamini 2020a). This was in the context where the possession of firearms and ammunition by Africans was seen as a direct threat to national security.⁷⁵

When asked what the ideal model would look like - despite the use of military and para-military units - to stem rhino poaching and wildlife crime, Marius Roos, the head of Pathfinder Corp contracted by SANParks to combat rhino poaching, replied "...sound intelligence [...] if we do not have intelligence we cannot tackle this problem".⁷⁶ Indeed, some scholars, calling for more interdisciplinary approaches in conservation science, advocate that crime analysis within intelligence-led policing frameworks can prove useful in preventing wildlife crime (Moreto 2015). The fusion of conservation and intelligence gathering was also prominently positioned at the CITES CoP17 conference held in Johannesburg in October 2016 where it was clear that the South African government had committed to a number of international and regional wildlife crime fighting networks and initiatives, including, amongst others, the Interpol Wildlife Crime Working Group, the International Wildlife Consortium on Combatting Wildlife Crime (ICWC) and the South African Development Cooperation Law Enforcement and Anti-Poaching Strategy (SADC-LEAP). It is clear that policing efforts and coordinated intelligence gathering capabilities has become a central pillar in the South African state's response to wildlife crime⁷⁷ (see also Massé et al. 2020).

One of my first interactions in the Kruger area, as I started my year-long ethnography into rhino poaching, was with a Zimbabwean national, consulting as a field ranger trainer at the South African Wildlife College (SAWC). This individual was very prominent as an anti-poaching ranger in the Zambezi Valley in the 1980s during Zimbabwe's 'rhino wars' under 'Operation Stronghold'. When the conversation veered to the frustrations

of merely arresting hundreds of rhino poachers with seemingly little effect in decreasing the number of rhino poached, he shared what he thought would be a very effective intervention that would revolutionize information gathering and the collection of actionable intelligence.

All you need to do is wet a pillow case and pull that over [a suspect's head]. You will get all the information you need and it won't leave a mark.⁷⁸

What this respondent was referring to was a common technique used by the apartheid era security police called 'wetbagging'.⁷⁹ The comment by the respondent above was all the more chilling as it was delivered in a very sober and measured voice. He was devoid of passion and presented no outward indication of being a zealot. What he suggested was in diametrical contrast to his calm demeanour. The moral standard of the respondent above, who genuinely thought that wetbagging and torture was a legitimate technique to be used speaks to the 'spiritual depletion' (see Chapter 7) of those involved in the 'war on poaching' and how such techniques can - and indeed have - become institutionalized in conservation policing. Neither was anyone else at the dinner table particularly disturbed by his suggestion. Another variant of wetbagging - 'tubing', made of a broad strip of a used car inner tube- was also used by the security police

there were methods used, common assault, slapping with an open hand or with fists. Then there was also the tube method that was used and at that stage we used a wet bag that was pulled over a person's head [...] and basically the person was suffocated for a short while... I will honestly say that it was general practice in the Police and specifically in the final years where I was involved in the Security Branch. There was never any person that was ashamed to say that he had assaulted a person or had applied certain techniques in order to obtain certain information (TRC 1998 Vol 6, § 3 Ch.1: 206-207, emphasis added).

At the Game Ranger's Association of Africa (GRAA) annual general meeting (AGM) held in June 2016 at Berg-en-Dal rest camp in the KNP, the association awarded prizes to those members who played a key role and achieved a measure of success in anti-poaching operations in the year leading up to the AGM. Bronze awards were awarded to two KNP section rangers for their innovative approaches to stem rhino poaching in their respective sections. At a communal braai (barbeque) for all participants on the first night, delegates stood in small groups around a collection of

small fires to help ward off the biting cold of the night. At one fireplace, a group gathered to listen to one KNP section ranger, a recipient of a Bronze award earlier in the evening, regale attendees of the challenges faced by KNP rangers and the minutiae of poaching and anti-poaching in the Park. The conversation turned to the questioning of suspects to garner information on their tactics and the identities of their recruiters and he matter-of-factly talked of 'tubing' them, identical to the technique described by the apartheid era security policeman quoted above. This method of 'tubing' is a far cry from the practice of tactical questioning, which is the basic questioning of a captured person and gaining information of immediate tactical value from captives who are already cooperative (IGADF 2020). It is in settings such as this where disturbing practices, reminiscent of apartheid era torture techniques, gain a semblance of normalcy where any gains made, irrespective of the means through which it is attained, is considered a 'necessary' condition. It resonates with the testimony of the witness at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) hearing above that there was no stigma attached to these forms of torture. Consequently, in the KNP and forums such as the GRAA which provides a space for fraternity amongst conservation practitioners, the use of such practices gain normalcy and through celebrating gains in counter poaching through whatever means necessary, such practices become embedded in conservation practice. The use of torture was a repressive response to political activism during the apartheid era and such institutionally embedded practices continue to (re)emerge under conditions that are considered exceptional. This continuity of apartheid's afterlives in violent contemporary conservation policing is not a deviation, it mirrors the continuity of a range of practices and social relations in the Park.

It is not only the manner in which information is extracted, it is also its veracity that can be questioned. A respondent who conducts polygraph or integrity tests in a paranoid conservation service industry in the private nature reserves adjacent to the Kruger that increasingly treats most of its low waged black workers with suspicion (see Sithole 2018, Thakholi 2021), had this to say about the process of transforming information into intelligence in the 'war on poaching'.

Its a joke, intelligence is the biggest lie in the world.⁸⁰

It was a curious comment by someone who makes his living from intelligence but points not only to its limitations but an underlying fallibility. Where the use of polygraphs represents a technical pursuit of the 'truth', it follows that what is the truth is also contingent. To understand the nature of the fallibility of intelligence it would be instructive to turn to the views of another respondent. In a separate informal conversation, a respondent,⁸¹ who served in military intelligence in arguably one of the most volatile areas in the country during the late 1980s, shared the manner in which he wilfully manipulated information before passing it on to his superiors. The respondent considered being a conscientious objector when he was conscripted into the apartheid era military. He was ideologically opposed to the apartheid state but instead of spending two years in military detention he rationalized that the least he could do during his military service was to ensure that he would not unnecessarily cause harm to another human being. During his time as a collector, he became aware of at least five individuals whose lives were irrevocably changed through the information that he gathered. He realized that there were dire consequences for those people who he informed on and it was then that he started manipulating and transforming the information that he gathered before passing it on to his superiors. In this case it is clear that information was manipulated to bring no harm to individuals who posed no threat to society based on his evaluation. While his motives can be considered honourable, it raises important questions around the role of ideology and agency and the manner in which information can be manipulated - that intelligence is not an objective and technocratic pursuit as it is often purported but that it is at its core susceptible to the subjectivity and the intentions of the collector and can also be used nefariously and vindictively in a workplace infused with suspicion and mistrust.

The Perverse use of Entrapment and Manufacturing Successes: Section 252A

Section 252A is that section of the Criminal Procedure Act 51 of 1977 that regulates the use of traps and undercover operations to gather evidence that can aid in the prosecution of suspects. "Entrapment occurs when an opportunity for the commission of an offence is created for the specific purpose of securing evidence, in order to obtain a conviction"

(Subramanien and Whitear-Nel 2011: 634). Subramanien and Whitear-Nel also posit that it involves a degree of deception and at times the law enforcement officer is also involved in the illegal activity (ibid.). It is this feature that leaves this legal tool open to abuse and where people who would not have committed an offence are otherwise tempted to do so (ibid.). It was a technique widely used during the apartheid era where the police could not rely on the cooperation of the public – where the police and military in townships were seen as an occupying army – to solve a crime and neither did the courts necessarily exclude such illegally obtained evidence (ibid.).

Pete Clemence, the renowned Zimbabwean anti-poaching trainer and former Selous Scout, contends that informants “...very commonly will go out and *induce* people to come and poach in order to get the reward” (emphasis added).⁸² Other observers have also noted that the “information game is ugly [and that] informants are rarely model citizens”.⁸³ Where the motive is purely to gain more and more information on a suspect irrespective of the manner in which it is done, police or conservation handlers – those officials who manage informants – in an environment of intense political and institutional pressure often overlook the nefarious activities of informants themselves. It is this perverse development in information gathering and its subsequent reformulation as intelligence that has been a feature of apartheid era security operations.

Reporting on the encounters between poachers and law enforcement teams in the popular media bear a disconcerting similarity where typically two or three suspects are arrested and one suspect was killed in a firefight with police or rangers or in a joint operation. Below is a report from KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province that experiences the second highest number of poaching incidents after the Kruger.

A joint operation [...] yielded results in the fight against rhino poaching when they arrested three alleged rhino poachers [...]. The fourth suspect died during the shoot-out between the suspects and the police. A .458 calibre pistol [sic] and a hunting rifle fitted with a silencer were found in possession of the suspects.⁸⁴

Very little consideration is paid to how it is that law enforcement officials – typically from multiple agencies, in this instance members of a private anti-poaching company, members from the SAPS Organized

Crime Unit and a specialized police unit such as the South African Police Service Special Task Force (SAPS STF) – are able to know exactly *where* and *when* these poaching groups plan to enter a particular protected area. Many protected areas conserving a suite of charismatic mega-fauna such as rhino and elephant, are enclosed by hundreds of kilometres of game proof fencing - in the case of the KNP it extends to over 1 000 kilometres. With the limited human resources – or boots on the ground – it would be impossible for any protected area manager to effectively monitor their entire boundary so that they can successfully encounter and apprehend any suspects entering the park to poach, even with the extensive use of detection security infrastructure, as is the case in the Kruger. On the surface it would seem as if this is exactly what intelligence purports to offer and that such encounters with poachers is evidence of its efficacy and utility.

When suspects are recruited or induced to enter a game reserve to poach, this matter of knowing when and where becomes pedestrian. Besides knowing the exact location and time of entry by a team of poachers, very little is said about the precise circumstances that resulted in a suspect getting shot and killed especially when security forces and field rangers are able to position themselves behind adequate cover⁸⁵ to mitigate any injuries to law enforcement officials. In terms of the Act governing the use of lethal force, field rangers and police officials may only use lethal force when there is an imminent threat of a loss of life or serious bodily injury to themselves or their colleagues. This threat can be sufficiently mitigated by taking adequate cover precisely because they have forewarning of such an event through the ‘intelligence’ from a police agent or informant. Therefore, these anti-poaching teams would have been able to have made adequate preparations before taking up their positions. Speaking to a number of respondents⁸⁶ familiar with these incidents, it was already decided by these security personnel that a specific suspect – often a person recruited, identified by wearing a distinctive set of clothes, a red hat as an example – would be killed. These targeted assassinations or killings have a long history in the South African apartheid era security services who routinely lured Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) operatives into ambushes (TRC 1998 Vol. 2, Ch. 3). In the report,

[t]he Commission distinguished between four types of extra-judicial killings [such as] ambushes where seemingly little or no attempt was made to effect an arrest, and entrapment killings (ibid.: 222).

Ostensibly, it seems that the motive for these killings was not to stymie any legal objections by a defendant in court but that the real motive behind these killings was the recovery of a firearm and the associated monetary rewards associated with its recovery. The recovery of a firearm had two crucial economic incentives for the owner of the private anti-poaching company who was at the centre of these targeted killings. First, the recovery of a firearm used in the perpetration of a crime holds an official monetary reward to the value of approximately ZAR 10 000 from the SAPS. However, in the case of the owner of this company, who provides wildlife security to a number of high-end private game reserves in this part of the country, had brokered a deal with one reserve that a reward of ZAR 60 000 would be paid out to the company for each firearm recovered in a bid to end the scourge of rhino poaching. In some instances, these rewards were paid by a conservation NGO specifically focused on the rhino poaching issue. Through the provision of such lucrative incentives, a thriving market for firearms was being created and, in some instances, illegal firearms already in the possession of the company would be placed at the scene, to not only justify the killing but to claim the reward. The owner of this specific anti-poaching company in question also has deep institutional connections to SAPS members through his former employment in specialized apartheid era police units. Through these connections he purportedly struck deals with known rhino poachers or other members in the criminal underworld who could become involved in rhino poaching from entering the reserves to which he provided security services. Essentially, he was directing poaching away from these small private game reserves with insubstantial rhino populations to provincial run reserves with key or source rhino populations. Thus, the respondent contends, anti-poaching conducted by this private company was not about rhino conservation, as it purported in the public sphere, but about company prestige and monetary rewards and that the deflection of these poachers to key populations amounted to a "war within a war".⁸⁷ This prestige was attained through the high degree of actual 'recoveries' of firearms and armed contacts with 'suspects', which showcased the supposed 'effectiveness' of this particular private company, further enhancing its reputation and opening up avenues for future business contracts. These 'successes' in apprehending suspects and recovering firearms stood in sharp contrast to the rates of success in a nearby provincial/state run game reserve that had one of the highest densities of

rhino anywhere in the country and this factor brought this company into consideration for a lucrative contract with the provincial authorities that never materialized.

One senior manager from Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife (EKZWN), the provincial conservation authority in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province had this to say about the use of 252A warrants in the province.

252s is a police...run operation...you would need [police] permission to do it, so basically its is a setup...what police are saying is well you are creating a crime...so there is that situation where you are pulling people into the poaching situation. Questions are being asked who you are pulling in? Are you pulling in the known poachers...the SAPS would like to stop the 252s...if you know there is a firearm coming in why don't you go fetch that [outside]? [That is] a police instruction. We have had an investigation in KZN running for a year now [into the use of 252As].⁸⁸ [emphasis added]

Indirectly, this senior EKZWN manager, was alluding to the activities of the private anti-poaching company referred to above that is under investigation. He was explicit in underlining that 252A warrants are open to abuse and that people who would not have committed a rhino poaching crime, have been lured to do so by this private security company and the SAPS. While the above events did not take place in the KNP, it is used here to show the manner in which Section 252A is misused and that similar irregularities are mirrored in the KNP.

Reports of poachers shot in ambushes also emanate from the Kruger Park.

There was a shootout and two of the three suspected poachers were fatally wounded?...[t]he third suspect escaped during the incident which took place around 5am...in the vast park roughly the size of Wales.⁸⁹

Conservation entities like KNP pay for information. According to one SANParks environmental crime investigator, he was paying an informant in Mozambique ZAR 12 000.⁹⁰ This monetary reward, according to 2016 data, amounted to eleven times greater than the minimum salary for public servants in the Mozambican defence and security sector.⁹¹ Thus, this reward on offer by SANParks is not insubstantial in the context of chronic unemployment in the border areas of Kruger. In my observations between them, it seemed that the payments were made more to maintain amicable relations and to facilitate the movement of the SANParks investigator when he was in Mozambique as the informant held an official

position in the Limpopo National Park, that formed part of the Greater Limpopo Transfrontier Park (GLTP). When incentives and rewards represent such lucrative sources of income, there is a significant risk that police agents or informants can be motivated to wilfully – and thus illegally – recruit and induce people who would not otherwise have committed an offence to participate in rhino poaching. Furthermore, during these pseudo operations, people are shot and killed as they enter the Park and their death is not necessarily related to circumstances that would warrant the use of deadly force as set out in the Act. When I sketched this scenario to a KNP field ranger he replied

...that is exactly what is happening in Kruger.⁹²

When the respondent above became a field ranger in 2013, he did not, he contends, invent these practices out of his own volition but that these practices were already in place and that it was part of the institutional make-up of law enforcement practices in the KNP. Further evidence that these practices of 'recruiting' so-called poachers in the Park because of the lucrative incentives on offer was further corroborated by a KNP section ranger.

[on the matter of rewards] ...it will enhance our success rates I believe but [...] you must be very careful, its thin ice that you treading on ... because you might change a guy into a bounty hunter, [you] might create an environment where they would lure people. There were already rumours that [...] there is a place [in the Park] where the guys are compensated in a much smaller way but there were rumours that he actually got a cousin from KZN [KwaZulu-Natal] to come and hunt rhino and they caught their own cousin.⁹³ [emphasis added]

While the veracity of this incident could not be corroborated, it is the mechanism behind the supposed act that is important and it shows the near universal use of such practices in anti-poaching operations in different parts of the country and that the Kruger Park is not immune to the abuse of 252As. Field rangers in this particular section were being paid an 'unofficial' reward for the arrest of a poacher and/or the recovery of a firearm. The problematic practices in which rewards and incentives in law enforcement becomes perverted is discussed in Chapter 5. Here, this respondent corroborates that innocent civilians – or those that were peripherally involved in other forms of petty or even serious crimes outside of rhino poaching - were being recruited or induced to commit a

crime and that the motive behind this practice are the lucrative monetary rewards. These ‘successes’ also further enhances the reputation of the section ranger responsible for this particular section in countering the rhino poaching threat. Indeed, he was one of the recipients of the Bronze Award at the GRAA conference in 2016, alluded to above. It demonstrates that it is not intelligence that results in these ‘successes’ but that these ‘successes’ are being *manufactured* – that certain successes are specious and that the use of intelligence gathering as a central pillar in the state’s efforts to counter wildlife crime has become completely perverted and undermined.

A further hallmark of a similar practice in the KNP, is where a senior KNP manager ostensibly gave instructions for a targeted killing not because the targeted person was a suspect and to circumvent entanglement in a drawn-out and contested court case but to target the informant or police agent that was recruited by the Park. In such instances the informant began demanding additional payment for information or making ‘noises’ about irregular and illegal practices in the Park and he was subsequently killed to ensure that the knowledge that he has of irregularities in the Park remains hidden. Officials in EKZNW were also familiar with this version of targeted killings and that they took place because “they can’t keep a secret”.⁹⁴ The targeted killing of associates and colleagues was also a feature within the apartheid security forces, especially in those notorious covert units such as the Civil Cooperation Bureau (CCB) who targeted its own members who were opposed to the use of illegal practices, who threatened to make ‘noises’ or who were considered a “weak link” (TRC 1998, Vol. 2 Ch.3: 267). These targeted killings are also the ultimate expression of the practice of manhunting (see Smith and Humphreys 2015, Chapter 2).

6.4 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has demonstrated that while the use of deadly force by law enforcement officers is permitted, its use is subordinate to the precepts of the right to life, enshrined in the Founding Provisions and the Bill of Rights of the Constitution of South Africa. However, these provisions to the right to life is increasingly seen as an impediment to the ‘effective’ enforcement of the law. It shows that SANParks and KNP officials are

continually seeking to overcome these restrictions, making appeals at the highest regulatory bodies to insulate themselves and their employees from prosecution. This is not because they are concerned about the welfare of their employees but because the very structures that organize work in the Park and the structures that measure success in their fight to reduce rhino poaching is premised on the use of force. It further undermines the precepts of the right to life in its aggressive training tactics and the tolerance management echelons show for aggressive tactics. The organization thus plays a central role in structuring violence and in certain instances the nature of that violence is not only as a result of injudicious use of force but decidedly irregular and extrajudicial in nature.

Secondly, this chapter shows that historically, the Park used a precautionary approach in its application in the use of deadly force. However, that precautionary approach became increasingly eroded in its joint operations with other state security actors, especially during the height of the apartheid state's counter revolutionary efforts in the mid 1980s. It shows that under circumstances of existential threat – real or perceived -that the security forces became increasingly permissive of the use of deadly force by its operators and that even where unarmed men, women and children were shot and injured or killed, that these actions were addressed 'in-house' and not arbitrated in a court of law. It shows that there was a degree of collusion and complicity between the security forces and the officers of the courts. Injudicious or even extrajudicial actions were becoming increasingly tolerated under the logic that placed the security of the state in the face of revolutionary onslaught as the highest order of priority. The prosecution of any soldier or law enforcement officer could potentially undermine the efforts of the state in securing its sovereignty. It shows that instead of a precautionary approach to the use of deadly force, it was irregularity in police actions that became necessary to effectively deflect threats.

Thirdly, it shows that these historical entanglements with the apartheid security forces in reconfiguring the use of deadly force and the interagency collusion, has insinuated itself in its contemporary efforts to curb rhino poaching. It shows that the same anxieties around the prosecution of its officers in the execution of their law enforcement duties remain. In addition, the close working relationships between law enforcement officers and officers of the court poses a fundamental conflict of interest and that instead these prosecutors collude or in the very least choose not

to interrogate the actions field rangers even where police actions result in the death of a suspect.

To deflect any criticism, Park authorities demonstrate that they have done and continue to do everything reasonably possible to educate and train field rangers in the use of deadly force. In circumstances where field rangers do use deadly force, its use is defended by Park authorities and any criticism is deflected by the argument that civilians can never fully understand the exigencies and pressures of war. However, despite the Park's efforts in outlining that its practices are precautionary and responsible, there widely disparate interpretations in the use of deadly force by practitioners when in the field. Some of these actions include the injudicious use of deadly force where field rangers misidentify or accidentally shoot suspects that pose no threat and on occasions where suspects are wilfully killed post capture. To further insulate itself of any impropriety, Park managers control what is recorded in official police dockets through the retention of an attorney and the contents of the affidavits are highly curated or exclude crucial information. It also shows that the most senior officials in the organization are aware of these improprieties and on occasion even encourage it.

Furthermore, this chapter also demonstrates that use of intelligence gathering has become a central pillar in the Park's efforts to curb rhino poaching. It shows that in incorporating communities as partners to curb illegal wildlife crime that instead, the only utility of its strategy to include communities is as a source of information. It shows that such strategies of community involvement have resonances with counterinsurgency strategies, that the Park's renewed focus on communities instead re-centre communities as a target for surveillance. It also shows that intelligence gathering itself is fraught with contestation, that it is not technical and objective pursuit of the truth but that information is either perverted or that in the pursuit of information, practitioners resort to violence and torture, using apartheid era techniques such as wetbagging or tubing to get suspects to confess. It is not the veracity of the confession that is at stake, merely the production of that confession that matters.

Lastly this chapter shows that in its pursuit to gather more information and intelligence, that the Park makes use of significant rewards and incentives. In the context of persistent structural unemployment or below subsistence salaries, agents resort to manipulating information to claim a reward. In order to effect an arrest, police make use of a provision in

Criminal Procedures Act called entrapment. However, where police agents are incentivised to make more and more arrests and for organizations like SANParks to show that it is making progress against illegal activities, the use of entrapment becomes perverted and people who would otherwise not have committed an offence are enticed or lured into committing an offence. Furthermore, where people are lured into conducting a crime, no efforts is made to arrest them and they become victims of entrapment killings, a feature that was also common in ambushes by apartheid era security forces. In this way, successes in law enforcement are manufactured. Furthermore, targeted killings also take place where police agents threaten to expose the irregular practices of the authorities and they are killed in police traps because they 'cannot keep a secret'.

Notes

¹ Although ROE is often how KNP managers refer to the SOP's governing use of force, it is a misnomer and more indicative of how conservation practitioners have adopted military jargon. However, I will continue to describe the SOP's governing the use of force as ROE as this is how Kruger respondents refer to this particular SOP.

² Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 [Online] Available at: <https://www.gov.za/documents/constitution-republic-south-africa-1996> (Accessed 24 June 2021).

³ See United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 'Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials' [Online] Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/useofforceandfirearms.aspx> (Accessed 7 October 2020).

⁴ Confirmed in multiple informal conversations with KNP section rangers and field rangers during the course of the fieldwork period.

⁵ Informal conversation with conservation practitioner, June 2016.

⁶ Participant observation of KNP field ranger foot patrols.

⁷ 'Urgent changes to the Rules of Engagement in the Kruger Park – Letter A', 2 April 2015 [Online] Available at: <https://accountabilitynow.org.za/> (Accessed 18 August 2021).

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ SANParks CEO, Fundisile Mketeni, presentation to Parliamentary Committee Environment, Forestry and Fisheries [Online] Available at: <https://pmg.org.za/committee-meeting/32803/> (Accessed 25 December 2021).

¹⁰ Semi-structured interview with KNP section ranger, August, 2016.

¹¹ Informal conversation with KNP section ranger, June 2016.

¹² Skukuza Archives NK/9/18 Bantoesake/Veldwagters 1945-1974 [Native Affairs/Field Rangers]. ‘Memorandum: Insake Bantoevelwagterdienste in die Nasionale Krugerwildtuin, 1 February 1967, A.M. Brynard: Conservator, KNP [Memorandum related to Native Field Ranger Services in the KNP] “Indien die person hom teen arrestasie verset, moet daar net genoegsame geweld gebruik word om die person onder bedwang te hou. Die idee van ‘minimum geweld’ geld dus. Behalwe as die prisonier die aanhouer aanval of probeer ontsnap, mag daar na arrestasie onder geen omstandighede van geweld gebruik word nie. ‘n Oortreder mag geskiet word aanleenlik wanneer hy deur sy optrede jou lewe in gevaar stel. In geval van ontsnapping nadat arrestasie reeds uitgevoer was. (Waarsku drie keer). Vir alle praktiese doeleindes mag dus alleenlik geskiet word as die Veldwagter se lewe in gevaar verkeer. Dit wil sê indien daar geskiet word moet die koeël die person van voor tref. Indien moontlik moet altyd probeer word om te wond of skadeloos te stel eerder as om te dood. Die kursusganger moet onthou dat in vergelyking met byvoorbeeld moord of enige van die ander halsmidade, die normale oortredings in die N.K.W. van relatiewe geringe aard is.”

¹³ Skukuza Archives NK/13/4 Misdaadoorsig Nasionale Krugerwildtuin Mei-Junie 1987 [Crime Overview Kruger National Park May-June 1987]. “Moord: Swart deur Wit. Drie onbekende mans vermoedlik afkomstig vanuit Mosambiek word tydens ’n hinderlaag, opgestel deur Lede van die S.A. Weermag, gedood op 1987/05/06 te Apollo Kraglyn. Uitslag: Dossier verwys na die Prokureur-Generaal. Poging tot moord. ’n Onbekende swartvrou word tydens ’n hinderlaag by die Apollo kraglyn opgestel, deur lede van die S.A. Weermag, in haar bobeen verwond op 1987/04/28. Uitslag: Dossier na die Prokureur-Generaal vir beslissing”.

¹⁴ Skukuza Archives/13/4 Letter from ‘Lappies’ to park warden, 28 October 1989. “Die afgelope jaar het agt skietvoorvalle voorgekom (noord van die Olifants) waartydens burgelikes, insluitend vrouens en kinders, deur die SAW gewond of gedood is”.

¹⁵ Skukuza Archives/13/4 ‘Notule van die Derde Nasionale Krugerwildtuin Gesamentlike Beplanningskomitee Vergadering gehou 241000B Augustus 1989 te Groep 13’ [Minutes of the Third Kruger National Park Joint Planning Committee Meeting held August 1989 at Group 13].

¹⁶ Skukuza Archives NK/9/7 Gebruik van geweld in die Nasionale Kruger Wildtuin deur die SA Weermag [Use of force in the KNP by the SA Army] 30

August 1989 letter from Col C.E. le Roux to SAP District Commander and Park Warden KNP. "Kommandent Oos-Transvaal wat verantwoordelikheid aanvaar vir die beskerming van die internasionale grens beskou die veiligheid van die RSA as sy grootste verantwoordelikheid. Binne hierdie parameter moet die gebruik van geweld met groot omsigtigheid hanteer word...[t]en einde die soldaat op die grond helder riglyne te veskaf juis omdat hierdie hoofkwartier die moeilike omstandighede op die grond ken en daarvoor waardering het...[h]ierdie dokument toon duidelik dat die soldaat ten alle tye binne die reg moet optree en sy aksies in die hof moet kan verantwoord. Die dokument is verder selfverduidelikend".

¹⁷ Ibid. "[h]ierdie hoofkwartier het ook hoë vlak regsmeening ingewen en die mening toegedaan wat deur die volkereg onderskryf word, dat 'n staat die reg het om sy internasionale grens te beskerm"... "[i]n die lig van die bogenoemde handhaaf hierdie hoofkwartier dus die status quo ten opsigte van die gebruik van geweld".

¹⁸ Skukuza Archives NK/13/4 Vertroulik: Beveiligingsplan 1987-1992 [Confidential: Security Plan 1987-1992]. Notule van Nasionale Krugerwildtuin Gesamentelike Bepannings Komitee Vergadering gehou op 23 1000B Augustus in die Raadsaal te Skukuza. "Skietvoorvalle: Kol Herbst spreek sy kommer uit oor die aantal skietvoorvalle wat in die NKW plaasvind.

- a. Die vergadering is van mening dat die situasie in-huis uitgesorteer moet word daar die vergadering nie daarby betrokke is nie.
- b. Kol Otto meld egter dat skietvoorvalle in die NKW wel afgeneem het. Hy spreek die troepe gereeld aan oor hierdie aspek en daar sal gepoog word dat skietvoorvalle nog steeds tot die minimum te beperk (Verantwoordbare insidente).
- c. Die voorsitter verseker Kol Herbst dat hy alles van sy kant sal doen om [sic] te sorg dat hierdie situasie reg hanteer word en alle moontlike samewerking sal gee maar daar is sekere dinge wat buite sy perke en beheer is en hy sal graag Kol Siebert se voorstel aanvaar dat hierdie aangeleentheid ook in-huis uitgesorteer word".

¹⁹ Skukuza NK/13/4 Gebruik van geweld tydens arrestasie van onwettige grensskenders OPS PEBBLE alleenlik [Use of force during an arrest of illegal immigrants OPS PEBBLE only] 30 July 1987. "Die Suid Afrikaanse Weermag sal na sy mense omsien wanneer hulle hul plig binne opdragte doen. Ons moet dan ook doen wat van ons as soldate verwag word om te doen. Onthou net dat wat jy ookal doen, jy met jou gewete moet kan saamleef. Die feit dat die Suid Afrikaanse regstelsel bepaal dat daar altyd ondersoek ingestel word wanneer geweld deur wie ook al toegepas is, moet ons nie verskrik nie. Die ondersoek is om te bewys dat die soldaat sy plig op 'n verantwoordlike wyse uitgevoer het. Nog nêrens of ooit is 'n lid van die SAW skuldig bevind waar hy volgens sy voorskrifte opgetree het

nie, maar die ondersoekprosesse is maar altyd daar. Die ondersoekbeamptes is ons vriende – die regstelsel het nog nie en sal ook nie sy veiligheidsmagte in die steek laat nie”.

²⁰ Comments made by senior KNP manager, GRAA AGM, Berg-en-Dal, June 2016.

²¹ Skukuza Archives NK/9/18 Bantoesake Veldwagters [Native Affairs Field Rangers]. 1938 to 1946. Letter from park warden, 24 November 1939.

²² Skukuza Archives NK/9/18 Bantoesake Veldwagters 1938 to 1946. Letter from park warden, 24 November 1939. Letter from park warden to Secretary of the National Parks Board, 3 November 1939.

²³ Semi-structured interview with senior KNP manager, February 2017.

²⁴ Remarks by Special Prosecutor, National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) at the KNP Ranger’s AGM, 24 November 2016, Mopani, KNP.

²⁵ Remarks by Special Prosecutor, National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) at the KNP Ranger’s AGM, 24 November 2016, Mopani, KNP.

²⁶ Informal conversation with Special Prosecutor, National Prosecuting Authority (NPA), November, 2016.

²⁷ Informal conversation with Special Prosecutor, National Prosecuting Authority (NPA), November, 2016.

²⁸ Semi-structured interview with senior KNP manager, February 2017.

²⁹ Semi-structured interview with senior KNP manager, February 2017.

³⁰ Statistics of weapons confiscated between 2006 and 2012 in the KNP indicate that an overwhelming majority (68 percent) of all weapons confiscated was a heavy calibre hunting rifle (Vorster, 2012). There have been isolated instances where poachers carried a either a pistol or semi-automatic or fully automatic rifle for ‘personal protection’ together with a heavy calibre hunting rifle in this early period (informal conversation with KNP field rangers, 2016). There are indications that after 2012, the use of heavy calibre weapons has become even more ubiquitous – accounting for as much as 90 percent of firearms recovered in the KNP (see ‘Follow the Guns: An overlooked key to combat rhino poaching and wildlife crime’, 22 April 2019 [Online] Available at: <https://followtheguns.org/report.php> (Accessed 28 May 2020). Typically, a hunting party consisting of three poachers will have one bolt action heavy calibre hunting rifle to shoot rhino in the overwhelming majority of cases (numerous conversations with KNP field rangers and section rangers; see also Rademeyer 2012). The three individuals will have different tasks, namely a shooter, and two carriers/trackers. While these other members may carry machetes to chop off the rhino horns once it has been shot, these tools could ostensibly also be used as a weapon. However, in instances where a contact takes place over several metres, in some cases over a hundred metres, it

is not the imminent threat of the use of a machete that occupies the thoughts of rangers when it comes to personal safety. However, suspects who are not armed with a rifle and where they pose no threat to rangers even when carrying a machete are often injured and/or killed in contacts with rangers, an outcome that is not permitted in terms of the Act. When rhino poaching started, initially poachers were armed with automatic or semi-automatic firearms such as the AK-47. However, this calibre of firearm proved wholly inadequate in hunting mega herbivores such as rhino or elephant and often required the use of multiple gunshots to immobilize or kill such animals. In using multiple gunshots poachers potentially risked drawing the attention of field rangers and it because of this reason that hunting parties converted to using the heavy calibre hunting rifle and using, in most instances, a single shot to kill the rhino.

³¹ Semi-structured interview with two separate wildlife managers in KZN province, December 2016.

³² Semi-structured Interview with senior KNP manager, February 2017.

³³ Semi-structured interview with KNP section ranger, March 2017.

³⁴ Fieldnotes, October 2016. This excludes ammunition expended in encounters with potentially dangerous wildlife such as elephant or buffalo.

³⁵ Informal conversation with KNP trails ranger, November 2016.

³⁶ 'Briefing to the Portfolio Committee on Police: Division Detective Services', 9 September 2015 [Online] Available at: http://pmg-assets.s3-website-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/150909Det_Serv_KNP.pdf (Accessed 3 December 2018).

³⁷ Informal conversation with KNP field rangers, January 2017.

³⁸ Fieldnotes, October 2016.

³⁹ Informal conversation with KNP Environmental Crime Investigations (ECI) officer, May 2016).

⁴⁰ Informal conversation with KNP section ranger, October, 2016.

⁴¹ By the end of my fieldwork period in March 2017, all fatalities of rangers were as a result of 'friendly-fire' or 'blue-on-green' shooting incidents by police and military personnel. A ranger and SAPS member were shot and killed in a single incident where the ranger shot the SAPS member and a SANDF member returned fire killing the ranger on the 28 April 2012 in the Tshokwane section [Online] Available at: <https://www.sanparks.org/about/news/?id=1873> (Accessed 19 February 2019); in September 2012 a trainee ranger was shot and killed in a firearms training exercise by a fellow trainee; in March 2017 in Lower Sabie section when a SAPS member was inspecting a confiscated rifle accidentally discharged the rifle, shooting and killing a field ranger, George Mdaka, who was seated in the doorway to the office [Online] Available at: <https://www.netwerk24.com/Nuus/Algemeen/veldwagter-sterf-in-ongeluk->

[met-stroper-se-wapen-20170322](#) (Accessed 19 February 2019). Other non-deadly shooting incidents are: one section ranger shot (five times in the back) and severely injured in a shooting incident involving a member of the specialized Battle Field Surveillance (BFS) unit of the SANDF in May 2013 (semi-structured interview, March 2017). One field ranger shot himself in the foot on a follow up in March 2017 (see also Rademeyer 2018).

⁴² Informal conversation with KNP section ranger, March 2017 and trails ranger, November, 2016.

⁴³ Semi-structured interview with KNP section ranger, February 2017.

⁴⁴ Informal conversation with senior KNP manager, September, 2018.

⁴⁵ Semi-structured interview with KNP section ranger, March 2017.

⁴⁶ Semi-structured interview with respondent familiar with KNP ranger practices, July 2016. I purposefully omit any designation or gender to protect the identity of the respondent.

⁴⁷ Semi-structured interview with KNP employee, February, 2017.

⁴⁸ Semi-structured interview with KNP section ranger, March 2017.

⁴⁹ Informal conversation with iMfolozi Game Reserve (EKZNW) section ranger, December 2016.

⁵⁰ Informal conversation with KNP field ranger, January 2017.

⁵¹ This practice where section rangers are complicit in tampering crime scenes was also confirmed by another KNP field ranger from another ranger section. Informal conversation with KNP field ranger, November, 2016. It suggests that the practice may be more widespread than the single example referred to in the text.

⁵² 'Chiefs Voice Dismay at Poaching', *Pretoria News* 29 November 2018 [Online] Available at: <https://www.iol.co.za/pretoria-news/chiefs-voice-dismay-at-poaching-12189166> (Accessed 24 August 2018).

⁵³ Informal conversation with KNP field ranger, January 2017.

⁵⁴ Informal conversation with KNP field ranger, November 2016.

⁵⁵ Informal conversation with senior prosecutor from the NPA, related to the CAS 04/08/2016, November 2016.

⁵⁶ Informal conversation with senior prosecutor from the NPA, related to the CAS 04/08/2016, November 2016.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Noble, J.J. and Alpert, G.P. (2013) 'Criminal Interrogations of Police Officers after Use-of-Force Incidents', *Law Enforcement Bulletin*, [Online] Available at:

<https://leb.fbi.gov/articles/featured-articles/criminal-interrogations-of-police-officers-after-use-of-force-incidents> (Accessed 16 November 2021).

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Semi-structured interview with KNP section ranger, March 2017.

⁶¹ Skukuza Archives/13/4 Bevelsbeleid (BB): Krugerwildtuin Kommando: 1991/92 [Command Policy: Kruger National Park Commando: 1991/92], 28 February 1991. "Infiltrer die bevolking van die NKW en versaf inligting vir proaktiewe teen rewolusionêre optredes".

⁶² Skukuza Archives/13/4 Bevelsbeleid (BB): Krugerwildtuin Kommando: 1991/92 [Command Policy: Kruger National Park Commando: 1991/92], 28 February 1991. "Verkry die steun van die bevolking vir ewolusionêre verandering en diskrediteer organisasies en individue wat rewolusionêre verandering voorstaan".

⁶³ Skukuza Archives NK/13/5 Letter from park warden to Commander Eastern Transvaal Command, 15 September 1987. "Graag wens ek u hiermee hartlik te bedank vir die geleentheid wat u aan my gebied het om vanaf 2 tot 4 September 1987 saam met 'n groep genooide gaste die operasionele gebied van Suidwes-Afrika te besoek. Die besoek was vir my besonder interessant en het vir my 'n baie wyer perspektief gegee van die Weermag se totale betrokendheid in die noordelike gebiede van Suidwes-Afrika. Afgesien van die militêre paraatheid en die opsigtelike gemotiveerheid van al die militêre personeel met wie ons in aanraking was, was dit vir my ook baie duidelik dat die sosio-ekonomiese aspekte van die strategie wat toegepas word 'n baie hoë prioriteit geniet. Weens ons besondere situasie het ek alle aspekte waaraan ons blootgestel is met intense belangstelling waargeneem en glo ek dat ek my eie begrip vir sulke omstandighede aansienlik verbreed het. Graag wens ek u weereens van harte te bedank vir hierdie besondere geleentheid en voorreg.

⁶⁴ Participant observation and fieldnotes, CITES CoP17, 24 September to 3 October 2016. The Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) and one of its implementing agencies, SANParks, foregrounded its 'People and Parks Programme' (PPP), already established in 2004, as a paradigm shift in how the state engaged with communities who were dispossessed in the establishment of conservation areas under apartheid. The PPP was positioned as a progressive approach in enabling local communities to play a pivotal role in the governance of protected areas and that it heralded a new era in government-community partnerships. This together with a Parliamentary working group, the Integrated Strategic Management Approach (ISMA) and an initiative called Operation Phakisa to harness the country's rich biodiversity as a driver of socio-economic development, was established to combat the scourge of rhino poaching. The aim was to build on the socio-economic beneficiation encoded in the PPP and that it

was only through creating tangible benefits (ie. market-based benefits) from the protected area estate that communities could be expected to play a meaningful role in combatting rhino poaching.

⁶⁵ Minister Edna Molewa calls for community participation in conservation, 26 September 2016 [Online] Available at: https://www.environment.gov.za/mediarelease/molewa_callsforcommunityparticipation (Accessed 7 October 2016).

⁶⁶ Minister Edna Molewa calls for community participation in conservation, 26 September 2016 [Online] Available at: https://www.environment.gov.za/mediarelease/molewa_callsforcommunityparticipation (Accessed 7 October 2016).

⁶⁷ 'Food parcels and water tanks donated to the most destitute communities bordering the Kruger National Park', *Department: Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment*, 24 April 2020, [Online] Available at: https://www.dffe.gov.za/mediarelease/creecy_foodparcelswatertanks_limpopo_mpumalanga (Accessed 26 January 2022).

⁶⁸ Semi-structured interview with senior KNP manager, February 2017.

⁶⁹ Skukuza Archives NK/13/4 Vetroulik OT GBS (2) 1987-1995 Riglyne vir Gesamentlike optrede: Sub/Mini GBSa van die OTBGS [Guidelines for Joint action].

⁷⁰ "Media Release: President Zuma leads Anti-Poaching awareness day in KNP", 2 November 2015 [Online] Available at: http://www.sanparks.org/parks/kruger/news.php?id=56523?PHPSESSID=hho_dltavpmc261e7qua5dkock7 (Accessed 12 May 2020). The Skukuza MAJOC was christened the *Foxhole* after the scenario planner, Clem Sunter's *Mind of the Fox*, encouraging corporate entities to be 'fox-like' in character – to adapt to unforeseen circumstances, to be nimble, resourceful and wily. Conversely, it also reminds of a technology of war, one akin to the trench, a position that is entrenched and unmovable contra to the notion of adaptability espoused by Sunter.

⁷¹ This was confirmed in an informal conversation with an EKZNW employee who was shown such a device on an official exchange visit to the KNP, December 2016.

⁷² Local artists have also composed songs related specifically to helicopters hovering over homes and the intimidation of those households. This particular song also forms part of a larger repertoire of social commentary by artists - both in South Africa and Mozambique - often naming the actual KNP protagonist, whether it is a ranger or investigator and how these Kruger protagonists are perceived in the communities that have become the object of police actions.

⁷³ 'Address by SANParks Chairman, Mr Kuseni Dlamini to the media', 23 July 2014 [Online] Available at: <https://www.sanparks.org/about/news/?id=56121> (Accessed 30 March 2020) for reasons why SANParks suspended its contract with Pathfinder. What is not mentioned is that Pathfinder purportedly uncovered high level state corruption in rhino poaching and that it was this that led to the termination of their services out of fear that its findings would implicate senior politicians. See also 'South Africa National Parks: Head of Conservation suspended', 11 June 2014 [Online] Available at: <https://untoldafrica.com/south-african-national-parks-head-of-conservation-suspended/> (Accessed 30 March 2020).

⁷⁴ Information is differentiated from intelligence in that it is unverified and unanalysed. SANParks has its own Environmental Crime Investigation (ECI) unit, headed by a former South African policeman with 22 years of services in the detective branch, stock theft, crime intelligence, firearms and organized crime units. See 'Eyewitness to Leadership: A long career in South Africa that witnessed profound change', *National Association of Conservation Law Enforcement Chiefs*, 20 September 2017 [Online] Available at: <https://www.naclec.org/press-pages/2017/9/20/eyewitness-to-leadership-a-long-career-in-south-africa-that-witnessed-profound-change> (Accessed 30 March 2020).

⁷⁵ Skukuza Archives NK/9/7 Bantoesake Mosambiek Bantoes: 'Funksies verrig namens die Suid-Afrikaanse Polisie' [Functions executed on behalf of the South African Police].

⁷⁶ 'International criminal networks depleting South Africa's rhino population', *Africa Centre for Strategic Studies*, 20 September 2013 [Online] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WqFv4LU-SXs> (Accessed 30 March 2020).

⁷⁷ Participant observation, CITES CoP17 conference 24 September to 3 October 2016.

⁷⁸ Informal conversation with ex-Zimbabwe Parks ranger, March 2016.

⁷⁹ It is also referred to as 'submarino', a tactic used by American soldiers in the counterinsurgency war in Vietnam and subsequently used in policing practices such as the Chicago Police Department (Taylor 2014). There is a variation on the 'submarino' torture technique, it can either be a 'dry' or 'wet' but both techniques simulate suffocation (ibid.). More recently 'waterboarding' was another name given to essentially the same technique mentioned above, used again by American troops in the illegal rendition of suspected 'terrorists' to black sites in the 'war on terror'.

⁸⁰ Semi-structured interview with polygraph service provider, August 2018.

⁸¹ Informal conversation with military intelligence conscript during the 1980s, December 2016.

⁸² ‘Zimbabwe’s legendary game ranger Pete Clemence on training combat field rangers’, [Online] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fsqixdB1z8U> (Accessed 26 November 2018).

⁸³ Informal conversation with conservation practitioner, December 2016.

⁸⁴ ‘Police shoot rhino poacher and arrest three others’, 24 May 2013 [Online] Available at: <https://matthewsavides.wordpress.com/2013/05/24/police-shoot-rhino-poacher-and-arrest-three-others/> (Accessed 16 November 2021).

⁸⁵ Cover and concealment are two crucial considerations in tactical firearm use. Concealment can refer to any object that hides a shooter from view and can range from a bush, grass or even shadows or darkness. However, it cannot stop a bullet projectile from injuring or killing an intended target. Cover on the other hand “can stop bullets from an attacker” depending on the calibre of firearm used by an attacker (EKZLNW, 2003: §3, pp.1). In practice this means field rangers and their counterparts in the police and military can use hardwood tress, rocks and embankments, amongst others, as effective forms of cover.

⁸⁶ Informal conversation with private rhino owners and EKZLNW officials in KZN province, December 2016.

⁸⁷ Informal conversation with EKZLNW section ranger, December 2016.

⁸⁸ Senior EKZLNW manager, comments made at the KNP Ranger’s AGM, 24 November 2016, Mopani, KNP.

⁸⁹ “South Africa Rangers Kill Two Suspected Rhino Poachers”, *The Guardian*, 15 January 2015 [Online] Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/jan/05/south-africa-rangers-kill-two-suspected-rhino-poachers?CMP=Share_AndroidApp_Other (Accesses 20 September 2021).

⁹⁰ Informal conversation with SANParks environmental crime investor, May 2016.

⁹¹ ‘Mozambique’s new minimum wages: From 3, 642 to 10, 400 meticaïs per month’, *Club of Mozambique*, 19 April 2017 [Online] Available at: <https://clubofmozambique.com/news/from-3642-to-10400-meticaïs-per-month-meet-mozambiques-16-new-minimum-wages/> (Accessed 4 January 2022). This is calculated at May 2016 exchange rates of 3.71 Meticaïs to the Rand [Online] Available at: <https://freecurrencyrates.com/en/exchange-rate-history/ZAR-MZN/2016> (Accessed 4 January 2022).

⁹² Informal conversation with KNP field ranger, November 2016.

⁹³ Semi-structured interview with KNP section ranger, August 2016.

⁹⁴ Informal conversation with EKZLNW section ranger, December 2016.

7

The Police Labour Regime and Shaping Institutional Life in the Kruger

7.1 Introduction

On the 31 July of every year, conservation agencies across the world celebrate World Ranger Day (WRD). It is an opportunity for organizations to highlight the dangers many rangers across the world face as a result of increased incidences of wildlife crime and to acknowledge the sacrifices of those men and women who have died or been injured in the ‘line of duty’. It is a rhetorical and performative technique that adds to the growing narrative that frames rangers as heroes (see Büscher 2021, Duffy et al. 2019, Marijnen and Verweijen 2016). This public relations drive to elevate the rangers-as-heroes narrative has taken another turn during the current global efforts to combat Covid-19. Where many frontline health workers in the medical field have been publicly celebrated as heroes due to the risks of contracting a highly transmissible disease while treating patients, rangers are also being positioned as ‘planetary health professionals’¹ in caring for nature and the dangers they face in stemming the dual crisis of biodiversity loss and climate change.

Especially prevalent in these annual celebrations is the publication of an ‘Honour Roll’² with the names of those rangers who have died in the ‘line of duty’. However, many of the deaths are presented in a decontextualized manner, where people other than rangers are also killed and these reports obscure the role rangers play in destroying homes and crops or simply because of their association with armed forces in joint operations as is the case of rangers in Virunga National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo (Verweijen and Marijnen 2016). This ‘necropolitics of heroism’³ that macabrely valorises the death of practitioners and their heroic sacrifices, however, obscures their precarious workplace conditions not only related to the risk of death but the systemic lack of adequate protective equipment; low salaries and the associated inequalities that accompany the extreme gaps in salaries

between rangers and those who occupy senior positions in state, non-governmental or intergovernmental agencies; poor living conditions; labour migrancy; problematic workplace relations that includes racism and uneven power relations; and the long working hours, amongst others, that is a feature of many conservation workplaces. Where many conservation agencies profess their concern for the well-being of rangers, highlighted in the theme of the 2021 WRD focused on ranger 'Safety and Well-being'⁴, this chapter seeks to highlight this disconnect between the rhetoric of care and the problematic workplace practices that further drive the precarity, victimization, mental health trauma and marginalization of rangers in the workplace. This chapter posits that these costs to rangers are particularly emphasized under a police labour regime and how such workplace regimes shape the institutional life in places such as the Kruger National Park in problematic ways.

Firstly, it assesses the Park's own Ranger Wellness Programme and its proclamations of corporate social responsibility. It shows that the interventions put in place by Park management to mitigate the concerning rise in psychosocial disorders such as mental health disorders and alcohol and substance abuse fail not only because of institutional weaknesses and obstructions but that it has not begun to reflect on its own historical treatment of black labour (see Chapter 3) and an institutional blindness to the plight of African staff (see Meskell 2012) that, this thesis contends, continues into the present day. Furthermore, the Park has failed to critically evaluate the very modality – its pattern of reasoning – that privileges the use of violence and aggression (see chapters 5 and 6) which are implicitly inscribed in its performance reviews (both formal and informal) that results in mental health trauma and its associated social costs. Secondly, it highlights that the realpolitik that informed its stuttered and contingent efforts at racial transformation effectively maintained the institutional whiteness of critical operational and strategic layers in the Park. Under the logics of police this institutional whiteness has become re-emphasized and its intersection with institutional racism sets the stage for the further marginalization of black conservation staff. It then shows how policing is turned inwards on its own employees (and the families of employees) who are suspected of wildlife crime and it manifests itself through intensified workplace surveillance, silencing dissenting voices, victimization, wrongful dismissal, animalization and even torture. It also shows that actions simplistically framed as corruption on the part of

workers are often misdiagnosed and that seeing it through the lens of resistance can help inform how such acts are not insulated from problematic workplace practices and relations. Lastly, this chapter highlights how, under the logics of police, the increased working hours and the associated increase in irregular forms of income such as the payment of overtime and rewards open up new avenues for precarity and forms of labour control in the form of financial indebtedness.

7.2 The Illusion of Corporate Social Responsibility: The Ranger Wellness Programme

Despite the knowledge that KNP administrators from the past had in recognising the low salaries they paid African field rangers and the hardships they had to endure living in remote pickets, they did nothing to substantively improve the living and working conditions of their staff. Instead they sought short term interventions to mitigate an immediate need and in the absence of a living wage they opted instead to provide African staff with rations (Chapter 3) or rewards (Chapter 5). These interventions did little to address the underlying structural conditions that made these below subsistence wages so commonplace in the South African workplace. Similarly, present-day KNP managers are acutely aware of what psychological and emotional impacts the unrelenting counter poaching operations have on their staff and their families (see Mathekga 2017 for a comparative analysis of the effects of anti-poaching operations on rangers in Mkhuzi and Hluhluwe-iMfolozi game reserves in KZN province). Again, KNP management has done little to substantively change the conditions under which field rangers work and to adequately prevent or overcome these costs to anti-poaching staff.

As is shown in chapters 5 and 6, violence is at the core of its pattern of reasoning in ostensibly saving the rhino and in its accounting controls in measuring ranger productivity. These very measures – not only the implicit primacy of aggression and violence but the irregular nature of that violence – is what lies at the basis of many of the mental and emotional health disorders and the symptomatic social maladies such as alcohol and substance abuse, domestic violence and financial indebtedness that is diagnosed in KNP field rangers. Many KNP managers do not see – or choose not to see - this causal chain, one where it is the privileging of

violence that lies at the heart of its institutional response to rhino poaching. KNP managers are unable or unwilling to critically evaluate their primary responses to rhino poaching, doing so would be an admission that its it is fundamentally failing in its duty of care to its employees. Instead it frames these costs as inevitable, much like Pienaar (2012) chose to do in his historical account of the bloody costs the construction of the Kruger landscape held for African rangers (Chapter 3) or the continued construction of rangers as heroes.

At a game ranger association meeting held in August 2018, a senior SANParks manager reiterated these regrettable, yet inevitable costs to field rangers.

...there are no medals hanging on the trees, you will leave with scars but you will leave fulfilled.⁵

It is reminiscent of a leitmotif of late Afrikaner Christian nationalism that saw suffering and hardship as a rite of passage, that the struggles of Afrikaners were willed by god (see Chapter 1). It is this belief by KNP managers - like Pienaar from nearly four decades ago and the manager quoted above, both who happen to be Afrikaner males – not only in the inherent good that they are engaged in but that suffering and hardship are necessary and inevitable costs to living a meaningful Christian life. What is left unsaid is that those costs accrue mainly to African field rangers and their immediate supervisors. Such sacrifices become acceptable and normalized under workplace regimes where black labour has historically been considered as disposable (see Chapter 3). However, to show that they have - discursively at least – addressed the psychological impacts the trauma of violence has on the lives of field rangers, KNP have drafted a ‘Ranger Wellness Programme’. It is a programme that is celebrated by KNP management in the public sphere as a demonstration of itself as a caring institution – at game ranger association meetings⁶ and at international fora such as the CITES CoP17 conference in 2016.⁷

I wrote up the ranger wellness plan that we currently have which I think is a transcending document, its a simple document, its not well written I never had the time to write it out in a proper 15 or 20 pages and you take ranger wellness you look spiritually what can you do for them, you look psychologically, socially and physically. That is why my wife started project relax. In the three years we’ve been here every year 24, 25, 26 December we went and handed out Christmas parcels and when she saw that the first

year she said that cannot be possible there must be ways to making it more livable that is why every section in this park now has a jungle gym, has a TV, has cellphone booster.⁸

By his own admission, the ranger wellness programme that is so much vaunted in the public sphere, was not drawn up by a professional in the field of clinical psychology, organizational psychology or an appropriate wellness practitioner but by a SANParks manager with a professional expertise in the South African military. Again, the interventions in the ranger wellness programme do not substantively address the structural issues in the workplace that give rise to mental and emotional trauma, instead they only represent minor corrections to ameliorate the immediate struggles of its staff and, to reproduce its labour force in very much the same way as Park management have done throughout its history in offering rewards and rations to staff in the face of below subsistence wages (Chapter 3). This is evidenced in the fact that the most substantive elements in ranger wellness programme is comprised of ‘Christmas parcels’, jungle gyms for the intermittent occasions that the children of field rangers do visit, television sets for entertainment and Wi-Fi boosters.

Further evidence of similarly superficial interventions is expressed in the myriad of sub-programmes that make up the Ranger Wellness Programme. These include the appointment of a full time advocate to provide legal support, write field ranger statements and effectively shield rangers from prosecution (see Chapter 6); ‘Kruger for Jesus’ mass church services to support staff spiritually; a range of social interventions such as organized football matches; playgrounds for the children of ranger staff; upgraded cooking facilities; cell phone boosters so that rangers in remote outposts can stay connected to their families; improved housing and entertainment facilities in some ranger outposts (this was only evidenced in two of the ranger outposts I conducted participant observation in); incentive based overseas trips to participate in marathons (for example in 2016 a small contingent of rangers participated in the Berlin Marathon); attending local Premier League football matches as a recognition of their work; and working to position rangers as ‘heroes’ in the public imagination. These Ranger Wellness projects fall under an array of labels such as ‘Operation Embrace’, ‘Project Relax’, ‘Project Batho Pele’, ‘Project Faith’ and ‘Project Bafana’. Furthermore, the KNP has also constructed a Ranger Monument at its main entrance gate, Paul Kruger gate, to honour rangers killed or injured in the line of duty as well as a dedicated ceremony

on WRD of each year. It has dedicated significant financial resources on upskilling (specifically advanced weapons training and first aid training related specifically to treating trauma from gunshot injuries) and equipment issue for (some) rangers; considerable focus on awards of recognition at gala events such as the KNP regional awards, the Kruger Awards, the organization-wide Kudu Awards, the prestigious Game Ranger's Association of Africa (GRAA) Rhino Conservation Awards and the inaugural African Ranger's Awards officiated by the Minister of Environmental Affairs in August 2018 with monetary rewards of up to USD\$3 000 per ranger.⁹ The prize money is not insubstantial, it represented nearly half the annual salary of some black field rangers in the Park and on this occasion it was awarded to a white KNP section ranger. These interventions do not substantively differ from the practices of mining houses in the exploitative workplace regimes described by the early writers on mine labour who posited that "leisure and Christianity functioned to assist the accumulation of capital" (Harries, 1994: xv). Rajak notes that these modalities are still visible in contemporary platinum mining operations in South Africa where the promotion of sports amongst hostel dwellers forms part of a paternalistic ideal of Victorian industrialists who sought the "moral upliftment of their workers through physical endeavour, underpinned by a vision of muscular Christianity" (2016: 45). Consequently, these varied interventions do not address the underlying structural features of the labour process premised on substantive differences in income gaps, long working hours, labour migrancy, sub-standard housing, social domination, and neither does it address the institutional imperatives that prioritises violence and aggressive tactics in its pursuit to reduce the number of rhino killed (see Chapter 5 and 6). These interventions do not differ substantively from the minor corrections Park administrators employed in its early years to overcome below subsistence wages through the supply of maize at cost price, providing rations and bonuses, creating a differentiation in the labour class to elevate some employees over others in labelling them as 'special', all with the aim of ameliorating the immediate hardships of its workers, to reproduce its labour force and to maximize labour productivity.

7.2.1 The Limits of Ranger Wellness: Operational Burdens, the Nature of Psychosocial Trauma and Moral Injury

Institutional Obstruction and Operational Burdens

In response to the growing concern of mental health issues related to trauma from violence, the Park engaged the services of a clinical psychologist as early as January 2011 and by 2016 at its annual general meeting (AGM) for Ranger Services, there is further evidence that the services of mental health experts were still in place.¹⁰ This singular intervention is often positioned as proof of the Park's concern for its field ranger corps and that it has the necessary mitigating tools in place to address the far-reaching impacts trauma has on the well-being of anti-poaching staff. In addition, counselling interventions were also extended to the spouses of field rangers, but as far as could be ascertained this has only been conducted on one occasion. However, a presentation by the mental health practitioner at the Kruger Ranger AGM, showed that merely creating such a support service was a long way from actually achieving its intended purpose of reaching field rangers who were in dire need of counselling.

When I started working here at KNP I was contracted by [indistinct] ...it was just like I was thrown into the deep because there was no contact person, no nothing they said just go to Kruger, I didn't even know to which office and there was, I think, four or five weeks that I was sitting, seeing no clients. It was very very frustrating but I had to find my way around and at a point I was very very discouraged.¹¹ [emphasis added]

The experience of the mental health practitioner above shows that the much-touted support it provides to rangers is in effect actively being marginalized in a range of ways. Despite the existence of structures such as an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) geared to employee wellness, the fact that it still took this newly appointed mental health officer 'four to five weeks' before a single staff member was counselled or debriefed speaks of a form of obstruction that the presence of such an officer was never really welcome in the Park in the first place. Furthermore, the fact that this practitioner was a black woman further explains her marginalization in the light of the persistence of institutional whiteness in the Park (see below) and because she was for all intents and purposes still an outsider to what is a tight knit and exclusive professional and social circle. In organizations where, certain kinds of people

responsible for this kind of work are less valued, means that interventions are not valued and relegated to the periphery. Ahmed found that this was certainly the case for diversity and equality workers where the very act of appointing such workers “becomes the story of not being given institutional support”, that merely ‘being there’ is considered enough (2012: 23). Thus, Ahmed contends, the appointment of an officer to deal with an institutional deficiency – in this case mental health officers - represents the wider absence of mental health in the institution (ibid.).

Other ways in which such practitioners are pushed to the margins, with consequences for the community they need to serve, is also a function of where these practitioners are stationed in the Park and their ability to respond in a timeous manner. This becomes even more pertinent when trauma debriefing, from a clinical perspective, should take place within 72 hours of an incident.¹²

...by the time since the call [comes] this [sic] people who has been in that contact, it has now been seven days. By the time you come, this person is getting depressed and in some [cases]...there was this one guy he said ‘I can’t go back to the field, I can’t’...he is anxious, he has got panic attacks, he has developed post-traumatic stress disorder, so if we had attended to that situation within that 72 hours probably some of the things we would have [prevented] them.¹³ [emphasis added]

The sheer size of the Park and the long travel times between camps and ranger outposts make reaching field rangers in need of mental health services challenging, more so if such officers are purposefully stationed in far-flung locations. Where the travel time by car from the far north to the far south can take over fifteen hours – a journey that would require two days - the area in which she was based made it prohibitive for her to respond timeously to debrief field rangers, particularly those rangers in the south of the Park who were more likely to be involved in shooting incidents or contacts. Furthermore, the access to field rangers are also contingent on the willingness of the section ranger to firstly report shootings incidents and where such incidences are flagged for the attention of the mental health practitioner, the logistics surrounding an actual visit can also cause further delays. For such a visit to take place the section ranger has to ensure that the field ranger – in most cases it will include a number of field rangers – needs to be held back at the station for an assessment. Doing so, especially where a shooting incident involves more than one field ranger, has consequences for the operational

capabilities of that section ranger in meeting the pressing key performance indicators stipulated by Park management. At times this practitioner would arrive after a long journey to find that field rangers have already been deployed to the field to conduct their patrols.¹⁴ Field rangers themselves also corroborate these observations that their mental health issues are seen largely as an operational burden by KNP managers.

...the company will take care of you for a week and after that they are complaining because of kilometres [vehicle mileage to get further medical assistance] and operational costs... I feel like we are a burden to management [because] we can't work normally as other field rangers.¹⁵ [emphasis added]

The field ranger respondent above was making an explicit example of a field ranger colleague who was injured in a contact and that immediately after the incident the field ranger in question was feted as an integral and valued member of the ranger corps. The experience of this field ranger was that immediately in the aftermath of his injury, senior Park managers would visit him in hospital and assure him of their continued support in his recovery. However, after 'a week' these demonstrations of support started to diminish and it was clear that he was increasingly being seen as a burden as his physical injuries and mental health trauma prevented him from participating in actual anti-poaching operations. The ongoing treatment required follow trips not only to distant camps in the Park where field rangers needed to meet with a mental health practitioner but at times it also required seeing specialist doctors outside of the Park, in some instances as far afield as Polokwane, a one-way trip of approximately 220km to the west of the Park.¹⁶ Where section rangers have budgetary constraints in terms of vehicle running costs, allocating those costs to health-related trips as opposed to anti-poaching operations is the reason they are 'complaining about kilometres'. Where these visits are seen as redirecting the already scant resources at a section ranger's disposal, both in terms of personnel and vehicles, certain section rangers, in some sections, see mental health support services as an added burden that further hampers their operational effectiveness. Furthermore, resistance from Park management could also be related to an unwillingness to let 'outsiders' such as psychologists and social workers becoming aware of irregular practices during anti-poaching operations and that it might pose a risk to its institutional reputation. Some KNP managers also feel that

counselling of field rangers will result in them becoming 'soft' and consequently affect productivity.

The Nature of Trauma in the Kruger Park and the Limits of Ranger Wellness

The psychological costs to rangers *may* include post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), acute stress disorder (ASD) and burnout stress syndrome (BOSS) (see DSM-5). Some or all of these symptoms have been diagnosed in KNP rangers as a result of actual or threatened exposure to death, serious injury, experiencing a traumatic event or imagining a traumatic event as experienced by others.¹⁷ Incessant fatigue and withholding personal experiences (as field rangers are extremely circumspect about what they share and with whom) from their families further deplete ranger's emotional resilience with a result that in some instances reduced sexual performance and secrecy as a result of these multiple factors also lead to accusations of extra-marital affairs, placing additional strain on family life.¹⁸ The idea of fighting a hidden war closely resembles the experiences of SADF conscripts during the apartheid-era bush wars, where the secrecy that was officially maintained through the Official Secrets Act further entrenched the myths of the 'just war' that ensconced the 'border war' of the 1980s and further obscured the realities and experiences of conscripts (Edlmann 2014). These silences and the hidden nature of their experiences exacerbated the psychic dislocation that conscripts suffered (ibid.). The effects resulting from the code of secrecy can be overcome through ordinary de-briefing or storytelling as a way to identify trauma.

In the KNP, referrals to clinical psychologists or de-briefing is primarily instigated through the recommendation of section rangers. Some section rangers may themselves be exposed to high levels of visceral violence from encounters with suspected poachers and therefore could suffer from trauma themselves. These individuals would therefore not be best placed to identify the possibility of trauma in others. However, the basis of the institutional response to employee wellness is centred around this one factor, section rangers recommending field rangers for counselling. Furthermore, some managers are reluctant to refer field rangers to such support services as it may adversely affect operational effectiveness of a section and/or add an additional burden on them as managers (see above).

In addition, where extrajudicial actions and subsequent collusion may have taken place, there would be reluctance to refer those involved in a violent encounter to a clinical psychologist where the nature of these extrajudicial actions might become exposed. These silences and limits of de-briefing can thus further serve to marginalize the experiences of field rangers in the KNP. However, as is expanded on below, storytelling and a narrative approach during consultations with a mental health professional did show positive results. Alcohol abuse, domestic violence, suicides, psychic fragmentation, divorce and violent crimes are often the psychosocial legacies (after Edlmann 2014) associated with trauma that can find expression in the family life of these rangers and broader South African societal context. This raises important questions related to how violence is reproduced in society and the ways the violence in Kruger contributes to this reproduction of violence more broadly. These disorders can lead to emotional distancing, isolation, agitation coupled with either aggression and/or withdrawal.¹⁹ In addition, these symptoms can further lead to spiritual depletion where the value and belief systems of an individual can become degraded with potentially serious consequences, leading to perpetuating acts of violence and the normalization of extrajudicial practices. It is important also to be cognisant that a trauma discourse is not used to minimise individual agency for deeds that are unsanctionable (Baines, undated) but that nevertheless such polarised identities of victim and perpetrator require serious attention (Edlmann 2014).

What this spiritual dislocation looks like was most starkly expressed by a white section ranger who has been involved in numerous contacts with poachers. While he was sharing the harrowing accounts of what some of these interactions entailed, he tried to remember how many suspects he actually shot. It was not to boast about his exploits but in trying to tally the number he counted on one hand up to four and after a marked period of silence he raised a fifth finger to indicate that he had been directly involved in five shooting incidents that resulted in the death or serious injury of a suspect. I did not have the words or the emotional intelligence to adequately deal with this account, except to remain quiet. What effect these shooting incidents had on his emotional health was expressed when he shared with me a text message from a family member with the following quote from Nietzsche.

Whoever fights monsters should see to it that in the process he does not become a monster. And when you look into an abyss, the abyss also looks into you.²⁰ (from Friedrich Nietzsche *Thus Spake Zarathustra*)

It is not the first time that Nietzsche's aphorism reflects the idea that police discourse is saturated with the notion of the 'monster' and that in 'catching monsters', it is "a reminder of the intimate and abiding connection between the monster and the police" (Neocleous 2014b: 9). While my analysis of this extract from Nietzsche is not intended to match the literary critique of what Nietzsche may have alluded to, it was clear in my conversation with this KNP section ranger what he – as well as his family member who shared the quote with him – feared. That in fighting poachers-as-monsters, that he has not become a monster himself and that when he looks at himself in the mirror – figuratively speaking – he does not look into a void in which his own personal ethics has become violated. What struck me most during the conversation with this section ranger was the burden he carried and that he would not emerge unscathed - emotionally speaking - from this 'war on poaching'.

Furthermore, many rangers who have either been physically injured and/or suffer from mental health trauma that has been diagnosed by a mental health practitioner are no longer able to participate in anti-poaching operations. Where these injuries, both physical and emotional, may persist for months, many field rangers feel they are systematically being marginalised by their managers and team members, not only professionally but also socially. In a community that is virtually entirely circumscribed, where employees not only work but live in a given workplace, the effects of this social exclusion cannot be underestimated.

...its difficult for them to see that we are 'disabled', if you can't carry a R1 [rifle] you are no longer a field ranger.²¹ [emphasis added]

These subtle forms of ostracization and being seen as a 'disabled' has marked effects on the sense of identity and self-worth. Where carrying a rifle is widely considered as a mark of masculinity, field rangers who have been designated 'light duty' have now been stripped of such masculine markers.²² Jacklyn Cock (2004) has written extensively about militarization as a gendering process where it is not only military training that is a crucial socializing marker of masculinity that is violent but also the tools and practices of war. The rise in private gun ownership by black

men in South Africa after the end of apartheid was in one way associated with reclaiming this lost masculinity (ibid.).

Care for United States (U.S.) military veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan who have been diagnosed with PTSD are often replete with accounts of a dearth of care. Although the U.S. military, often posited as a world leader in many spheres, was able to improve its treatment significantly, initially they could only provide ten-minute consultations, which was just long enough to make a diagnosis and prescribe medication. Many were not given the type of evidence-based psychotherapy, which is widely seen as the best form of treatment.²³ In KNP, however, such evidence-based approaches, such as measuring cortisol levels to quantitatively measure stress in the body, together with eye movement desensitization, hypnotherapy and relaxation therapy was not seen to be a culturally appropriate approach.²⁴ In many South African cultures, storytelling is an important medium to cultural cohesion and such culturally relevant approaches were seen as more appropriate.²⁵

However, what limits its efficacy in the eyes of field rangers is that consultations are limited to three sessions and that other culturally relevant approaches, such as consulting a traditional healer or *inyanga*, are overlooked. Often the guilt associated with shooting an individual is not because they think that they have done something wrong but that the spirit of the deceased will ‘curse’ them and that these ‘curses’ may continue to haunt subsequent generations. Field rangers lament that in cases where someone is shot and killed, particularly in circumstances where they lose body parts, it is difficult to ‘bury’ such a person.²⁶ In some South African cultures (most notably Nguni cultures to which xiTsonga speakers belong) rituals are performed at the place of death to return the spirit of the deceased to the site of burial using the branch of a *mphafa* tree (*Ziziphus mucronata*). When a suspect is shot and killed in the KNP, it is close to impossible for ranger staff to know who the family are especially if the suspects come from Mozambique. Furthermore, field rangers also avoid the area where these events have taken place out of fear of encountering the spirit of the deceased (see also Mathekga 2017). Such cultural and spiritual dislocations and its impacts on the psyche of field rangers who understand the importance of such rituals should also not be underestimated and should, according to a mental health practitioner, be an integral part of the therapeutic process.²⁷ Often everyday maladies or

misfortune in their everyday lives or that of their families is often attributed these unsettled spirits.

In the KNP therefore, hidden in all the rhetoric of a Ranger Wellness programme, is the personal financial burden that field rangers have to carry to treat their own mental and spiritual trauma. In cultural terms, the killing of a suspected poacher requires a cultural cleansing, necessitating the services of a traditional healer. Many of these services are becoming financially unaffordable where traditional healers are capitalizing on the demand for such specialist services, placing rangers not only at emotional risk but at a financial risk as well. In this way, the political economy of violence may be adversely affecting broader community spiritual well-being as these services become increasingly unaffordable. In my conversations with a senior manager in the Kruger in September 2018, nearly a decade after the onset of rhino poaching in the Park, he conceded that Park management was beginning to consider providing financial aid to rangers for cleansing ceremonies but it is unclear when such support services would be operationalized.

In my discussion with a former organizational psychologist in the Irish Defence Force (IDF), it was often financial burdens and other dysfunctional personal circumstances of individual soldiers that compound and exacerbate mental health disorders related to combat.²⁸ In addition, having been diagnosed with PTSD, soldiers also feel that being diagnosed with PTSD would negatively impact on the opportunity for promotion and that these diagnoses were perceived as an affront to their self-image when previously they were seen as tough and self-reliant.²⁹ Where diagnoses of stress related trauma may negatively impact on opportunities for promotion and overseas deployments,³⁰ most soldiers opt for counselling by a private practitioner outside of the army since the assurance of confidentiality of in-house medical records are never truly confidential. In this way, soldiers undertake personal financial costs that should be carried by the state in order not to limit their own future career opportunities.³¹ Furthermore, it is often not serving members who show the most obvious symptoms of trauma. In a recent meta survey to understand the incidence of mental health trauma in British combat personnel after withdrawal from Iraq and Afghanistan, it found that mental health outcomes and alcohol abuse was significantly worse in ex-serving personnel as opposed to currently serving personnel (Stevellink et al. 2018). The effects of mental health trauma are thus often most marked

well after members retire from service and can manifest itself many years later. Kruger management have no contingencies in place to deal with these eventualities as far as I am aware.

Often it is not the actual fire fight or contact that is traumatising, since field rangers experience a surge of adrenalin at the prospect of encountering poachers and the constant alertness that comes with such manhunting operations. What is most traumatic is guarding over someone (and the crime scene) after a suspect has been shot and/or killed once that adrenalin has worn off. Field rangers have to stay with the corpse or injured person often having to listen to them dying and at times their screams and wails. Another respondent explained it as follows –

...its tough, no one who hasn't done what we have done can ever understand what we have to experience...what its like to see someone shot and their face is gone and they are still alive or someone [is] shot and their leg is gone.³²

Field rangers question why they have to wait at the scene and why they cannot be relieved by teams brought in by helicopter, bearing in mind the vastness and remoteness of some areas of operation. Helicopters are hardly, if ever, dispatched in such instances and my understanding from conversations with field rangers is because the threat has passed and that valuable assets such as helicopters remain on standby for real time incidents. Often, they have to wait until the forensic pathologists arrive, sometimes hours later and at other times only the following morning if a contact has taken place at last light (see also Mathekga 2017). Often these forensic pathology teams come in teams of only two and field rangers have to help place the body in a body bag (including body parts that have been shot off) and help carry the body back to a vehicle which at times can be kilometres from the actual crime scene.³³ Such experiences are hugely traumatic and may cause significant impairment in social and occupational function.³⁴ Where exposure to combat is considered a 'linear predictor' of PTSD, the more combatants are exposed to combat, the greater the probability of developing PTSD.³⁵ Some KNP rangers, particularly in so-called hotspot areas, are continually exposed to the repetitiveness and stress associated with manhunting, the potentiality of violent encounters and violent encounters themselves. My own experience helping to carry a severely injured gunshot victim on a stretcher after a shooting incident was in itself not only a harrowing experience but physically exhausting.³⁶

Where field rangers do receive counselling and where trauma and its associated maladies such as alcohol and/or substance abuse is identified in an individual, the Park still had no clear strategy in how to deal with employees *after* such a diagnosis was made.

Yes, we identify those people who abuse alcohol but what more? What next? How do we help them? The workshops is [sic] another issue of exposure and information but what do we do to help this [sic] people because that is where they going to fall into this trap.³⁷ [emphasis added]

Where their utility as able members of a field ranger team are in question, many field rangers expected the organization to actively assist in their redeployment to other non-law enforcement duties in the Park. The organization was wholly ill-prepared to facilitate such interventions and many field rangers who were seeking to leave the Ranger Services department were upskilling themselves at their own costs.

I have taken it upon myself to train as a field guide, I can't see how the organization is going to help me, we have to fight with them instead of them trying for us.³⁸ [emphasis added]

Many field rangers I spoke to felt their bush craft skills were easily transferrable to being a field guide where they could accompany guests on guided walks. However, the organization does not possess the institutional dexterity to retrain and redeploy staff and the experiences of affected field rangers is characterized by them 'fighting' with the organization instead of 'them trying for us'.

Mental trauma is also rarely a mitigating factor in disciplinary issues. Where mental trauma adversely affects the productivity and/or workplace discipline of an affected field ranger, the disciplinary procedure guidelines seems to lack any guidance to recommend alternatives to dismissal in severe cases of insubordination, absenteeism or poor work performance. In a specific case, a newly recruited field ranger witnessed the accidental shooting and subsequent death of a fellow recruit during a live fire training exercise. The employee was diagnosed with acute PTSD and in the recommendations by the clinical psychologist, he should have been redeployed in a non-law enforcement role. His wife became increasingly anxious and concerned about his safety and well-being and she exhibited somatic symptoms which necessitated him to stay home and care for her. His continued absenteeism resulted in his dismissal and in my conversation with his field ranger colleagues, they merely said he was lazy

and unwilling to work³⁹ but in reality, they were more concerned about his effectiveness in a contact or firefight and day to day operations that necessitated him being issued with a loaded firearm in the context of his mental trauma – in effect they did not trust him with a loaded firearm.

In another instance, the recommendation in 2014 by a clinical psychologist was that a field ranger suffering from mental trauma be redeployed. By the time I conducted participant observation in 2016, that field ranger was still conducting anti-poaching duties, albeit in a reduced role. The lack of imagination that marks these institutional responses lay bare the stark limitations of the KNP Ranger Wellness programme and its purported concern for field rangers. It is field ranger productivity and loyalty that is valued above mental and emotional wellness. Where field rangers do not meet these measures of value they are no longer of any use to the organization. Field rangers thus continue to bear the costs of militarized responses to poaching and any claim of a robust ranger wellness programme does not match the lived experiences of anti-poaching staff in the Kruger.

Moral Injury

SANParks and KNP officials are reluctant to describe the mental health effects suffered by anti-poaching staff in the Kruger as PTSD.

I see no mention anywhere of well-resourced and active Ranger wellness programs. [By the way] I know of no Ranger in KNP suffering PTSD – if there are, they will be withdrawn from service immediately. Some of them do manifest with symptoms of severe stress, hence that part of the wellness plan to address such.⁴⁰ [emphasis added]

It is uncertain why this is the case but I suspect it is because PTSD is associated with combat violence and it represents the highest order of combat injury next to death, consequently SANParks managers prefer to downplay its prevalence in the Park. However, a handful of field rangers have been diagnosed with acute PTSD in my discussions with the SANParks appointed clinical psychologist.⁴¹ In response, to downplay its prevalence, it was notable that mental health practitioners contracted by KNP were also guarded in making a definitive prognosis of PTSD and instead tried emphasizing that it is only the *symptoms* of PTSD that is observable and that these symptoms should not be seen as a definitive

prognosis of a *disorder*.⁴² Instead, they tried to frame mental health effects largely as ASD, BOSS (see above) or ‘severe stress’ as the senior SANParks official above proposed, I suspect, so as not to marginalize themselves and the valuable support they were providing to field rangers who are in need of these services. What was not discussed in any of my interactions with KNP officials or mental health practitioners familiar with the situation in the KNP was the notion of moral injury. Moral injury is defined as “a betrayal of ‘what is right’...by a person in legitimate authority...or by one’s self” (Shay 2014: 182). Where there is a repeated exposure to atrocities and depravity, these forms of moral injury can lead to an impaired “capacity for trust...elevate despair, suicidality, and interpersonal violence” (ibid.: 182). The literature on moral injury (see also Litz et al. 2009, Meagher 2014, Wood 2016), in distinction to what we read about PTSD, is that it includes acts that violate deeply held morals as opposed to acts of actual or threatened death or serious injury (Shay 2014). It is thus the irregular or illegal nature of the violence that results in trauma and not necessarily the continued exposure or fear of violence itself. Furthermore, PTSD frames the sufferer as the victim or witness of atrocities while with moral injury the sufferer is the perpetrator (ibid.). In addition, where PTSD is typified by fear and helplessness, moral injury is typified by guilt, shame and anger (ibid.). Litz et al. (2009) posit that morally questionable and ambiguous combat situations can arise in all manner of warfare but that these aspects are especially pronounced in counterinsurgency modes of warfare. Where this thesis has demonstrated that counterinsurgency tactics inform a large part of field ranger responses to rhino poaching, most notably in the form of manhunting, cognizance should be taken of these cautionary notes by Litz et al. (2009). While this thesis is not qualified to make these diagnoses, these insights into moral injury is offered as a potential avenue to address the trauma of anti-poaching staff in the Kruger. However, acknowledging these effects would also be an acknowledgement of irregular practices in encounters with suspected poachers, one I suspect would not be readily forthcoming from SANParks and KNP authorities, further obstructing and limiting its duty of care to workers.

7.3 The Persistent Hold of Institutional Whiteness and Institutional Racism in the Kruger

Claims of racism and torture of black staff members accused of poaching in the KNP have surfaced over course of this study.⁴³ In response, SANParks have insisted that these allegations of racism are baseless offering demographic figures of employment according to race as evidence that the KNP is a transformed, non-racial organization in post-apartheid South Africa. Of the 2 236 employees in KNP, 78 percent are black and 9.5 percent white.⁴⁴ These ‘facts’ omit important nuances in who occupies which positions and the manner it shapes power relations in the Park. Maguranyanga (2009), in his PhD dissertation on transformation within SANParks, shows that the organization readily showed its willingness to participate in this process in an attempt to gain legitimacy amongst its new political masters after the black majority ANC-led government came to power in 1994. It was a show of *realpolitik* - a pragmatic and expedient response not associated with the emerging body politic of a new ‘rainbow nation’ encompassing the hopes of a non-racial and equal democratic society. Dlamini (2020a) also shows that the Park was one of the first institutions to do away with petty apartheid typified by the segregation of facilities for white and black visitors by 1981. This was, as this section contends, not necessarily because of a progressive bent of Park officials but mainly because it was again a show of pragmatism to mitigate the internal contradictions of these petty apartheid policies and to avoid embarrassment both to its international clientele and its own staff.

Through legally mandated affirmative action programmes,⁴⁵ the organization set about diversifying its management echelons to mirror the racial demography in the country. Ahmed (2012) contends that the act of addressing racial diversity merely changes the *image* of an organization and that “[d]iversity becomes about *changing perceptions of whiteness rather than changing the whiteness of organizations*” (2012: 34, emphasis in original). In other words, projecting the ‘right image’ obfuscates the existence of whiteness and in effect serves to reproduce whiteness (*ibid.*). Where whiteness is not considered a racialized or ethnicized positioning, where it is seen as “ordinary, so lacking in characteristics, so normal, so devoid of meaning”, pointing out its presence risks rendering the act equally devoid of meaning (Wekker 2016: 2). It is precisely this invisibility of whiteness that renders pointing out its presence inconclusive, yet it is “the visibility

of non-whiteness that marks it as a target and a denigrated particularity” (Alcoff 1996: 8).

A first indication that it was only the perception of transformation that the National Parks Board (later SANParks) sought to project lay in the fact that “critical operational layers and executive management remained dominated by white employees” (Maguranyanga 2009: 79). The majority of park managers, who were in effect the interface between a new progressive policy of engaging rural black communities, remained overwhelmingly white (ibid.). In this way, Maguranyanga posits, “[t]he predominantly white ‘face’ of park management structure mirrored apartheid through dominance of whites in management positions ... [and] the NPB [National Parks Board] continued to be viewed as a bastion of apartheid” (ibid.: 79). Thus the ‘Africanization’ of senior management did little to guarantee an improvement in parks’ relationship with neighbouring black communities and that the affirmative action drive was largely symbolic (ibid.). In effect, senior black employees felt increasingly marginalized and that the NPB’s head office “was like two organizations, one for black people and the other for white people” (Magome 2004: 128). During the 1990s, management meetings in the KNP still continued to be held in Afrikaans as a means to exclude newly appointed black managers.⁴⁶ The renowned predator ecologist, Colleen Begg, who started her conservation career as a research assistant in the Kruger in the early 1990s, also encountered and experienced this lack of transformation and the persistence of racism in the Park.

In the early 90s I spent a couple of years in the Kruger National Park as a research assistant. There was still very little sign of transformation. This was still a sheltered, racist, sexist place and a supreme example of fortress conservation in Africa. I saw computers draped with right wing ‘AWB’ [*Afrikaner Weerstand Beweging*] flags; all the rangers were still white men.⁴⁷

Nearly a decade after Begg’s observation, a ministerial commission set up to inquire into the causes and institutional response to a large runaway fire in 2001 that resulted in the death of twenty grass cutters (nineteen women and one man) from communities adjacent to that part of the Park as well as four field rangers, found persistent evidence of a lack of transformation in the Park (Ngobeni 2005). It was the biggest single loss of human life in the history of the Park (Dlamini 2020a). The findings of the commission found that key technical positions were still held by

whites, an observation reiterated by Maguranyanga (2009). Where there were black staff members in key technical positions the commissioner identified such instances as mere tokenism (ibid.).

Evidence has revealed that historically, management and supervisory positions in the Kruger National Park and the rest of the parks under SANParks were held by white employees. Traditionally game rangers were white and male and this section of Conservation remained closed to white women and blacks in general except for isolated pockets of tokenism. An illustration was made to indicate the imbalances that out of 22 section rangers in 2001, only six were black and most of them were appointed after 1998. Departments such as technical services, finance and procurement were entirely managed by white males. The majority of camp managers were also white and so was the Traffic Department (Ngobeni 2005: 15-16, emphasis added).

Despite this evidence where white staff still occupied key technical positions, there was still a widespread perception and dissatisfaction that under Operation Prevail in 2001, an organization-wide restructuring process to mitigate the high salary costs of the organization, that it was merely an excuse “of getting rid of experienced white employees in favour of employing lowly qualified black staff” (Ngobeni 2005: 15). Affirmative action and Operation Prevail did little to end white dominance in Park leadership and many white employees with technical expertise continued to wield power in the organization (Magome 2004 in Maguranyanga 2009). Half a decade after the findings of the ministerial commission and nearly two decades after Begg’s observation, a senior white manager who started his tenure in the Kruger after 2010, reflected on his own initial observation of racial segregation in the Park.

...we’ve still got this white-black issue in the Park which is a big issue for me...when I came I was invited to one dinner and I was shocked that it was all just white ...my wife has found the same thing which is why she is no longer living here...she finds the [social] groups are all white...its completely exclusive.⁴⁸

The Kruger Park remains untransformed and the lack of diversity persists despite a small handful of senior positions such as the chief ranger, mission area manager and two regional ranger positions which were occupied by African staff at the time of this study. Many of the core technical management positions related to the management of the rhino

poaching issue were held, almost exclusively, by white (mostly male) employees. Close to ninety percent of the ranger sections in the intensive and joint protection zones, those zones with the highest incidence rhino poaching, were managed by white males.⁴⁹

Where mid-level black managers or section rangers have previously been stationed in the worst affected rhino poaching areas, they were moved to the north of the Park, only to be replaced by white section rangers. Where black section rangers were seen as not being sufficiently competent to effectively curb poaching, white managers, who perhaps have had to deal with greater poaching pressure as the threat intensified, are seen to be trying their best without having their competence questioned.⁵⁰ Consequently, in traversing the KNP from north to south, the gradient of threat - from low intensity threats levels to high intensity threat levels - matched the racial gradient (see Chapter 5). The racial demographics of the critical operational levels at a section ranger level, arguably *the* key operational level in the 'war on poaching', morphed from black to white as you traversed the landscape from north to south. In addition, the regional rangers for these hardest hit areas were also white,⁵¹ as is the regional ranger in charge of the Special Ranger Unit, the Head Ranger, all the helicopter pilots and chief technician of the airwing, the head of Special Operations, the data analyst, the technical operations manager in charge of the management of all tactical technological infrastructure, the head of Crime Investigations Services, the KNP armourer, the head of the KNP K9 Unit and the specialist scientist who shapes public and official understanding of the status and ecology of rhino in the KNP are also all white. Between 2013 to 2016, the Mission Area Manager was also white. Despite the ubiquity of whites in key operational positions related to anti-poaching in the Park, a senior white manager continued to lament that affirmative action policies unfairly discriminates against competent white males, and in his reference to a former colleague, he said that "I couldn't extend his contract because he is a white man".⁵²

Other key strategic positions such as the managing executive of the Park, the heads of conservation services, technical services, veterinary services, scientific services and the game capture unit were also held by white males at the time that fieldwork was conducted. In effect, it is still an 'old boys' network'⁵³ (see also Ahmed 2012), a largely white, male-dominated demographic that continues to hold the critical operational and

strategic layers within the Kruger. These demographic characteristics prompted a former senior KNP human resources manager to note that the Ranger Services has been “restructure[ed] [to resemble] an Irish coffee, with whites on top and blacks at the bottom”.⁵⁴ In the face of an existential threat to a species that not only occupies a precarious position in terms of its population status but one that embodies so many different meanings around identity and sovereignty (Sodikoff 2012), this aggregation of white bodies in critical operational and strategic levels serves to create the illusion of coherence and competence (see Ahmed 2012). Furthermore, this somatic norm of white presence in turn becomes an institutional norm, it reproduces likeness and a specific brand of social relations and signals that the presence of black bodies is considered ‘out of place’ (ibid.).

One way this institutional whiteness is reproduced in the Kruger is celebrating in the downfall of black colleagues who do manage to breach the invisible ceiling into a key operational or strategic position. In speaking to a black environmental crime investigator in the KNP about what effect the arrest of a black colleague who held a senior position in the Ranger Services department had on him, he shared the following thoughts:

These whites want to make an example. When I went to the scene where he was arrested and when I got there all the white guys were rejoicing. I never got a chance to speak and the first time I got to actually speak to him was eight months later. When I first heard the news and I was standing by waiting for the chopper to take me I went to my office and I teared up, I was so upset for a good 30 minutes then my investigator skills kicked in. I was so hurt not only because I admired [name omitted] but because he just gave [white] people another reason to doubt our ability, its like we took ten steps back. When I saw those white guys celebrating it really hurt me.⁵⁵ [emphasis added]

The offence committed by this senior manager who was arrested in the excerpt above could arguably be considered the most egregious act that can be committed in the context of the ‘war on poaching’ - the alleged poaching of a rhino. Where the symbolism surrounding the defence of rhino can arguably be considered constitutive of whiteness (Burnett, 2018), the killing of a rhino by this celebrated black manager should be seen in its symbolic context as well. The actions of the celebrated black KNP manager above, marked an attack on whiteness, in effect an attack

on the essence of the institutional identity of the Kruger Park. That a trusted and venerated employee, who was often touted as the ‘golden boy’⁵⁶ could commit such an act stunned many colleagues in the Park. However, the reaction to his arrest generated starkly different responses from white and black colleagues. That white colleagues celebrated his arrest spoke of an affirmation that black people could not be trusted in positions of power, that their appointments were ‘out of place’. An Afrikaans language newspaper, the *Beeld*, with a readership I would hazard a guess as largely white, heralded the arrest with a headline that read “crown prince caught: [a] wolf in shepherd’s clothing”⁵⁷ (own translation), that he was merely masquerading to be something that he was not. It is not only the animalization (see below) of the black body, equating him to a species often associated with disgust (see Brooks 2006) but it is also an affirmation of the ‘out-of-placeness’ of the black body. His arrest reversed any gains that may have been made in diversifying key operational and strategic levels within the ranger services. It held distinct consequences for those black colleagues who remained and who held aspirations to breach this ceiling of whiteness. His arrest served as a justification to return the Kruger to its default setting - ‘taking ten steps back’ – to a specific somatic norm where only a certain category of conservationist can ‘save Africa’ (see below). In filling the position that had been vacated after the arrest of this black manager, Park management appointed a white section ranger in a demonstration of a return to its institutional norm.⁵⁸ It arguably mirrors a reverse form of ‘aversive racism’ where black managers, who adhere to egalitarian principles, seek to demonstrate that they remain unprejudiced in appointing a white manager (see DeAngelis 2009).

In addition to these organizational demographics, key role players in the rhino poaching issue in the Kruger from external state and private institutions are also mainly white. This includes the two special prosecutors dealing with rhino poaching cases in the Skukuza Regional Court; the lead SAPS investigator stationed at the Skukuza Community Police station; leading figures in conservation NGO’s that make considerable contributions to the Park’s anti-poaching efforts; the head of SANParks Honorary Rangers; reserve managers in the private game reserves adjacent the Kruger; technology partners; experts in anti-poaching and field ranger training; the CEO of the Game Ranger’s Association of Africa (GRAA) amongst others are all white. This broader institutional whiteness beyond the borders of the Park all play a role in

shaping the social dynamics within such an epistemic community. Black managers are thus further professionally and socially marginalized from participating in these influential social circles premised on ‘likeness’.

Perhaps the most telling evidence of the persistent hold of whiteness and racism in the organization during my year-long ethnography came at a GRAA annual general meeting held at Berg-en-Dal rest camp in the KNP in June 2016. During a coffee break, members and invited guests gathered in small groups to re-acquaint themselves with former colleagues and friends. I milled around the fringes of a group gathered around a prominent and charismatic figure in Kruger’s ‘war on poaching’. The group was also made up of (white ex-pat) delegates from other African countries, sharing the challenges and lack of resources in their places of work and generally painting a dystopian picture of conservation in Africa. The senior SANParks manager, around whom the group was gathered, offered the following observation.

...only we can save Africa.⁵⁹ [emphasis added]

Missing from this seemingly benign comment was the associated, albeit subtle, physical gesture. The speaker was rubbing the skin on his bare forearm, indicating that the ‘we’ he was referring to is white – that it is only white conservationists who can ‘save Africa’. It is a deeply held belief that it is only whiteness that can make a meaningful and lasting contribution to conservation in Africa and that it is its counterpoint – blackness – that embodies utter incompetence and a threat to nature. In a semi-structured interview with a black KNP section ranger, he recounted that the myriad of obstacles in the path of prospective black conservationists started at Technikon level in the early 1990s where “seventy percent of the lectures were in Afrikaans” effectively excluding many black people and that conservation was still a job “mainly for whites”.⁶⁰ This was made most explicit to him when he started in the Kruger in the mid-1990s and he came across an article pinned to the wall in the James Stevenson-Hamilton library in Skukuza saying blacks cannot contribute to conservation. While it was very difficult for him to identify occasions of overt racism, many experiences over his nearly two decades in the Kruger pointed to the repeated micro-racisms that he was subjected to – being excluded from meetings in which he should have participated and attended by white colleagues; being relocated to the northern part of the Park for ‘operational reasons’ but related to distrust and his perceived

incompetence; and racial disparities in disciplinary hearings and performance reviews. It is part of what scholars classify as microaggressions, its effects are to make black managers feel as they do not belong and can have profound effects on the psychological health of people of colour and their estimation of self-worth (DeAngelis 2009).

The figure of the white male thus imparts, as Joseph Pugliese (2005) suggests, a higher order of knowledge. Publicly, this senior manager presents the façade of an enlightened and progressive manager, extolling the virtues of black field ranger staff and voicing his concern over their well-being. It mirrors the techniques of colonial administration where morality and conscience projected the image of judicious and progressive government (Harries 1994). The colonial era Native Affairs Department (NAD) also generated an internal identity of itself as being protective of its African wards by constraining its own powers so as to “reconcile its protective role with its coercive functions” (Dubow 1986: 218). However, it is in these private moments in the trusted fraternal circle of other, mostly white, conservationists that the true nature of whiteness and racism in the Kruger comes into view. It is disturbing precisely because this evidence of racism remains hidden, it is not an image that is as readily discernible from the outside in the same way as the open display of white supremacist flags that Colleen Begg remarked on three decades ago (see above). It demonstrates the manner in which organizational habits are revealed in informal and casual conduct and also rejects the notion that racism can be readily seen or detected (Ahmed 2012).

It is this institutional whiteness, this lack of diversity, that Sara Ahmed (2012) contends reflects the way institutions ‘think’ and ‘act’. Where the ‘face’ that makes up the leadership of anti-poaching in the Park is largely white, Ahmed argues that it is the “proximity of some bodies and not others” that dictate how institutional spaces are shaped (2012: 35). Crucial to Ahmed’s argument is that the problem should not be reduced to individuals who exhibit racist behaviour but that the observation of racism in individuals is a function of the manner it becomes reproduced in organizations – that individual racisms are a product of institutional racism (ibid.). Bonilla-Silva (1997) also asserts that examining racism at an individual level obscures that it is merely part of larger racialized social system – that it is a structural phenomenon. The racism implicit in the casual comment by the senior SANParks manager above is a central concern of the discipline of Whiteness Studies, where the discursive

practices in the context of institutions, continue to shape epistemologies, cultures and bodies (Pugliese 2005). The imperative of race is thus fundamental to relations of power and guarantees “differential power positions and the unequal distribution of power” (ibid.: 350). It is this imperceptibility – despite its obvious presence – of institutionalised whiteness embedded in the broader institutional racism of the Kruger that persists and continues to shape workplace relations in its efforts to curb rhino poaching.

7.4 Turning Police Inwards: Animalization, Workplace Surveillance and Torture

There is mounting evidence that the assault tactics, surveillance and interoperability of technologies and practices in joint operations in times of war to deflect external threats can readily be turned inwards. McMichael (2012) demonstrates that many of the security technology acquisitions for the Soccer World Cup held in South Africa in 2010 formed a base for quelling public disturbance. A central task of the police after the World Cup was controlling ‘dangerous’ civil unrest. As in urban policing which is geared at protecting citizens from deviant or ‘unsovereign’ elements within society, it becomes increasingly clear that identifying who exactly those deviant elements are within society is not so readily obvious. Increasingly, it is the public who represent an ever-present and potential threat (ibid.). Similarly, in the Kruger, any employee could represent this ever-present and potential threat. While the acquisition of security technologies and policing practices in the Kruger was justified to address the ‘war on poaching’, predominantly from Mozambique, it is increasingly being turned inwards to target its own internal population, Park employees and their families.

Animalization

While the Park has always been explicit in identifying the myriad of threats it faces from external forces, it is also adopting a recycled language to identify the threats posed by its own staff implicated in rhino poaching. Early Dutch settlers in 18th century South Africa juxtaposed themselves vis-à-vis indigenous people of the Cape where “[t]hey describe themselves

as humans and Christians, and the Kaffirs and Hottentots as heathens” (Legum 1967: 485). Similarly, early British hunters, like the celebrated William Cornwallis Harris, was particularly disparaging of Africans by comparing the features of the Khoikhoi and San as bearing resemblances to bush pigs and baboons respectively (Carruthers 1995). Aside from being compared with undesirable wild animals either in terms of physical attributes or behaviour, the staple diets of Africans comprised in part of venison from wildlife was also equated to being ‘uncivilized’ (ibid.). This animalization of black people is a practice that is not relegated to the distant accounts of the colonial encounter in South Africa but it is one that is recycled by Kruger management. Black staff in the Kruger are increasingly referring to the Kruger as being akin to an ‘animal farm’.⁶¹ It is a direct reference to Orwell’s *Animal Farm* and alludes not only to a disturbing spectre of an Orwellian, totalitarian mode of governance but also a return to an old trope that served to dehumanise black people and legitimise the violence against them.

In the face of threats that emanate from inside, Kruger, management are increasingly consumed by frustration at the growing incidence of staff members involved in poaching - providing poaching syndicates with information related to the location of rhinos, the location of anti-poaching teams or actively involved in poaching themselves. The frustration is even further amplified where the Park has invested over a ZAR 1 billion in tactical security infrastructure and other high-tech interventions to deflect and/or alert them to *external* poaching threats and how this technology is being circumvented when some threats emanate from *within*. KNP managers often are at their wits end to show tangible progress in the face of growing political and public pressure and the added of complexity of sabotage from within further exacerbates the problem. In seeking to root out these corrupt staff members, Park management have repeatedly referred to these individuals engaged in illegal and disloyal actions as ‘snakes’.

...for us its been very, very difficult to firstly identify your... what we call snakes in the organization. We appreciate the fact that its going to happen... the recent arrest of rangers in the park...its a scourge we have to tackle and its not very easy...we see it as a very, very serious slap in the face from our point of view and we are actually doing everything possible we can to root it out... most of us are tainted with the same brush the minute we have a ranger arrested.⁶² [emphasis added]

While this comment was made by a senior white Kruger manager, black managers also reiterate this language of animalization. Ahuja posits that animalization is “the organized subjection of racialized groups through animal figures...[involving] the contextual comparisons between animals and the bodies or behaviours of racialized subjects” (2009: 557). Fanon also remarked that when the “colonists speaks of the colonized he uses zoological terms...[t]his explosive population growth...is all part of the colonial vocabulary” (1963 in Ahuja 2009: 557). Emel cautions how the use of such rhetorical techniques shapes how certain groups of people are framed and the consequences they hold stating “[h]ow we represent and identify ourselves and others – whether they be animals or people, is at the heart of our actions towards them” (1995 in Brooks 2006: 8). In othering members of its own staff, Kruger management have found a means to legitimate the violence used against them, a technique that is not new and has deep historical resonances.

Workplace Surveillance and Quashing Dissent

A number of ranger staff have also spoken about a culture of suspicion and victimization that has (re)surfaced as rhino poaching increased. Junior and mid-level black staff talked of being secretly placed under surveillance while they are in the staff accommodation, their family members followed and stopped in road blocks as they were leaving the Park, had their bank accounts scrutinized without their permission and having investigators inquiring about home improvements and vehicle purchases. Some staff members have been under, what seemed open-ended internal investigation by the organization’s Environmental Crime Investigation (ECI) services on the suspicion that they are involved in poaching, but due to a lack of evidence, were dismissed on unrelated charges such as gross negligence for improperly managing their inventory, only to be reinstated after an appeals process.⁶³ In this way, an increasingly toxic culture of suspicion and victimisation of staff is becoming common place in the KNP.

Park employees are increasingly being subjected to integrity testing despite it being in tension with the basic conditions of employment. However, many of these tests are framed as being ‘voluntary’ but in reality, refusal to submit to these so-called integrity tests risk further victimization and open-ended surveillance not only to themselves but also family

members and friends. These staff members go as far as to post their test results online on social media or messaging platforms to reinforce their innocence.⁶⁴ Park managers admit that integrity testing has been badly managed and that it has devastated workplace trust, an outcome that is particularly damaging in an environment where people work and live in the same space.⁶⁵ These forms of integrity testing also mirror the screening of black recruits into the apartheid security forces by psychologists, ethnologists and senior SADF personnel to ‘check their personality’ and to “ensure their loyalty” (IDAF 1980: 40). Individuals in other work categories, such as scientists not involved in law enforcement, showed a willingness to have their homes searched and being subjected to scrutiny such as surveillance of their bank accounts to track irregular payments. This occurred after a staff meeting in Skukuza where senior management bemoaned that there were ‘snakes’ still working in the Park and that searches would be conducted in the homes of employees. Speaking to some middle management staff about what this would mean for privacy rights, they relented that they did not have a problem with searches as ‘they had nothing to hide’.⁶⁶

This uncritical support of these quasi-totalitarian methods of being surveilled is indicative of a specific ‘science of government’ that posits to be free of crime and enjoy certain liberties, citizens have to forgo other liberties (Hansen 2006). Clough and Willse refer to ‘surveillant assemblages’ that “produces disciplined labourers, as they work with fear and insecurity [which] determines their relationship to governance, their willingness to submit to counting, evaluation, examination and estimation” (2011: 8-9). Where democratic institutional governance requires the active participation at all levels of the organization, this level of acquiescence by park managers, most of whom are scientific services staff, speaks of a culture of disciplinary power in Kruger that does not invite dissent or questioning. It is under such conditions that undemocratic, and in its most dystopic forms, repressive rationalities of rule are able to gain traction where the infringement of privacy becomes normalized and acts as an entry point for the disturbing developments of workplace victimization and even torture to become common place.

This quashing of dissent was reinforced in my conversation with a senior white KNP manager with almost two decades living and working in the Park.

...the minute you start being critical, in a constructive way, they see you as somebody that's like you don't know what you are talking about, you don't have to do this every day... I support them as much as I can but I mean there is no doubt some of the stuff that they doing or some of the questions I ask get their hackles up and I think its because its probably an inconvenient truth that they have to deal with and because they are so [busy] they don't want to deal with another problem.⁶⁷ [emphasis added]

Any form of dissent or critique of the overtly militarized approaches, discussions around the dangers of subordinating conservation functions in favour of law enforcement in the Park or nefarious law enforcement actions come with the fear of being ostracized or marginalized within what is already a bounded social space – more so for those staff members whose social circles are in many ways indistinguishable from their professional circles. Where the constructive critique of a trusted and respected colleague with many years of experience in the Park with close social ties to many senior personnel in the ranger services is not welcome and seen as a betrayal, it leaves little opportunity for critical reflection and imagining alternative pathways.

Again, the defence that if you don't have first-hand experience of the dangers and burdens of anti-poaching operations is deployed (see Chapter 6) to deflect the legitimacy of any form of critique, even from respected colleagues. Where the respondent above held one of the most senior positions within the Park, is white, and is considered highly competent in his specific area of expertise, his concerns were still met with derision. The opportunities then for black, low salaried workers to voice their concerns become even more remote. It created a palpable atmosphere of tension, one where employees consciously measured their responses to my enquiries. Matelakengisa (2020), a former senior human resources manager in the Park, also recounts the numerous occasions when the organization's own whistleblowing policy was weaponized to discredit, ridicule and dismiss employees who highlighted acts of maladministration, criminality and even incidents of torture and murder.

In an environment where insiders risk being ostracized, there remains even less opportunity for considering the critiques of outsiders, especially the critique of many scholars in critical conservation studies. My interactions with employees in the Park largely, with the exception of field rangers themselves, was continually contingent on my not being overtly

critical of policing practices but to show a professional interest in the inner workings of area integrity and an appreciation of the operational challenges of their work. Where my discussions veered into those spaces that were deemed too uncomfortable, especially related to the arbitrary or extrajudicial use of force or other nefarious practices such as crime scene manipulation or entrapment, I would be called into a 'meeting' to gauge my views or ultimately, as transpired, writing to my academic advisor to discipline or discredit my findings (see Chapter 1).

Many of my own interactions with scientific staff and managers based in the Park revolved around questions of verifiability, research rigour, triangulation and statistical frequency.⁶⁸ Despite this concern, Park management reneged on the conditions set out in our research agreement to share information that could allay these very concerns around the research process. These managers tried to instill in me the 'scientific principle' that something was only valid if a statistically significant number of respondents confirmed its presence and that it is the natural sciences that constituted 'real' science.⁶⁹ The fact that extrajudicial use of force or crime scene manipulation *did* take place, irrespective of the number of respondents who confirmed its occurrence, did not seem to register and that it is rather a crude and a particular interpretation of empiricism that guides their thinking. This strategy to discredit and undermine research that is critical of KNP practices does not only pertain to this research. Jooste and Ferreira - both senior SANParks managers - argue that qualitative social science is "less robust" and that it does not conform to the ostensibly more rigorous process of falsifying hypotheses typical of quantitative statistical approaches (2018: 54). Dlamini alludes to the challenges he faced in his encounters with natural scientists in the Park who posit that scientific inquiry can only progress from a testable hypothesis, despite its limits.⁷⁰ Rademeyer recounts the vitriolic responses from SANParks officials, accusing his research of "not being up to scratch" (2012: 223) and Duffy et al. also report how critics of militarized conservation are "portrayed as naïve, lacking in understanding, as pseudo-scientists or even as hostile towards conservation" (2019: 67). This is despite the Park's own deification of science and positioning itself as a world leader in conservation science (see Chapter 1). It is clear that only certain knowledges and epistemologies are permissible and demonstrates yet another example of how those in power seize the authority to produce knowledge (Hall et al. 2017). These techniques of quashing dissent and

marginalizing dissenting voices, whether they arise from inside or outside, is an important ingredient in the policing logic that governs Kruger. It points to a concerning form of governance that seeks to discipline all forms of institutional life within the Park so that it is quiescent. It impedes any opportunity to robustly analyse anti-poaching and labour practices in the Park and limits any opportunity for reimagining a conservation workplace that is premised on dignity and care.

Victimization and Torture of Staff

Between 2012 and 2018, 34 staff members⁷¹ working in the KNP have been arrested for activities related to rhino poaching, all of them black men.⁷² Park management refer to these arrested employees as ‘snakes’ and counter the argument that these investigations are racially motivated and that it is merely a function that the majority of employees in the Park being black.⁷³ Some affected employees in the Park have expressed their concerns in the media in the ways rhino poaching is being used as an excuse to torture them⁷⁴ (see also Matelakengisa 2020). In 2015, a field ranger with twenty years’ service in the KNP, Tommy Mogakane, was tortured by police on suspicion of poaching. He was awarded ZAR 350 000 in compensation when the court found in his favour. The court proceedings provide an insight into the manner he was tortured, bearing a disturbing semblance to the practices used the apartheid era security police when interrogating suspects (see Chapter 6).

His face was covered with a masking tape, [they] took off his jacket and ordered him to sit on the floor with his legs stretched over whilst his hands were handcuffed. He was then covered with [a] tyre tube around his neck and it rested on his shoulders...he was forced to inhale something like water and he could not see where it was coming from as his face was covered.⁷⁵

The experiences documented in the court documents of the employee above also mirrors the experiences of respondents who shared their encounters with joint SAPS and KNP ranger investigative teams. In the investigations conducted by a co-researcher in a community adjacent to the KNP, a KNP staff member recounted his own experiences of being woken up in the early hours of the morning in his official accommodation by both KNP law enforcement staff, whom he referred to colloquially as ‘*amaphoyisa*’ or ‘police’, as well as members of the SAPS from the Skukuza

Community Police station. In the opening sequences of his questioning, they even misstated his name, calling him 'Alfred' instead of 'Albert' (I am using a pseudonym here to demonstrate how suspects are misidentified and the veracity of intelligence).

I asked them who told them I had a gun and then they started beating me. I was in pain they were beating me they were even using that thing in my nose [a wet hessian bag] ...they started tying my legs with rope, I was feeling pain and I even fainted twice because they were using that hessian they were covering me and I can't breathe, the mouth is closed and my nose I couldn't breathe, I could hear [sic] that I am dying.⁷⁶ [translation by co-researcher]

He continued to relate how both KNP 'police' and SAPS members beat him and suffocated him with a wet hessian bag, reminiscent of the apartheid-era practice of wetbagging (see Chapter 6) or the experiences of the claimant above. They also questioned him about the purchase of his vehicle and how he was able to afford the purchase, even though it was a second-hand vehicle. They proceeded to cut open the seats and destroy his personal property in a false show of conducting a search to find incriminating evidence but mostly in the hope that these acts of damaging his property would prompt him to confess. He recounted how he passed out from the beatings and that at times he feigned fainting so that the beating would stop. At one point, when he was asked where the rifle was that he supposedly used in his alleged poaching activities, he offered that it was in the KNP managed workshop, knowing that the investigators would have to call his supervisor to unlock the workshop. He did this in the hope that his supervisor would intervene in the beating. However, the beating did not stop. He was eventually loaded into a vehicle and taken to his home and beaten in front of his wife and his nine-year-old daughter. His wife was also informed that they caught him in his KNP single roomed accommodation with a 'girlfriend' in the hope that it would turn his wife against him. This employee had no opportunity for recourse - when he tried to open a case he was told to go to the nearest police station to where the beatings took place, the Skukuza Community Police station, whose members were involved in the beatings. Resorting to torture marked a return to 'confession-based policing', reminiscent of apartheid era policing, a practice that relied on beating a suspect until he or she 'confessed' (Hansen 2006).

7.5 Misdiagnosing Corruption: Sabotage as Worker Resistance

The issue of corruption of field rangers, customs officials, police and judicial officers is a theme that is near ubiquitous in discourses around the challenges faced by those looking to put an end to rhino poaching.⁷⁷ Kruger management are acutely aware the risks financial indebtedness of staff poses to its efforts to curb rhino poaching. They posit that it is these financial risks that lead staff members to become complicit in poaching. What they do not seem to recognize is that this financial indebtedness that *may* induce *some* staff members to engage in poaching activities for financial rewards is directly related to its own practice of below subsistence wages and the informal payment of significant rewards or incentives or its formal system of payment for overtime and subsistence and allowance and the associated financial precarity. This assertion will be fleshed out in more detail in the section below. Missing from these narratives of the presence of ‘snakes’ (see above) in the perpetuation of corruption, is the notion of worker agency and resistance in racially repressive and despotic workplaces (see Phakathi 2012). Phakathi argues that workers in colonial, apartheid and post-apartheid workplace regimes were not “passive acceptors of racial and coercive forms of labour control” (ibid.: 279). Franz Fanon, the postcolonial thinker, distils this non-passivity as follows:

The colonized know...that they are not animals. And at the very moment when they discover their humanity, they begin to sharpen their weapons to secure its victory (Fanon 1963 in Ahuja 2009: 557, emphasis added).

What these ‘weapons’ are does not necessarily only allude to the use of violence against the colonizer, as Fanon urged, but that there is a plethora of overt and covert strategies workers can employ to express their opposition to these repressive workplace practices. James Scott (1985) in his seminal work, *Weapons of the Weak*, examines the manifold forms of peasant resistance and that these forms of resistance often reflect the conditions and constraints imposed on workers. He posits that if forms of resistance “are open, they are rarely collective, and, if they are collective, they are rarely open” and that often these encounters amount to nothing more than isolated ‘incidents’, seemingly not part of a broader upwelling of worker revolt (ibid.: 242). This is not to suggest that violent and collective forms of resistance aggregate after a string of seemingly benign encounters. These incidents are often interspersed with violent revolt,

evidenced by the armed revolts by indigenous people throughout the colonial encounter (see Mkhize 2012) and through the 1960s and 1980s against segregationist policies by the apartheid state. In the Park, these forms of collective revolt culminated in a strike at Skukuza in 1990, the first ever form of collective resistance since the inception of the Park.⁷⁸ It profoundly shook Park authorities and reinforced their assessment of which form of labour was more compliant. Park authorities lobbied the state to employ workers of Mozambican origin who they saw as ‘more stable’ and less politically radicalized than the South African labour in its employ (Chapter 3). Most recently, from the 3 February to 28 April 2012 – for a total of eighty-five days – an estimated 99 percent of the field ranger corps went on a collective strike action.⁷⁹ It meant that some ranger outposts were left only with a section ranger and ranger sergeant or corporal. It was during this period that the Park experienced an intensification in rhino poaching, leading Park management to suspect that many striking field rangers gave information to poaching groups, informing them which areas were critically understaffed.

Phakathi details the myriad of strategies used by workers on the mines under the various workplace regimes to reassert their autonomy, ranging from “desertion, output restriction, go-slows, effort and time bargaining, sabotage, deliberate accidents, feigning sickness, drunkenness and theft” (2012: 284). Industrial sabotage is one strategy used to cope with tight management controls, despotic white supervision and hazardous working conditions, conditions that not only typified underground gold mining conditions but bear a striking similarity to the working conditions of field rangers in the Kruger (see Chapter 3). Drawing on Webster (1978), Phakathi (2012) outlines that industrial sabotage takes place

in a situation in which workers cannot organize or bargain, [when] they tend to react in other ways...individuals tend to destroy or mutilate objects or each other in the work environment. This is done either to reduce tension or frustration or, on the other hand, to assert some form of direct control over one’s work or life. Unplanned smashing and spontaneous destruction are signs of powerless individual or group (Webster 1978: 78 in Phakathi 2012: 285, emphasis added)

This ‘smashing, mutilation and destruction’ of property or machinery in the industrial workplace is also mirrored in the conservation workplace in the mutilation and destruction of rhino. Where rhino have come to embody whiteness (see Burnett 2018) and have become a primary object

of care that informed the nascent colonial preservationist project (Brooks 2006), the complicity of field rangers in either the direct or indirect poaching of rhino, as a form of industrial sabotage, represents a move to reassert not only their humanity, as Fanon (1963 in Ahuja 2009) posited, in the face of racial repression and animalization but also the manifold inequalities in their working conditions. Sabotage is a sign, as Webster (1978 in Phakathi 2012) argues, of the powerlessness of field rangers as a subordinated fraction of the population in Kruger.

Instead, these forms of sabotage should be read as a form of *deviant politics* (after Rios 2011) as a way of 'getting back at the system' and a means for workers to regain their humanity and sense of empowerment as redress for the humiliation and stigma they encounter in the workplace. Where these forms of deviant politics are all too readily framed as crime that legitimizes punishment, it should instead serve as evidence of injustices within that workplace. As Little (2016) argues, the point is not to rationalize or excuse crime but to point to its underlying sources so that they can be addressed. Thus, simply framing acts of sabotage as crime or corruption obfuscates identifying and addressing underlying injustices.

7.6 New Avenues of Labour Control and Precarity: Financial Indebtedness

The significant increase in irregular income from participating in anti-poaching operations has led many field rangers to purchase status and affirmational consumer products such as vehicles or undertake home improvements. One of the key themes of Dlamini's (2020a) rewriting of the history of black presence in the Kruger Park - beyond that of black poachers or labourers - is the theme of black mobility. The purchase of vehicles by field rangers in particular adds further credence to this theme of black mobility and the desire to overcome the constraints of racially biased social control that determined when and where blacks could and could not go in the Park. This restriction of movement of black workers has been central to the control of labour in the Park. This is evidenced in the lasting imprints on the landscape from the 'Marfourteen' footpaths that marked the movement of masses of indentured and migrant black labour through the Park (see Chapter 3). These migrants moving through the Park understood very clearly where they could and could not walk.

During the 1980s and onward, when the apartheid state actively tried to curb the Park's use of Mozambican labour, Park administrators boasted that its compound system allowed for total control of this pool of labour and that these forms of labour control ensured that these workers could not pose a threat to the state in the context of armed anti-apartheid struggles (see Chapter 3). Furthermore, in a list of grievances from the various pay stations within the Park in 1988, workers complained that personal vehicles of staff were not allowed in the compounds.⁸⁰

Today, many black employees working in the Park continue to face serious challenges in commuting between their homes and work. Even for individuals living in Acornhoek, in the Bushbuckridge municipality adjacent to the Park, the commute to Skukuza, still posed a travel time of at least four hours of travel in one direction using notoriously unreliable public transport.⁸¹ The amount of commuting time is further exacerbated when workers have to travel to more remote camps in the Park. This is aside from the cost implications to employees. Thakholi (2021) demonstrates that for one worker travelling from Acornhoek to Hoedspruit (approximately half the distance if you were to travel from Acornhoek to Paul Kruger gate) for work, transport costs can account for nearly one fifth of her monthly salary. Meskell (2012) also notes that the lack of transport was a key grievance by workers living in the Park. The practice of transporting workers on open trucks resembled the ferrying of animals in game capture trucks, and while Park management recognized this as problematic in later years, little else was done to replace it with a regular and subsidized bus service (*ibid.*). The restriction of movement is further exacerbated in the context of rhino poaching. The searching of vehicles of staff and family members of employees foments resentment and impacts on the dignity of these individuals when they are habitually treated with suspicion. The racialized bias in these searches also has an historical precedent where white section rangers often conducted "spot checks on the black taxis and busses" travelling out of the Park.⁸²

Urry (2004) posits that the notion of 'automobility' through the ownership of a car, at once captures both the improvement of the self and physical mobility. Where the ownership of a car confers status to its owner and denotes socially valued attributes such as masculinity and success, amongst others (*ibid.*), automobility in South Africa developed along distinctly racial contours (Burnett 2018). This is especially pertinent in a context where geographical segregation strongly influenced where

black people could work, constrained largely to those areas serviced by a limited public transport system, where they lived and where they could exercise leisure. This is especially so in the KNP where freedom of movement of black staff has been and continues to be curtailed. Black ownership of cars in South Africa, specifically during apartheid, provoked a sense of suspicion and distaste of Africans (Posel 2010) and in post-apartheid South Africa, car ownership has been “invested with the iconography of joyous emancipation” (ibid.: 159).

It is within this context that the consumption of affirmational consumer products amongst KNP rangers is so pertinent. The Volkswagen Polo hatchback is one such status and affirmational consumer product that was almost universally sought after amongst the field rangers I interacted with in Kruger. The field ranger accommodation units I lived in during my twelve-month ethnography in the Park were lined with as-new vehicles, many of them Polo’s or similar sedan vehicles. Where field rangers are able to significantly increase their take-home pay – in some instances earn as much as half their monthly income⁸³ – in overtime, subsistence and travel allowance, danger allowance, camping out allowances, standby and night shift allowances. It is this additional, albeit irregular, forms of income that has exposed field rangers to new forms of precarity.

Where field rangers have become financially indebted, these forms of irregular income become increasingly crucial to service these debts that they are not otherwise able to service based on their regular monthly incomes. In its June 2021 Quarterly Bulletin, the South African Reserve Bank (SARB) estimated that the ratio of household debt to disposable income stands at approximately 75 percent, meaning that households in general spend three quarters of their disposable income in servicing debt.⁸⁴ Where many black South Africans in lower income brackets are not able to secure loans against fixed assets, they make use of unscrupulous lenders who charge exorbitant interest rates which place them in even greater financial precarity. Where this level of household debt precludes household savings, many households are unable to not only mitigate against future shocks or save for retirement but also immediate needs such as school fees, particularly where parents try to enrol their children in schools that offer better standards of education than the local, rural schools.

Field rangers across the Park lamented the inadequacies of their salaries and that it is not sufficient to pay for their children's school fees,⁸⁵ and no doubt the myriad of many other financial commitments they have (see also Meskell 2012). It is the access to irregular income that enables the purchase of these affirmational consumer products that exposes field rangers in the KNP to indebtedness and financial precarity. It is this indebtedness and its associated financial precarity that is weaponized as a new form of labour control. To ensure that they remain in contention to earn this additional irregular income to service their debts, they have to fit the notion of what Kruger management see as an ideal worker or a 'good field ranger' – those field rangers that are able to display the desired metrics of labour productivity associated with violence (see Chapter 5). It is a technique that is not dissimilar to the threat of deportation of migrant workers in its early years, where the precarity of its migrant labour force was weaponized if they did not reproduce the desired metrics of labour value (see Chapter 3 and 5).

Thus, once field rangers have become enmeshed in debt, to service that debt they have to continue to replicate these notions of field ranger productivity premised on violence. With it comes the myriad of costs as outlined elsewhere in this chapter. Where field rangers do not meet these metrics of productivity, they are simply told they are not 'good field rangers' or that they cannot be trusted and hence they will not be called on to participate in anti-poaching operations such as extended clandestine patrols, a form of overtime in which they could potentially earn the greatest amount of irregular income. Moreover, where field rangers face insurmountable debt that cannot be serviced by their regular incomes, some may become complicit in rhino poaching activities, either indirectly or directly in return for the lucrative financial rewards on offer. This precarity was identified by only one senior KNP manager who noted that when there is a respite in poaching, the payment of overtime being paid to field rangers will be negatively affected and that it is the payment of overtime that affords them the ability to purchase material goods that would be beyond their means otherwise.⁸⁶

Financial indebtedness has also become a preferred mode of labour control in the KNP to further extend the working life of experienced field rangers and to prevent them from taking early retirement. The manager of a ranger corporal with twenty six years of service, who, in recognizing his indispensable role in manging the section, sought to induce him to

purchase a vehicle, knowing that in doing so he would not be able to take early retirement, instead having to service his financial obligation.⁸⁷ It is a technique similar to what Maseko (2021) describes on the mines where sub-poverty wages created a system of loans and advance payments that enmeshed mine workers in a state of perpetual debt and a never-ending cycle of dependency

7.7 Concluding Remarks

Some of the literature on militarized conservation has referred to the costs these forms of conservation hold for conservation workers (see Duffy et al. 2019, Verweijen 2020). However, very little scholarly work has offered an ethnographically thick description of what these costs entail. This chapter has made a novel contribution in not only describing in detail what these costs consist of but also situating them within their wider meaning and historical context (see Ahmed 2012). Firstly, it sought to critically analyse the Park's proclamation of care through its Ranger Wellness Programme. In the face of any critique of the Park's treatment of its employees, it offers this as evidence that it is an organization that cares for its employees. This chapter has demonstrated that this rhetoric of care is not matched in reality and that Park managers actively obstruct its deployment and see it as an operational burden. Where trauma is identified, the organization has no mechanisms to deal with the effects of trauma and does not have the institutional dexterity to redeploy or retrain staff for other job categories. The trauma that field rangers suffer is also disassociated from the structural phenomena within the labour process that rewards acts of violence, even where those acts are irregular or extrajudicial. These deviant acts and the associated complicity and collusion by the organization also leads to a phenomenon that has been unremarked upon in the Park, one of moral injury where individuals feel that deeply held morals have been violated in the conduct of questionable acts. However, acknowledgement of the existence of moral injury would be an admission that some of its practices are irregular, disproportionate and even extrajudicial. In this way, its duty of care for workers is further hampered.

Secondly, SANParks as an organization, has gone to considerable lengths to demonstrate that it is an organization that is thoroughly

transformed. However, the chapter shows that these efforts at transformation have been politically contingent and that key operational and some executive layers continue to be occupied by whites. This is most notably evidenced in the composition of key operational and senior layers in the rangers' services department in the Kruger. It shows that black operational managers are systematically marginalized, that a pervasive atmosphere of mistrust exists and competency as a metric is racially biased. Furthermore, acts of individual racism are hidden and hard to detect, obscured by discursive proclamations of care in formal and public settings, but that it is reproduced in casual and somatically homogenous social and professional circles. It also posits that these individual racisms are reinforced by a broader institutional racism and that these practices persist and are reinforced because these practices are in effect institutionalised.

It also shows that a pervasive atmosphere of mistrust within the Park has led managers to refer to those staff members suspected of being complicit in rhino poaching as snakes. It is a discursive technique reminiscent of the colonial encounter used to dehumanise black people and legitimise the violence used against them. In this respect, the Park has resorted to victimizing and using violence against its own staff members. It has conducted night time raids, beaten and used torture techniques reminiscent of the techniques used by apartheid era security police. Furthermore, it also demonstrates that any signals of dissent are quashed, even when that dissent is raised by white managers who are widely regarded as highly competent in their area of expertise. This deflection of criticism is also extended to external critics, particularly in the form of critical scholarship and that detractors are systematically discredited and undermined in efforts to open up alternative pathways to approach and understand the impact militarized responses to rhino poaching hold for staff.

Another technique the Park uses to legitimize violence and marginalization of workers is framing them as corrupt. However, this chapter offers an alternative lens through which to view acts of sabotage, that it be analysed through the lens of resistance. It demonstrates that worker resistance in the form of sabotage in the Park is a response to racially repressive and despotic workplaces and that even where these resistances are covert, that workers are not idle bystanders to repressive workplace practices. Labelling these as criminal or corrupt merely serves

to obfuscate the underlying injustices and violence in the conservation workplace.

Lastly, it shows how the payment of significant amounts of irregular or supplementary forms of income results in an increase in financial indebtedness. In pursuing aspirational consumer products such as the purchase of vehicles or home improvements, financial indebtedness has become weaponized as a new avenue of labour control. It shows that rewards and incentives are used to reproduce the desired forms of labour productivity and where field rangers become indebted, they are unable to extricate themselves from reproducing the violence that marks labour value and productivity in the Park. Where they do so, they risk significant financial repercussions.

Notes

¹ International Ranger Federation, Media Statement: World Ranger Day 31 July 2021 [Online] Available at: <https://mailchi.mp/550bab9c27f6/world-ranger-day-2021> (Accessed 3 August 2021).

² International Ranger Federation, 'Roll of Honour' [Online] Available at: <https://www.internationalrangers.org/meet-our-rangers/-roll-of-honour> (Accessed 3 August 2021).

³ Lesutis, G. and J. Las Heras (2020) 'The Necropolitics of Heroism', *International Viewpoint IV Online Magazine*, [Online] Available at: <http://internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article6632> (Accessed 29 May 2020).

⁴ International Ranger Federation, Media Statement: World Ranger Day 31 July 2021 [Online] Available at: <https://mailchi.mp/550bab9c27f6/world-ranger-day-2021> (Accessed 3 August 2021).

⁵ Senior SANParks manager, comments made at the inaugural African Ranger's Conference, 22 August 2018.

⁶ Event ethnography at the Game Rangers Association of Africa (GRAA) annual general meetings in June 2016 and August 2018.

⁷ Event ethnography CITES CoP17 Conference, September/October 2016.

⁸ Semi-structured interview with senior KNP manager, February 2017.

⁹ 'The First Annual African Ranger Awards Ceremony Held in CT', *IOL* 7 August 2018 [Online] Available at: <https://www.iol.co.za/business-report/economy/the-first-annual-african-ranger-awards-ceremony-held-in-ct-16442284> (Accessed 29 November 2018). Paradoxically these awards totalling USD\$150 000 in prize

money, have been sponsored by Paradise and Alibaba foundations. Alibaba hosts a range on online e-commerce platforms, such as *Taobao*, that trade in wildlife products including illicit products such as rhino horn, ivory, tiger bone jewellery and pangolin scales, amongst others. See [Online] Available at: <https://conservationaction.co.za/media-articles/the-hidden-iniquity-of-the-african-ranger-awards/> (Accessed 13 February 2019).

¹⁰ Participant observation, KNP Ranger annual general meeting held at Mopani rest camp, November 2016. Earlier in the year SANParks also advertised a vacancy for a general manager position to head its employee assistance and occupational health and safety programmes based in the KNP [Online] Available at: <https://www.sanparks.org/assets/docs/vacancies/gm-support-knp-support.pdf> (Accessed 2 August 2021).

¹¹ Comments made by clinical psychologist/mental health practitioner at the KNP Ranger annual general meeting, held at Mopani rest camp, November 2016.

¹² According to another KNP manager, the Firearms Act requires that officers receive mental health support within 48 hours of a shootout. Comments by KNP manager, KNP Ranger annual general meeting, held at Mopani rest camp, November 2016.

¹³ Comments made by clinical psychologist/mental health practitioner, KNP Ranger annual general meeting, held at Mopani rest camp, November 2016.

¹⁴ Comments made by clinical psychologist/mental health practitioner, KNP Ranger annual general meeting, held at Mopani rest camp, November 2016.

¹⁵ Informal discussion with KNP field rangers, August 2016.

¹⁶ Informal conversation with KNP field ranger, September 2018.

¹⁷ Remarks by SANParks appointed clinical psychologist at the Game Rangers Association of Africa (GRAA) annual general meeting held at Berg en Dal, KNP, 23 June 2016.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Semi-structured interview with clinical psychologist, July 2016.

²⁰ Informal conversation with KNP section ranger, October 2016.

²¹ Informal discussion with KNP field rangers, August 2016.

²² Informal conversation with KNP field ranger, January 2017.

²³ 'A Marine Attacked an Iraqi Restaurant. But Was it a Hate Crime or PTSD?', *The New York Times*, 18 October 2017, [Online] Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/18/damien-rodriguez-marine-portland.html?hp&action=click&pgtype=Homepage&clickSource=story-heading&module=second-column-region®ion=top-news&WT.nav=top-news> (Accessed 18 October 2017).

- ²⁴ Semi-structured interview with clinical psychologist, July 2016.
- ²⁵ Semi-structured interview with clinical psychologist, July 2016.
- ²⁶ Semi-structured interview with field rangers, August 2016.
- ²⁷ Semi-structured interview with clinical psychologist, July 2016.
- ²⁸ Email correspondence with former Irish Defence Force (IDF) organizational psychologist, October 2017.
- ²⁹ A Marine Attacked an Iraqi Restaurant. But Was it a Hate Crime or PTSD?', *The New York Times*, 18 October 2017, [Online] Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/18/damien-rodriguez-marine-portland.html?hp&action=click&pgtype=Homepage&clickSource=story-heading&module=second-column-region®ion=top-news&WT.nav=top-news> (Accessed 18 October 2017).
- ³⁰ Email correspondence with former Irish Defence Force (IDF) organizational psychologist, October 2017.
- ³¹ Ibid.
- ³² Semi-structured interview with KNP section ranger, February 2017.
- ³³ Semi-structured interview with KNP field rangers, August 2016.
- ³⁴ Semi-structured interview with clinical psychologist, July 2016.
- ³⁵ 'Psychological Traumatology (PTSD/Stress/Trauma) with Nicholas Barr'. Podcast [Online] Available at: <https://art19.com/shows/ologies-fb/episodes/cf3a1530-771d-4916-9219-db5994696e82> (Accessed 14 June 2019).
- ³⁶ Fieldnotes, October 2016.
- ³⁷ Comments by KNP regional ranger at the KNP Ranger annual general meeting held at Mopani rest camp, November 2016.
- ³⁸ Informal discussion with KNP field rangers, August 2016.
- ³⁹ Informal conversation with KNP field rangers, June, 2016.
- ⁴⁰ Email correspondence with senior SANParks official, November 2019.
- ⁴¹ Semi-structured interview with clinical psychologist, July 2016.
- ⁴² Participant observation, KNP ranger annual general meeting, held at Mopani rest camp, November 2016.
- ⁴³ 'Kruger Park: Rhino Poaching used as an Excuse to Torture us, say Black Employees', *City Press* 3 March 2019 [Online] Available at: <https://city-press.news24.com/News/kruger-park-rhino-poaching-used-as-an-excuse-to-torture-us-say-black-employees-20190403> (Accessed 5 April 2019).
- ⁴⁴ 'Kruger Park: Rhino Poaching used as an Excuse to Torture us, say Black Employees', *City Press* 3 March 2019 [Online] Available at: <https://city-press.news24.com/News/kruger-park-rhino-poaching-used-as-an-excuse-to-torture-us-say-black-employees-20190403>

press.news24.com/News/kruger-park-rhino-poaching-used-as-an-excuse-to-torture-us-say-black-employees-20190403 (Accessed 5 April 2019).

⁴⁵ A policy to correct the discriminatory employment practices of the past by recruiting and creating opportunities for black, female and disabled applicants.

⁴⁶ Informal conversation with senior KNP manager, March 2017.

⁴⁷ Predator ecologist, Colleen Begg in Butler, R.A (2021) 'Reckoning with Elitism and Racism in Conservation: Q&A with Colleen Begg', *Mongabay*, 21 June 2021 [Online] Available at: <https://news.mongabay.com/2021/06/reckoning-with-elitism-and-racism-in-conservation-qa-with-colleen-begg/> (Accessed 6 July 2021).

⁴⁸ Semi-structured interview with senior KNP manager, March 2017.

⁴⁹ Towards the end of my fieldwork period in the KNP, eight of the eleven sections that make up the Marula South and Marula North regions – the regions with the highest poaching incidences which also incorporates the IPZ and JPZ protection zones – were managed by white males.

⁵⁰ Informal conversation with KNP section ranger, March 2017.

⁵¹ At the time of the study the regional ranger for Marula South was a white male and the position for Marula North was initially held by a black male. After his arrest the position was temporarily, and then later permanently, filled by a white male.

⁵² Semi-structured interview with senior SANParks manager, February 2017.

⁵³ Informal conversation with SANParks crime investigator, May 2016.

⁵⁴ Informal conversation with former senior KNP human resources manager, September, 2020.

⁵⁵ Informal conversation with Environmental Corporate investigator, March 2018.

⁵⁶ Multiple conversations with KNP staff. It encapsulated the high regard with which this employee was held – he was considered highly competent as a ranger, a good communicator and as a manager someone who elevated the concerns of junior and middle management staff to higher levels. It was an open secret that he was earmarked to take over the role as chief ranger in the near future.

⁵⁷ Ellse Tempelhoff (2016) "'Kroonprins' vas: 'n Wolf in wagter se klere', *Beeld*, 29 July 2016, pp.1.

⁵⁸ Confirmed on a return visit to the Kruger in August/September 2018.

⁵⁹ Event ethnography, Game Ranger's Association of Africa annual general meeting, June 2016.

⁶⁰ Semi-structured interview, KNP section ranger, March 2017.

⁶¹ 'Racism and Inequality at Kruger Park: Its like animal farm, say black employees' *City Press*, 3 April 2019 [Online] Available at: <https://city->

press.news24.com/News/racism-and-inequality-at-kruger-park-its-like-animal-farm-say-black-employees-20190319 (Accessed 20 April 2019).

⁶² Comments by senior KNP manager at the Game Ranger's Association of Africa Annual General Meeting, June 2016.

⁶³ Semi-structured interviews with two black KNP section rangers, March 2017

⁶⁴ On the WhatsApp status/profile, a KNP employee posted the results of the integrity test that stated "no deception" was noted in the examination, November 2016.

⁶⁵ 'Beyond its exceptional beauty, Kruger National Park is on the ropes and hurting', by Helena Kriel and Don Pinnock, *Daily Maverick*, 25 January 2022 [Online] Available at: <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2022-01-25-beyond-its-exceptional-beauty-kruger-national-park-is-on-the-ropes-and-hurting/> (Accessed 26 January 2022).

⁶⁶ Informal conversation with KNP employees, 2016.

⁶⁷ Semi-structured interview with senior KNP manager, February 2017.

⁶⁸ Fieldnotes. Three separate meetings with researcher staff and managers in the KNP, September 2018.

⁶⁹ Informal conversation with KNP scientist, 2016.

⁷⁰ 'The "black history" of the Kruger Park', *TimesLive*, 18 July 2021, [Online] Available at: <https://www.timeslive.co.za/sunday-times/books/news/2021-07-18-the-black-history-of-kruger-park/> (Accessed 14 October 2021).

⁷¹ Racism and Inequality at Kruger Park: Its like animal farm, say black employees' *City Press*, 3 April 2019 [Online] Available at: <https://city-press.news24.com/News/racism-and-inequality-at-kruger-park-its-like-animal-farm-say-black-employees-20190319> (Accessed 20 April 2019).

⁷² See Oxpickers: Investigative Environmental Journalism [Online] Available at: <https://oxpickers.org/-tools> (Accessed 3 November 2017).

⁷³ This mirrors an observation by Sara Ahmed (2012) on racism in institutional life during her tenure at Lancaster University in the United Kingdom (U.K). When she pointed out the lack of diversity at the university, she was often confronted with a counterargument "that it was because of geography – and you can't do anything about geography" (ibid.: 4).

⁷⁴ 'Kruger Park: Rhino poaching used as an excuse to torture us say black employees' *City Press*, 3 April 2019 [Online] Available at: <https://city-press.news24.com/News/kruger-park-rhino-poaching-used-as-an-excuse-to-torture-us-say-black-employees-20190403> (Accessed 26 April 2019).

⁷⁵ 'Huge payout for game ranger tortured by police', *Times Live*, 15 January 2018 [Online Available at: <https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2018-01-15-huge-payout-for-game-ranger-tortured-by-police/> (Accessed 26 April 2019)].

⁷⁶ Semi-structured interview (by co-researcher) with tortured KNP staff member, September 2016.

⁷⁷ 'Corruption and Rhino Conservation', *Save the Rhino*, 14 May 2019 [Online] Available at: <https://www.savetherhino.org/thorny-issues/corruption-and-rhino-conservation/?cn-reloaded=1> (Accessed 15 October 2021).

⁷⁸ Skukuza Archives NK/9/7 Bantoesake Mosambiekers 1971-1995 'Staking van swart werkers op Skukuza in die Krugerwildtuin' [Strike action of black workers at Skukuza in the KNP], Letter from Chief Director NPB to Director General Homeland Affairs, 12 March 1990.

⁷⁹ Semi-structured interview with KNP shop steward, February, 2017. Curiously, striking field rangers were assisted by some white section rangers in securing the services of an advocate to challenge a court interdict instigated by SANParks to put an end to the strike action. Many section rangers, including white section rangers acknowledge that the salaries paid to field rangers are inadequate and that KNP field ranger salaries compare poorly to that of field rangers employed by the provincial authorities. This is not necessarily evidence of care but a pragmatic response to ensure that field rangers return to work. In a park-wide exercise to re-evaluate the job description of field rangers in the hope of addressing the issue of salaries, the determination made was that the scope of work of field rangers has not changed in terms of anti-poaching, the adverse environmental conditions, fitness and so forth. What has changed is the volume and intensity of the work and this was not deemed sufficient to address the salary structure of field rangers at an organizational level. Semi structured interview with KNP senior manager, February 2017 and KNP section ranger, February 2017.

⁸⁰ Skukuza Archives NK/9/18 Bantoesake Veldwagters [Native Affairs Field Rangers] 1938 to 1946.

⁸¹ Informal conversation with housekeeper on the A band Paterson grading and personal observations of co-researcher. For an individual travelling from Skukuza, they would first need to get to Paul Kruger gate, a distance of approximately 12 kilometres. From there one would travel in a shared mini-bus taxi to Belfast, then another taxi to Mkhuhlu Plaza, change to another taxi to Hazyview, change vehicles to Bushbuckridge and then take a fifth taxi to Acornhoek. The time between changing taxis can vary greatly and in most cases a taxi will only leave its rank once it is filled. This can further extend the travelling time significantly. In a private vehicle the travel time is reduced to two hours. SANParks also pays employees housing allowances. For employees travelling from for example from Acornhoek to Skukuza, the travel time to and from work for a minimum of eight hours each

day is not feasible. As a result, the only option for such a worker receiving a housing subsidy working in Skukuza, is to rent a room close to Paul Kruger gate, in say Belfast. Often the accommodation on offer is also a single room, with no cooking facilities or even running water and often it precludes the possibility of living with young children, in effect mirroring the conditions experienced in compound system in the Park. The offer of a housing subsidy by SANParks does not present an improvement where the 'choice' between a single room in the compound and a single room outside presents no choice at all (see Rajak, 2016). Instead, it is a mark of profound corporate externalization, where the costs continue to be borne by employees (ibid.).

⁸² Skukuza Archives/Ranger Diaries Shangoni/ 27 July 1990.

⁸³ Informal conversation with KNP field ranger, January 2017.

⁸⁴ 'Full Quarterly Bulletin, No. 300', *South African Reserve Bank*, June 2021 [Online] Available at: <https://www.resbank.co.za/en/home/publications/publication-detail-pages/quarterly-bulletins/quarterly-bulletin-publications/2021/full-quarterly-bulletin---no-300---june-2021> (Accessed 18 October 2021).

⁸⁵ Informal conversation with KNP field ranger, June 2016.

⁸⁶ Informal conversation with senior KNP manager, April 2016.

⁸⁷ Informal conversation with ranger corporal, January 2017.

8

Conclusion: Towards a Dignified Conservation Workplace

8.1 Introduction

The whole that constitutes the Kruger National Park is made up of many opposing and contradictory fragments – the past and the present; care and coercion; praxis and ideology; structure and agency; white and black; wealth and poverty; continuity and change; civil and military; order and disorder; police and war; the production and erasure of black labour – to name but a few. It is precisely this myriad of elements that made making sense of the complexity that is the Kruger and the writing of this thesis so challenging. Despite the attempt to include as many contradictory elements as possible, this is by no means an exhaustive account of the Park, its history or the contemporary dynamics it is embroiled in.

However, what the foregoing does show, is that the Park's history cannot be consigned to the past, that its contemporary struggles vis-à-vis the black communities on its borders, the black labour in its employ, its martial practices, institutional racism and whiteness and its sense of exceptionalism and sanctioned authorities are features that become re-amplified at varying levels of intensity throughout its historical trajectory. These features become increasingly exaggerated in times of intense political pressure and when the sanctity of its physical integrity and symbolism becomes most threatened. This was evidenced during the 1980s when the Park formed part of the state security apparatus when the apartheid state faced existential revolutionary threats. Today, the contemporary 'war on poaching' has again provided such a conjunctural moment in bringing to the surface these deeply rooted features of its institutional makeup.

This thesis provides a deep analysis and thick description of the labour regime in the Park and how its labour is produced, structured and controlled using theories of police, labour value, labour process and

racialized social systems to conceive of a distinctive form of labour regime, the *police labour regime*, to explore what effects policing responses to an intensification of rhino poaching have on the anti-poaching rangers and the institutional life within the Park. It provides a counter argument to one of the central narratives that justify and perpetuate the continuation of its militarized responses – a return to ‘law and order’. It obscures that in returning to order, that order is asymmetrically applied and that in the contemporary South African and conservation political economy, order is highly racialized and demarcated along class lines. It is thus seeking a return to certain typology of order in reaffirming old hierarchies. This narrative of the inviolability of good order also conceals who bears the costs of such proclamations and the precise nature of those costs. It perpetuates a myth that while the sacrifices of rangers are regrettable, they are necessary in saving an iconic species such as the rhino. It shows that such discursive turns obfuscate the precarious workplace conditions of rangers. It is not only the risk of death but the systemic lack of adequate protective equipment; low salaries and the substantive inequalities it fosters; poor living conditions premised on labour control; labour migrancy and its effects on social reproduction; workplace relations premised on racialized paternalism and whiteness; long working hours; and the profound social, physical and mental health costs related not only to the fear of violence but the irregular nature of that violence, amongst others.

In concluding this thesis, what follows, seeks to reiterate the key findings of this work in the context of continuity and change; to offer a rebuttal to the clamour for solutions, that the pursuit of practical solutions delimits our thinking to only a fragment of the whole and thus omits an analysis of and addressing broader systemic ills; and lastly that these structures that shape inequality are also prone to rupture and that this moment offers the potentiality of transformation. Lastly, this moment also offers the reverse, a hardening of a position, and offers further areas for potential research to explore what consequences its actions over the last decade hold for conservation practice and the people who live and work in and around the Park.

8.2 Tracing Continuity and Change in the Kruger

As the impending demise of apartheid was becoming ever more evident in the early 1990s, a small cadre of National Parks Board (NPB) officials started articulating the need for change and greater inclusivity of previously marginalized communities. Dlamini (2020a) recounts an awareness by officials of the Park's own history of exclusion and conflict with neighbouring communities. Quoting an official at the time, there was an acknowledgement that “the old way of running the park was forever gone’...[t]he park could no longer afford to be seen as a ‘white man’s playground’” (ibid.: location 4345, single column view). Other officials lament the stark differences between the ‘First World’ experiences of visitors to the Park and the ‘Third World’ realities of many people living on its boundaries, that this juxtaposition “was to look at South Africa in miniature” (ibid.: location 4363, single column view). These officials recognised the paternalistic attitudes which the Park displayed in its relations with its neighbours, treating their claims with dismissiveness and that change was not only a political imperative but a cultural and ecological necessity (ibid.). In short, Dlamini sketches a growing awareness of the Park's history vis-à-vis the people in its ambit and that there was a need for change – and *fast* as the country was lurching towards democracy (ibid.).

Fast forward nearly two decades from Dlamini's observation, Park authorities again sought to recalibrate its outlook by proclaiming a progressive evolution of its management philosophy and its renewed place in the socio-ecological milieu (Venter et al. 2008). The authors, mostly SANParks conservation and scientific services personnel, recognized that over the past century, its focus purely on change “originated more internally and were largely environmental, whereas the emerging issues are more external and largely social” (ibid.: 173). In developing its new philosophy of conservation management premised on adaptive management, it wanted to show that by integrating the biophysical and social systems it could better conserve and rehabilitate the natural resources within the Park (ibid.). The authors argue that its management practices, despite their damaging consequences, has been largely well intentioned and successful (ibid.). Part of this ‘success’ was its ability to “incorporate new knowledge...and [an] understanding of the socio-ecological system...to be ‘forward-thinking’ in an increasingly complex and uncertain world” (ibid.: 173). While this management philosophy is

largely geared to ensuring ecosystem heterogeneity, thus ensuring species and structural diversity, there is no evidence that this so-called evolution in its management philosophy has recalibrated and brought about meaningful benefits or earnest relationships with impoverished communities on its borders.

The question that emerges then is whether the old ways of running the Park has indeed changed? What has changed in the Kruger and what has remained the same despite these episodic moments of reflexivity? In tracing the dynamic of continuity and change, Jonny Steinberg argues that the scholarship on post-apartheid policing has been so engrossed in continuities with apartheid era policing that “a preoccupation with continuity risks blinding scholarship to what *has* changed” (2014.: 175, emphasis in original). Staying alert to Steinberg’s caution, is it still appropriate to claim continuity and in doing so here, is there the danger that this analysis has become blinded to what has changed? Here I concur with Dlamini (2020a) when he states that there has been change and there has been continuity. More precisely, this thesis follows Orton et al. (2001), that new management techniques, improvement in housing, changing the somatic make-up of strategic and operational layers, amongst others do not in-and-of-itself denote change but that old practices and relations merely become reconstituted despite these changes. Thus, neo-paternalistic relations, for example, can coexist alongside the evolution in management practices and the composition of management (ibid.). Ewert and Hamman (1999) contend that democratization and pro-worker legislation has done little to fundamentally change the labour regime on South African farms. They show that unequal relations of power, poor wages, poor housing and work conditions remain in place, together with neo-paternalistic relations. These are also workplace features that stubbornly persist in the Kruger and it is here that this thesis contends that there has been very little fundamental change in the treatment of black labour and the structural features of the labour process. Where change is detected, it merely represents a reconstitution of old practices.

On the surface it appears that much has indeed changed in the Kruger since the fall of apartheid. Key strategic and operational levels have been diversified and black managers *do* occupy key roles in the management of the Park, a transition that started in the mid 1990s. Key positions are now occupied by African staff, particularly by women and importantly women of colour as is evidenced in the recent appointments of the general

manager of the savanna and grassland research unit¹ and the head ranger.² Similar changes are also evidenced in the appointment across the organization for example the appointment of SANPark's first black helicopter pilot,³ a job category that seems to epitomise the 'technical', an area of expertise that was historically the sole preserve of whites. So too has been the appointment of the general manager of wildlife veterinary services, a position that is occupied by a black woman for the first time since the inception of the organization in nearly a century. Change is also mirrored in the appointment of many black park managers, a key operational layer that effectively stymied any aspirations of greater and more meaningful interactions with neighbours across its stable of national parks across the country after the fall of apartheid (see Maguranyanga 2009). So too has there been a greater diversity in terms of scientists and regional rangers in positions outside of the executive layers and into those operational layers that have for many years been the sole preserve of whites. These are important changes at an organization and Park wide level, it changes the somatic norm of the organization in important ways (see Ahmed 2012). However, these changes in the bodily norm does not necessarily imply progress where this thesis has shown that these individual actors, who happen to be black, continue to turn to the common-sense notion of 'law and order' to combat wildlife crime, positions that reproduce the violence and injustices we have seen when the overseers of Kruger happened to be white. Maguranyanga supports this view, noting the "'de-racialization' or 'Africanization' of park management does not necessarily ensure the 'transformation' of park management practices" (2009: 183). Thus, in a situation where not all members of a subordinate group occupy subordinate positions in a social system it in itself is not evidence of a non-racialized social system (Bonilla-Silva 1997).

Furthermore, the Park has acknowledged black belonging in the Park beyond the obvious and irrefutable evidence of iron age settlements such as Thulamela and Masorini (amongst others) in the north of the Park. In its 2021 Heritage Day celebrations, the Park made explicit reference to the cattle killings in 1939, specifically with reference to Chief Nyongane and the manner it was disguised as disease control and that his death, a year later, was directly linked to the deep sense of loss associated with the cattle killing.⁴ The site of his burial is marked with a plaque that makes explicit this history of violent dislocation and begins to acknowledge the degree

cattle are revered in pastoral African societies and what impact these cattle killings held for African pastoralist societies. It does not begin to touch on the social fracturing, the destruction of household and generational wealth and its role in creating a new highly exploitable labour and class system. However, this first step is not an insignificant development, although I am cautious not to overemphasize the Park's reflexive turn in acknowledging the brutalities it meted out in the past when so much of it continues in its dealings with neighbouring communities, poaching suspects and labour, and that these forms of contemporary violence remain wilfully obscured in the present moment.

With regard to diversity transformation, this thesis has shown that where there has been continuity, it is in the ranger services where key operational layers continue to be occupied by white, mainly male employees. Where the urgency of counter poaching has become the highest order of priority within the Park, these priorities have been so far reaching so as to subordinate all other functions and other authorities in the Park. It has created a space not only for the continuation of the structures of domination that shape social relations and the manner value is extracted from its labour force but also its violent practices, practices that, as this thesis has shown, is drawn from its close association with the apartheid era security apparatus. These continuities are far from insubstantial, they *shape* modes of conduct and the institutional life in the Kruger.

The Kruger Park is so often associated with the idea that it is a place of distinction, an internationally revered icon that represents a victory of human endeavour in saving nature despite the manifold threats faced by nature. Hidden in this veneration of Kruger - and the preservationist project more generally - is the racist and eugenicist leanings informing the creation of these spaces. Stevenson-Hamilton's own thinking was informed by these eugenicist principles in his concern over black population growth and the threat black people, especially black children, held as a reservoir for the spread of malaria and the threat it posed to white settler populations (see Stevenson-Hamilton 1926). It is this threat said to reside in the 'native blood' that justified Stevenson-Hamilton's fervour for segregation of natives from whites and the eviction of natives from the Park (*ibid.*).

These underlying white supremacist leanings is also a feature that persisted at varying degrees of intensification throughout the historical

development of the Park. It was evident in the use of the pejorative term, 'huiskaffir', to refer to black residents living the Park (Chapter 3); the concerns over black population growth and its association with environmental destruction; the essentialised tropes of the Mozambican Shangaan and *his* ability as an ideal worker (see Chapter 3); the inhumane exclusion of the wives and children of Mozambican field rangers; the white supremacist flags Colleen Begg saw draped over computers in the early 1990s (see Chapter 7); and the open hostility towards black management appointees (Chapter 3). Today, these racist worldviews are expressed in the continued concerns over black population growth on the borders of the Park by contemporary white managers (see Chapter 3); the racially exclusive social circles (see Chapter 7); the section ranger demographic along its longitudinal axis where competency and trustworthiness is linked to race; the hidden, casual comments by senior Park officials about who was most competent to 'save nature'; and the animalization of black staff members suspected of being complicit in rhino poaching (see Chapter 7). These racist traits coincide with the Park's institutional whiteness, a feature that was ubiquitous in its management echelon for most of its history. While this feature of whiteness *is* changing, this thesis has shown the continuation of institutional whiteness at a very specific category of work within the Park – the work of anti-poaching and conservation policing. These features of whiteness and racism are not coincidental, the Kruger Park is deeply tethered to notions of race and racial ordering (see Hays 2019) and the clamour to restore 'law and order' under the logics of 'saving the rhino' has presented a contemporary historical juncture to reinforce these problematic relations, not only with regard to the disciplining of black people who are suspected of poaching but the black labour in its employ. It is these silences and the reluctance to address the issue of race, that continue to be a stumbling block in conservation initiatives in the Park and South Africa more generally (see Kepe 2009).

Furthermore, where black people are seen as 'out of place' within certain institutions or certain categories within institutions, they too have to reproduce those performances of whiteness to attain credibility. Thus, whiteness should not be purely viewed through the presence of white bodies but that we interrogate the politics of whiteness that characterize institutions and meanings around nature. Indeed, Van Zyl and Boersema (2017) acknowledge that despite a shift from white dominance in colonial

era regimes to black, majority governments, historical racialized inequalities persist in new social and institutional arrangements. Thus, there is a need to “challenge prevailing structures of racialized power and meaning” despite the absence of minority rule (*ibid.*: 652). Nature conservation and the conservation of rhino in particular, embody the power and meaning of white privilege. It is at this location that these structures of domination can be challenged.

Scholars also warn against sweeping allegations of the continued use of apartheid era counterinsurgency practices to counter rhino poaching (Shaw and Rademeyer 2016). While Shaw and Rademeyer demonstrate that counterinsurgency doctrine no longer informs SANDF doctrine or the security sector more generally, it is not the SANDF or other security actors that is brought under scrutiny here, it is the Kruger Park. The Kruger’s security plans during the late 1980s was premised on counterinsurgency doctrine, conceptualized in the main by actors like Otch Otto (see Chapter 4). The fact that Otto himself was reinserted in a senior operational planning capacity in the ‘war on poaching’, points to a maxim deployed by Steinberg, referred to in Chapter 2, that “old instruments generally survive only when agents in the present find a use for them” (2014: 191). Those instruments that have no use become obsolete (*ibid.*). To understand what has survived from the past, Steinberg argues that “one’s analytical eye must focus on the present” (*ibid.*: 191). This thesis has shown that actors in Kruger have found use in these old instruments, that certain facets of counterinsurgency and manhunting have been repurposed to deal with contemporary threats. It is clear that manhunting and the ability to detect, follow and intercept human tracks lay at the foundation of its 1980s concept security plan and it is an approach that has persisted to the present moment to detect and intercept rhino poachers. What has changed is the degree of interoperability or integration of SANDF troops with ranger teams. While there have been incidences of joint operations, particularly with special forces operators, my own participant observation with field ranger teams for close to a year indicate that field rangers work largely on their own, largely out of mistrust and the perceived lack of competency on the part of regular soldiers.

The irregular, disproportionate and at times deviant use of force is another aspect that has persisted from the past. It is yet another reminder that due to the inability of police in preventing crime, it has to resort to irregular practices and at times even resort to manufacturing success (see

Chapter 6). This thesis has shown that these irregular practices include the use of deadly force under questionable circumstances, the use of torture and employing techniques such as wetbagging and tubing that mirror apartheid era torture techniques, and most disturbingly, targeted killings and post-capture killings (see Chapter 6). This is also a feature of information gathering and intelligence-led policing. In the past, as is the case now, intelligence has always boasted a more subjective, data-led, and pre-emptive promise. However, as is the case in the past, information is highly susceptible to manipulation, especially when law enforcement entities pay handsomely for information. It can lead to inducing persons who would not have committed a crime and often such interdictions are presented as a success, when in reality it has been manufactured. Where these manufactured intelligence reports lead to a contact in ambushes, no attempt is made to arrest suspects, a feature that has also persisted from apartheid era security police ambushes.

Furthermore, its strategy to clear the Park from the outside and its similarities to Otto's creation of a cordon sanitaire in the border areas in Mozambique are on the surface very different and suggest a shift. Yet, the end result remains the same. In the 1980s it included a plan for the physical removal of entire populations living in the border regions, a dream that was never fully realized. In its war on poaching and clearing the Park from the outside, the dream is to remove a sub-set of the population from the border regions of Kruger under the guise of skills development training and subsequent voluntary emigration in search for low entry jobs. In both eras, black populations were framed as a threat, in the 1980s entire villages and today a sub-set of the population in the guise of young, unemployed black men. It is a racial bias that continues to inform how the Park views its neighbours even if the overt racialized categorizations of threat has changed.

The co-option of communities in the reframing of communities as 'partners' and the rhetoric to include communities in the broader green economy and its similarity to the limited interventions such as trading posts on the border to act as vehicles for human development under MOZAIC during the 1980s constitute another continuity, although the purported inclusion into the economy lay at starkly opposite ends. What has remained the same is the rhetoric of human development and the promise of economic development to wrest loyalties away from

opposition forces and bring populations under the sphere of influence of the Park.

The engagement of a host of former apartheid era security experts such as Major General (ret.) Johan Jooste, Colonel (ret.) Otch Otto and many former policeman and soldiers who imprint their expertise in the conservation arena in the present moment to ‘save the rhino’ shows that it is not only ideas and practices that get recycled but that individuals with skill sets in apartheid era COIN that get recycled in the ‘war on poaching’. Integration and joint operations with other actors in the security establishment marks another continuity with the past. What has changed, is that the Park’s integrated mission with other security actors, both state and private, is so much broader in the present moment. In the past South Africa was a pariah in the international community and had to rely on its own wits in deflecting security threats. Today, it is able to immerse itself in a global security community and global political economy of security. The Park, through agreements entered into by the state, benefits from cooperation from international police agencies such as Interpol and the FBI; intergovernmental crime fighting initiatives such as LEAP and the ICCWC; and other global initiatives to combat wildlife crime through its membership to CITES. Lastly the use of technology, while only mentioned in passing here, certainly was a feature of border security concerns during the apartheid era, for example the use of the electrified and lethal CAF/TAN fence and the similarities in the use of contemporary security infrastructure and technologies with equally deadly outcomes.

Other key features by which we can measure continuity within the Kruger is staff housing and the salary structure. There *have* been improvements in the quality of housing for junior staff that are compatible for families. However, very few of those field rangers who I interacted with and who live in these self-contained units did not live with their families. When they do, it is only for intermittent periods. Even then, these improvements in housing units account for only a small fraction of the overall types of accommodation in the Park and they in no way constituted the primary option for housing for staff in those ranger outposts that had these upgrades. Chapter 3 demonstrates that seventy seven percent of all accommodation types in Skukuza, which houses the greatest number of employees in the Park, is comprised of single room accommodation, all occupied by black workers. The overwhelming majority of field rangers I interacted with continued to live in single

roomed units and black employees continue to share ablution and outdoor cooking facilities.

The persistence in income polarization between upper- and lower-income earners also has not changed in over a century. Furthermore, the gap between high income earners and low-income earners are also greater than the average income gaps within the broader South African society. Where income polarization is a predictor for inequality, the levels of inequality is thus substantially greater *within* Kruger than the rest of the country. If we take seriously income polarization as a predictor for inequality, and that its magnitude is substantially amplified in the Park, then this thesis contends that inequality as a barometer has not shifted in nearly a century of the Park's existence and that the spatial characteristics of the Park as an enclosed space further amplify these inequalities. Park authorities continue to emphasize the Park's importance in terms of job creation and the broader regional economy (see Swemmer and Mmethi 2016, Venter et al. 2008). However, such proclamations do not match the reality that the areas adjacent to the Park continue to experience unemployment rates well above the national average (see Thakholi 2021) and that expanded public works programmes (EPWP) or so-called poverty relief programmes are part of the apparatus of pacification that seeks to discipline troublesome populations (Kienscherf 2016). Essentially, such welfare-cum-workfare programmes seldom address structural unemployment challenges, they undercut labour rights, they are unable to generate sufficient household savings for future shocks and they are often deployed as a substitute to conditional or unconditional cash transfers instead of being deployed as part of a broader safety net programme (Lal et al. 2010).

Precarity is another feature that has persisted, however the mechanism around precarity has changed. In the past the Park showed a distinct predilection for Mozambican labour, ostensibly because these workers represented the essentialized virtues of the Shangaan worker. In reality, Park management weaponized their precarity as migrant workers and the fear of being repatriated to a country that was beset by consecutive periods of deprivation under the coercive cotton regime and the civil war. This meant that for workers to escape these precarious lived realities, they had to reproduce the qualities sought by Park administrators – that of loyalty, and docility. Park administrators exploited this precarity of its migrant labour force to realize the desired levels of productivity from its

workforce. Today, precarity takes a different shape. It is not the fear of deportation that persists but financial indebtedness, pre-empted by the payment of significant supplementary or irregular income. Where field rangers become indebted through the purchase of aspirational consumer products such as vehicles or home improvements, it becomes necessary for these workers to reproduce the preferred qualities of labour value in the 'war on poaching', in this case, violence, out of fear of losing those opportunities that keep them in contention to earn these forms of supplementary income and becoming exposed to financial indebtedness.

Perhaps the most notable indicator of reconstituted change has been the reconfiguration of labour value in the Park. For most of the 20th century, Park authorities relied on loyalty as a marker of field ranger productivity and as a means to show fealty to its white section ranger cohort. In the racially structured social formations in the Park, typified by paternalism, it was fealty to the father figure in the guise of a white section ranger that acted as a measure of labour value. While the most overt act of loyalty was the arrest and even the use of violence against family members, the overall effect was to test to which social worlds black field rangers were most loyal, the Park or their cultural or familial peers. Under the police labour regime, paternalistic relations still continue. However, black field rangers are not necessarily as embedded in the paternalistic relations with white rangers or the social worlds of people living on the borders of the Park adjacent to where they work. Field rangers also do not find themselves in the same precarious position as migrant labour from Mozambique did, living in fear of deportation and they do benefit from the protections offered by the labour regulations. In cases where they are unfairly dismissed, they do have recourse through arbitration in the guise of the CCMA. Furthermore, black section rangers are also able to extract violence as a measure of productivity from field rangers. What has changed is the manner in which economic incentives in the form of significant amounts of supplementary income in the form of overtime, S&T, rewards, awards, experiential trips and training and the threat of exclusion from these incentives, structure workplace relations. Under the police labour regime, the most visceral measure of productivity is not only related to the willingness of field rangers to merely arrest individuals from their social worlds as it was in the past but their willingness to use violence, measured in the expenditure of ammunition or the use of torture on suspects. The purpose of both forms of violence serves to reproduce

another feature from the past, the expression of exemplary violence. Its purpose is to make, as Foucault (1977) argues, punishment legible to all, that the Park seeks to reaffirm old hierarchies. This is not to say that these practices on the part of its field ranger staff are part of a considered policy framework of the Park or SANParks but this thesis has shown that the particularism of the labour process in the Park, characterised by a dormitory labour regime, racialized paternalism and the payment of significant forms of supplementary income shape labour relations in *particular* ways that are diffuse and extend beyond the sale or purchase of labour power. These relations that shape field ranger practices cannot necessarily be seen, touched or felt directly (after Harvey 2010) but that they nevertheless have an objective presence. Furthermore, there is a long historical precedent of Park authorities seeking to shield those field rangers that were considered ‘special’ from prosecution in the execution of their duties. At times it included ‘turning a blind eye’, as Stevenson-Hamilton has done, to the illicit or the less-than-legal activities of its field ranger corps out of fear of losing its most productive workers. This penchant to conceal the illicit actions of its field rangers continued during the 1980s when the shooting of unarmed men, women and children were dealt with ‘in-house’ and this penchant for collusion and obscuring the actions of its field ranger cohort has continued under the contemporary intensification of rhino poaching.

8.3 The Clamour for Solutions: Towards a Dignified Conservation Workplace

Many of my conversations with conservation protagonists grappling with wildlife crime and conservation biologists concerned with the extinction of rhino has been characterised by the retort: ‘great you have told us what is wrong, what alternative solutions do you propose?’. Even the preeminent economist Thomas Piketty in his 2015 Nelson Mandela lecture when addressing the question of solutions to the gross inequality in South African life posited, “[w]e are in the social sciences...our objective is not to come with ready-to-apply solutions or a ‘magic bullet’, but rather to contribute to a more informed democratic discussion about inequality”.⁵ Similarly, Cox, in differentiating the radical distinction between problem solving approaches and critical theory, contends that the former seeks to fix limits to a problem area to bring it under precise

examination within “the prevailing social and power relationships and the institutions in which they are organised” but – and this is crucial – it does *not call into question* those very relationships and institutions and the hand they play in causing problems and inequalities (1992: 128). Both Piketty and Cox’s remarks are pertinent here as a response to almost every interaction I had with KNP management or with interlocutors involved in conservation management or conservation science - that it is not sufficient merely to focus our attention on the problem of rhino poaching as a fragment, or as an insulated phenomenon, but to bring into question our socio-political economic frame and the relational structural domination that perpetuates the levels of inequality and power differentials we observe in South African life.

A central theme of this thesis has been its critique of police as a response to curb wildlife crime, its underlying historical rationale pertaining to social control and the ways it shapes relations in the conservation workplace and structures the labour process. McMichael (2012) contends that Neocleous (2000, 2021), in his critique of police, has little to say on the issue of public safety where violence, although being socially complex, poses a very real threat within communities. Indeed, Neocleous (2000) states that *The Fabrication of Social Order* offers no proposals “to make the police more democratic...more accountable, less racist, less oppressive” (2000: xiv). In the light of this, how do we ensure safety and well-being within communities so they can be free of the tyranny of crime? These are legitimate critiques. Proponents of police argue that communities demand safety through police action, however, Alex Vitale ripostes that these same communities also demand “better schools, libraries, and jobs, but these services are rarely provided” (2017: location 60 single column view). This is so, because these communities have been and remain systematically denied access to political power to make their communities safer and healthier (ibid.). The genealogy of police suggests that police both as an institution and a form of power is not benevolent, that it is not intended to combat crime but to maintain social order, an order that seeks to maintain material and political differences between races and classes. Police does not equate to freedom from crime. As this thesis demonstrates, even where considerable resources and institutional priorities are committed to policing crime, it is unable to combat crime. Hence, police is simply not enough. This why this thesis highlights that policing turns its attention to misdemeanour

offences within the general populace, especially those sections of the population that are black and economically deprived. Furthermore, as a result of these limitations, it resorts to disproportionate, irregular and even extrajudicial force and where it is conservation law enforcement staff who perpetrate these acts, they risk considerable deleterious consequences to their emotional and mental health with knock-on consequences for their families and the communities they come from. On a practical level, Alex Vitale (2017) argues that we do need to reform the police, we need to get rid of the warrior mentality and militarized tactics, and we need greater public oversight over police actions. Limiting the scope of policing can also dramatically reduce state violence without sacrificing public safety (ibid.). Here Vitale leans on the examples of decriminalizing aspects such as alcohol, gambling, sex and drugs that limits the scope of police, reduce aggressive and invasive policing without it impacting on public safety (ibid.). However, he does concede that “there is a larger truth that must be confronted” (ibid.: location 3361, single column view). There is no technocratic fix as long as the basic logics of police remain (ibid.). Neocleous (2021) also argues that we start not with asking how police should be organized, whether they should be armed or allowed to use teargas or what is an appropriate use of police discretion or even what training is more appropriate. Instead, he argues, we should begin to ask questions about police power, that our starting point should instead be a critique of contemporary political economy (ibid.). It is clear that police, infused with the logics of its historical formation, is not the answer.

However, as Büscher (2021), following Foucault, reminds us, power can also be positive and productive. Power does not necessarily mean that its purposes are repressive, it can also be harnessed to facilitate and enable (ibid.). It is to this potentiality of power that we should look to when communities seek to be free from crime. In other words, that it is possible, as Jackson (2013) argues, to conceive of an alternative politics of how society is ordered. Here, instead of systematically disinvesting in poor neighbourhoods, if the power of the state is instead geared to improved housing, services, education, social safety nets, a share in political and economic power and a myriad of other interventions, then power can indeed be positive and productive.

Like Piketty, I hope that this thesis can contribute to a more democratic discussion about the social costs of conservation in general and what conservation under the spectre of police mean for an underclass of labour

in the KNP who are discursively valorized but in reality, are victims not only of racism, workplace victimization and animalization but that these workplace dynamics embroil them in disturbing incidents of abuse and torture. Where such institutional practices form part of an organ of state, such developments undermine the very principles of a just and equal society that many hoped for in their defiance of apartheid. Furthermore, the violence that is meted out against suspects, dehumanizes both the victims and the perpetrators of violence. Thus, the claims by Park management that its responses to the surge in wildlife crime is 'responsible' (see Chapter 1), does not add up to the weight of the evidence presented here. Instead it has treated its labour force as an 'asset', a thing that is disposable and can be used up. In tracing what has changed and what has stayed the same, a central aspiration of this thesis is to bring attention to the continuities and in particular the structural domination and the manner policing practices continue to shape relations in the Park. Where Park officials are understandably daunted by the scope of change that is required to bring about social justice, this thesis seeks to highlight that many of those injustices are of its own making and rooted in its particular history. It requires a painful reading of its past and deconstructing and interrogating the structures that allow for the continuity of inequality and injustice into the present to begin to take meaningful steps to addressing these issues *within* the Park. The hope is that the analysis presented here can help the Park and its people to shape its own history of the present and realize a conservation workplace premised on dignity and care. This can provide a stepping stone to a meaningful and wider engagement with society, especially those residents on its borders on both sides of the international boundary who have for so long carried the considerable costs of living in its ambit.

8.4 The 'Fragile Fortress': Cracks in the Structure and Areas for Potential Future Research

The Kruger National Park has, throughout its history positioned itself as exceptional. It, at times, usurped the authorities and functions of other state institutions, at times, superseding the authority of the nation state. It has always looked to position the observations and lay-expertise of its own officials as more authoritative in relation to that of other state departments. This was demonstrated in its assessment of the foot and

mouth disease outbreak and the ‘unscientific’ approaches of officials from the veterinary department; the veracity of military intelligence that pointed to the build-up of German troops within Portuguese East Africa during the Second World War; the assessment of threat from refugees at the height of the apartheid state’s counter revolutionary efforts during the 1980s; and the competency and field craft skills of its own field ranger corps in relation to that of soldiers from the SADF. More recently, over the last decade in its ‘war on poaching’, it continued to position its own competency in apprehending poachers above those of the military and the police, its expertise as a world leader in conservation science (see Bunn 2003, Carruthers 2008, 2017) and a competent custodian of the largest rhino population on the planet.⁶

However, this façade of Kruger as exceptional, as a site of excellence and distinction, is slowly crumbling. The last-mentioned claim, is one that has for some time been met with scepticism⁷ and evidenced, most recently, by Kruger’s own admission that its white rhino population numbers have fallen from approximately 9 000 animals in 2013 to approximately 5 100 in 2017 (Ferreira et al. 2019). The latest reports point to a reduction of up to seventy percent of the white rhino population over the last decade, estimating its white rhino populations to be in the region of 3 500 animals in 2021.⁸ That these significant reductions in population numbers, attributed to a range of factors, most notably the severe drought in 2015/2016 and rhino poaching (see Ferreira et al. 2019) or that its rhino population numbers have always been exaggerated due to a problematic counting methodology,⁹ is moot. The point is that there is a growing erosion of public trust in the Kruger and the conspicuous role it has played in shaping the lives of people and the landscape over the last century. This erosion of authority is also evidenced in other spheres – the threat of closure of the Skukuza Periodical Court which has for so long been a vehicle to mete out its authorities and exemplary punishments;¹⁰ the open and collective resistance from within its black employee ranks in the 2012 strike (see Chapter 7); open letters to the press and executive management highlighting racism and inequality in the Park;¹¹ and allegations of torture within the Park and an internal investigation/commission of inquiry into one of its most senior and long serving rangers;¹² the countless acts of sabotage by staff, including rhino poaching; and documenting human rights violations and administrative malpractice (see Matelakengisa 2020). One senior SANParks manager referred to this impermanence, stating

I have always thought about this place, two million hectares, a 1 000-kilometre boundary, as a fortress and I am writing a little article...that says the 'fragile fortress'. I've learnt how fragile this place is.¹³ [emphasis added]

The authority that it held in shaping daily life of people is faltering. It alludes to a potential rupture, yet another conjunctural moment in the history of the Park. It is crucial that such moments are bookmarked and to assess whether it presents an opportunity for meaningful transformation and movement towards a non-racial, socially just polity and a dignified workplace premised on dignity and care.

8.4.1 Areas for Potential Future Research

However, such a moment can also be a precursor to reassert its failing authority, a hardening of a position that seeks to place the saving of nature as the highest order of priority. The consequences are that the costs of such a hardening of position will continue to be borne by the people living in poverty on its borders and its employees, both white and black. Many of the innovations in terms of the organization of work, the implementation and roll out new security technologies and infrastructure, the reamplification of racialized paternalism and institutional whiteness, amongst others threaten to set the Park on a continued course that will continue to hold consequences for people and their relationship with nature. The following section offers a handful of areas that could require further investigation to measure their effects in the continuation of these structures.

The Afterlives of Security Technologies

Foremost is the question around the use of military technology in conservation and what consequences its use holds for conservation labour. The KNP has spent in the region of ZAR 1 billion between 2011 and 2016¹⁴ (see also Aucoin and Donnenfeld 2017) on security infrastructure and technologies. Scholars have pointed out the early role technologies played in conservation territoriality (Peluso and Vandergeest 2011). The debate around the use of a specific type of technology in conservation, in this case security technologies, has emphasized the increasing synergy between conservation and war and how these

technologies are being trialled to market new weapons at arms fairs, pointing to the political economic incentives embedded in these collaborations (Duffy 2016, Lunstrum 2018). Neocleous and Rigakos also argue that militarization, be it the police or in this case conservation, creates a “laboratory for the militarization of domestic security” (2011: 18). However, despite the prominence of security infrastructure and technology in contemporary conservation there is very little critical evaluation of the ways it impacts on the labour process through the expansion of labour time and what consequences the expansion of labour time into the night holds for anti-poaching rangers. Stewart (2012) contends that labour time has been substantially understudied in the central role it plays in the theory of labour value and that it is a largely unrecognized foundation of labour exploitation in the South African context where the long working week has remained stubbornly stable for over a century.

The adoption of technologies also exposes conservation agencies to financial risk. It is not only the installation and capital costs of these technologies, the costs of which are often carried by donor funds, but the on-going life cycle, maintenance, licencing and service provider costs. There are already indications of the dire financial risks faced by the Kruger Park, attributed to the loss of income from tourism due to the Covid-19 pandemic and budgetary cuts of up to 66 percent.¹⁵ Scholarship is required to assess what links this financial precarity have to the costs associated with the acquisition of technology and conditionalities embedded in its bilateral agreements and it what ways it opens up further opportunities for private capital at the expense of public interests.

The use of technology also brings with it an intensification of workplace surveillance and accounting controls. This thesis has shown what implications accounting controls hold for the labour process and casting the analysis to the role technology plays in workplace surveillance and its implications for the labour process and the relations embedded in this process can further enrich this analysis.

The predictive capabilities of security infrastructure and data collection platforms are also an area of concern. The literature on precrime assemblages and predictive algorithms embedded in these technologies used in policing has concerning consequences for the objects of surveillance and the governance of society in general (see Mantello 2016, Harcourt 2007). Using these analytical threads can also shed light on the

nature of governance within conservation spaces and broaden our theoretical conceptualization of precrime assemblages in conservation governance. These technologies also have considerable legacies beyond what they were initially intended for (see McMichael 2012). Scholarship is needed to trace the afterlives of the use of security technology in conservation and what implications they hold for life in these circumscribed spaces in ways that was not anticipated at its inception.

The use of dogs for tracking and subduing a suspect during an arrest is also another innovation that has concerning potentialities. The use of dogs in colonial suppression and terrorising colonized populations (see Johnson 2009) and its use in the suppression of civil unrest and making claims against the state traditionally all used dogs as a ‘technology of terror’. A U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) report shows that the use of dogs in civilian policing represent anti-black violence, that police dogs are used instead to instil terror not to “counter a physical threat [to officers] but to inflict punishment”.¹⁶ Where the use of dogs in conservation policing is often framed as a ‘game changer’, its near ubiquitous use in combatting wildlife crime and its problematic historical resonances with racial suppression, further analysis is needed into what its use says about restoring old hierarchies and in ways both dog handlers, who are invariably black field rangers, and the people who are the objects of these policing interventions using dogs, are brutalised.

Where the use of security infrastructure and dogs are often positioned by Kruger managers to make rangers safer, further investigation is needed to test these proclamations. Technologies that extend the working day into the night may provoke rangers to continue to use disproportionate force when they have less ability to assess threats. This, together with the use of dogs which has been historically used to ‘inflict punishment’ rather than necessarily bring about arrest, may further impact on the mental health of field rangers and inflict further moral injuries.

Actor Agency, Cosmology, Ostracization and Gender

This thesis delved in to the structural issues at play, specifically the manner rewards and workplace incentives and social formations have and continue to structure labour relations in the Kruger. Intersected with these questions related to structure are in what ways agency shapes the practices and the institutional life in the Park. Here Scott laments that the

social sciences are often complicit in treating nonelites as “ciphers of their socioeconomic characteristics”, and while these factors are not insignificant, that it “is inadmissible, both morally and scientifically...to understand the behaviour of human agents without for a moment listening systematically to how they understand what they are doing and how they explain themselves” (2012: xxiii-xxiv).

In this regard, it would be instructive how the question of religion/the occult/cosmology – phenomena that frequently reared its head my conversation with interlocutors in the Park - shapes the very different social and political worlds of black and white in and around the Park and how it is used as a vehicle, not only to justify their actions, but the manner religion is mobilized specifically in times of social upheaval or uncertainty (see Niehaus 2001). Sodikoff (2009) and Jauregui (2010) give us some preliminary handles to understand how cosmology affects and shapes the lives of conservation agents in Madagascan forests and civilian police in India respectively. Jauregui (2010) in particular, points out the manner these public officials justify the use of violence as part of a professional and moral duty to restore order. These insights also resonate with how black and white rangers in the Park justify violence. The former mirrors the moral duty elicited by Jauregui’s (2010) interlocutors and the latter see the role of religion in restoring a social order premised on racial hierarchy.

Scholarship is also necessary to build on work by Jacoby (2001) to understand how rangers negotiate social relations in the communities - who also happen to be the object of their policing actions - they live in. The paucity of the stories of black rangers as conservationists is still a stark absence. More work is needed to fill in these considerable absences and to rewrite the history of conservation in terms of the black experience. Furthermore, the absence of women in conservation, not only those in the managerial layers, but those task workers who harvest resources in the Park (see Dlamini, 2020a); the narratives around female migrants and how they were constructed as undesirable; and female field rangers is another lacuna. My limited interactions with these female field rangers in the Park suggest doing conservation is a significantly different experience for them. At the same time, we should remain alert to the essentialized tropes of women in conservation law enforcement and that their presence presents a ‘softer’ approach to conservation.

Labour Fragmentation

Furthermore, a thorough analysis of the nature of the conservation workplace regime in the Park through the various political epochs is needed; how it shaped the labour process; and the ways it shaped worker resistance over time can also enrich this analysis. Where the workers are dispersed across the Park in an area that is similar in size to the state of Israel, in what ways does this fragmentation of workers affect their solidarity; are there variances in workplace regimes at these micro levels; how do workers view resistances that are commonly portrayed as corrupt; how do they themselves understand the relations of power and how do they reinforce or undermine these features that shape labour process in the Park?

A Focus on Communities

Building on the work of the effects of militarized conservation on communities adjacent to the Park (see Sithole 2018, Thakholi 2021), this investigation has contributed in a small way to this and other works but unfortunately space did not allow for a fuller account of its impacts on these communities. Where some scholars like Shaw and Rademeyer (2016) contend that there is no evidence that militarized conservation holds any dangers for proximate communities, preliminary evidence gathered during this research suggests otherwise. An in-depth ethnography into the communities adjacent to KNP is still a lacuna in understanding broader costs of militarized conservation around Kruger, especially the consequences its strategy to 'clear the park from the outside' hold for target communities. In addition, Dlamini (2020a) shows how Park Forums are mobilized as evidence of the Park's engagement with its neighbours. In their disputes with the Park, communities often concede to settlements that are unfair, as in the case with disputes over human wildlife conflict (ibid.). What is not clear, is why communities accede to these unfair settlements; how co-option operates; how it undermines dissent; and what are the actual dynamics that shape the institutional lives of these institutions that impede more meaningful partnerships.

Furthermore, bringing an understanding of the social worlds of actual poachers, beyond a criminological perspective, is also very necessary. This kind of research, despite its many challenges, would go a long way to challenging the objectified version of poachers in the public imagination

and bring greater understanding of the lived realities of this underclass of people and may contribute to identifying and ultimately addressing the structural conditions that this section of the population face.

Historical Rhino Numbers

Historical rhino estimates form the basis of almost any analysis of a species under threat. A critical historical investigation is required to unravel these historical assertions in how we understand the ecology and status of rhino of both species across the African continent. From a political ecological perspective, sensitive to the existence of power relations inherent in knowledge production, deconstructing contemporary science around population estimates, together with a critical historical analysis can contribute immensely to challenging notions of species in crisis. Following in the footsteps of Melissa Leach and James Fairhead in their seminal volumes *Misreading the African Landscape* (1996) and *Reframing Deforestation* (1998), they challenge commonly held notions of forest cover loss; that these narratives are based on spurious evidence; and that they hold material consequences for people living in these contexts that require an 'urgent' need to be conserved. A critical analysis of historical rhino numbers can offer a meaningful critique to the imperative of 'saving rhino' and how rhino (and other charismatic species) are used as a tool to further legitimate enclosure and impose social order.

Notes

¹ [Online] Available at: <https://www.sanparks.org/scientific-services/meet-the-team/dr-danny-govender> (Accessed 12 October 2021).

² 'Q&A Sessions: Meet Cathy Dreyer, the rhino whisperer', *Mail & Guardian*, 16 September 2021 [Online] Available at: <https://mg.co.za/environment/2021-09-16-qa-sessions-meet-the-rhino-whisperer-cathy-dreyer/> (Accessed 12 October 2021).

³ 'Media Release: SANPark's celebrates South Africa's first black game capture pilot', 7 December 2020 [Online] Available at: <https://www.sanparks.org/about/news/?id=58144> (Accessed 12 October 2021).

⁴ [Online] Available at: <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/hashtag/?keywords=heritagemonth> (Accessed 12 October 2021).

⁵ ‘Transcript of Nelson Mandela Annual Lecture 2015’ [Online] Available at: <http://www.nelsonmandela.org/news/entry/transcript-of-nelson-mandela-annual-lecture-2015> (Accessed 9 December 2015).

⁶ Comment made by senior Kruger manager at the Southern African Development Corporation (SADC) Rhino Management Group (RMG) meeting, held in Skukuza, February 2017.

⁷ See comments by veterinarian, Dr. Kobus du Toit, ‘Kruger rhino numbers in crisis, says expert’, *Mail and Guardian*, 8 June 2015, [Online] Available at: <https://oxpeckers.org/2015/06/kruger-rhino-numbers-in-crisis-says-expert/> (Accessed 5 April 2019) at end of 2014 he estimates between 1 529 and 4 585 white rhino in the KNP and refutes the 8 000 to 11 000 white rhino that are estimated to be in the Park using mathematical growth formula of 7 and 8% growth.

⁸ ‘Shocking statistics reveal that Kruger rhino population has dropped by nearly 70% in 10 years’, *Daily Maverick*, 28 January 2021, [Online] Available at: <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2021-01-28-shock-statistics-reveal-that-kruger-rhino-population-has-dropped-by-nearly-70-in-ten-years/> (Accessed 8 March 2022).

⁹ See comments by veterinarian, Dr. Kobus du Toit ‘Kruger rhino numbers in crisis, says expert’, *Mail and Guardian*, 8 June 2015, [Online] Available at: <https://oxpeckers.org/2015/06/kruger-rhino-numbers-in-crisis-says-expert/> (Accessed 5 April 2019).

¹⁰ ‘Skukuza court closure was like a “knife in the back” of rangers’, *Mail and Guardian*, 18 April 2012 [Online] Available at: <https://mg.co.za/environment/2021-04-18-skukuza-court-closure-was-like-a-knife-in-the-back-of-rangers/> (Accessed 8 March 2022).

¹¹ Racism and Inequality at Kruger Park: Its like animal farm, say black employees’ *City Press*, 3 April 2019 [Online] Available at: <https://citypress.news24.com/News/racism-and-inequality-at-kruger-park-its-like-animal-farm-say-black-employees-20190319> (Accessed 20 April 2019).

¹² ‘Kruger park ranger suspended for allegedly torturing black employees’, *City Press*, 12 November 2019 [Online] Available at: <https://www.news24.com/citypress/news/kruger-park-ranger-suspended-for-allegedly-torturing-black-employees-20191112> (Accessed 8 March 2022).

¹³ Comments made by senior SANParks manager, GRAA AGM, June 2016.

¹⁴ Semi-structured interview with senior KNP manager, March 2017.

¹⁵ 'Beyond its exceptional beauty, Kruger National Park is on the ropes and hurting', *Daily Maverick*, 25 January 2022 [Online] Available at: <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2022-01-25-beyond-its-exceptional-beauty-kruger-national-park-is-on-the-ropes-and-hurting/> Accessed 16 March 2022).

¹⁶ See [Online] Available at: <https://www.aaihs.org/police-dogs-and-anti-black-violence/> (Accessed 12 September 2019).



Appendices

Appendix 1: Post Interview Confidentiality Form

**International
Institute of
Social Studies**

Respondent # : _____

Post-Interview
Confidentiality Form

It is my goal and responsibility to use the information that you have shared responsibly. Now that you have completed the interview, I would like to give you the opportunity to provide me with additional feedback on how you prefer to have your data handled. Please select one of the following statements:

- You may share the information just as I provided it. No details need to be changed and you may use my real name when using my data in publications or presentations.
- You may share the information just as I provided it; however, please do not use my real name. I realize that others might identify me based on the data, even though my name will not be used.
- You may share the information I provided; however, please do not use my real name and please change details that might make me identifiable to others. In particular, it is my wish that the following specific pieces of my data not be shared without first altering the data so as to make me unidentifiable (describe this data in space below):

Visiting address
International Institute of Social Studies
Kortenaerkade 12
The Hague

Postal address
P.O.Box 29776
2502 LT The Hague
The Netherlands

T +31 61 949 1128
E smidt@iss.nl
W www.iss.nl

You may contact me at the following contact details:
emilesmidt@hotmail.com and/or +27 82 071 2340

Respondents Signature: _____

Date: _____

Investigator's Signature: _____

Date: _____



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Personal Information

Date of Birth	13 November 1972
Place of Birth	Cape Town, South Africa
Nationality	South African

Summary

- **Protected Area Management experience of approximately 18 years** in southern and East Africa.
- **Strong practical experience** in conservation management, personnel management, conservation law enforcement, black rhino metapopulation management including transnational black rhino translocations.
- **Strong project management skills**, with practical experience in implementing complex logistical projects in remote locations, working with multi-level stakeholders and a demonstrated ability to work independently.
- **Strong interest in the political ecology of conservation**, specifically unravelling what consequences normative, progressive sounding interventions may hold for conservation practice and people.

- **Strong interpersonal skills**, strong affinity to working with marginalised and vulnerable groups of people as well as engaging constructively with elite and powerful actors.
- **Strong problem analysis and analytical writing skills**, and the ability to disseminate findings to non-academic audiences

Education and Qualifications

2014– 2022 **PhD Development Studies**

International Institute of Social Studies of Erasmus University, Rotterdam

2012 – 2013 **MSc Practicing Sustainable Development** [Pass with Merit]

Royal Holloway University of London

Distinction for Dissertation: *Continuing the Conversation: Unravelling Conservation Discourses and Practices in northern Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa*

2001 – 2002 **Bachelor of Technology: Nature Conservation**

Tshwane University of Technology

Distinction for mini-dissertation: *Principle and Preferred foods of Black Rhino in Marakele National Park*

1991 – 1995 **National Diploma Nature Conservation**

Cape Peninsula University of Technology

Academic Conferences & Workshops

2019 Crisis Conservation Seminar, Rhino Convention Centre, Hoedspruit, South Africa

- 2019 Cosmopolitan Karoo Research Forum, Stellenbosch University, South Africa
- 2018 Ending Wildlife Trafficking: Local Communities as Change Agents, Global Initiative against Transnational Crime, University of Cape Town, South Africa
- 2017 BIOSEC Workshop: Conservation in Conflict Areas, University of Sheffield University, U.K.
- 2017 The Value of Life: Measurement, Stakes, Implications Conference, Wageningen University, The Netherlands
- 2016 Current perspectives on Conservation in (and beyond) the Limpopo National Park. Workshop for sharing and mobilizing knowledge, Universidade, Eduardo Motlane, Mozambique
- 2016 14th Annual Savanna Science Networking Meeting, Kruger National Park, South Africa
- 2015 New Voices in Social Sciences, part of the 12th Development Dialogue, International Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, The Netherlands

Publications

- 2019 Duffy, R., Massé, F., **Smidt, E.**, Marijnen, E., Büscher, B., Verweijen, J., Ramutsindela, M., Simlai, T., Joanny, L. and Lunstrum, E. (2019) 'Why we must Question the Militarisation of Conservation', *Biological Conservation*, 232. pp.66-73.
- 2015 Embido Bejeno, C., Harcourt, W., Parra Heredia, J.D., Radley, B., Sathyamala, C., **Smidt, E.**, Soukotta, T. and Zahda, Y. (2015) 'Guest Editorial: Rethinking Democracy', *Development*, 58(1), pp. 7-9.

- 2015 **Smidt, E.** (2015) 'Last Word: 12th Development Dialogue - Rethinking Democracy: A Photo Essay', *Development*, 58(1), pp. 150-152.

Academic Awards & Scholarships

2014 EUSA_ID Erasmus Mundus PhD Scholarship

2013 Paula Anne Travel Award, Royal Holloway University of London

2012 Vanina Award, Royal Holloway University of London

2012 Irene Marshall Scholarship, Royal Holloway University of London

Non-Academic Employment History

Project Leader: Serengeti Rhino Repatriation Project

2009 – 2010 Frankfurt Zoological Society

Management and implementation of a multi-million US dollar project to translocate black rhino from South Africa to the Serengeti NP, Tanzania. Implementation of all technical aspects of the project including purchasing of assets; financial management and reporting; field ranger anti-poaching training; conceptualisation of reintroduction, security and monitoring plans; habitat assessment and threat analysis, multi-level and multi-national stakeholder liaison; infrastructure development; transport logistics; introduction of first cohort; boma care and post-release monitoring.

Section Ranger: iMfolozi Game Reserve

2004 – 2008 Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife

Management of 30 000ha in the west of iGR; personnel management of law enforcement and maintenance personnel; financial management of station budget; conservation law enforcement with strong emphasis on firearms proficiency and area coverage; strong emphasis on black rhino monitoring; wildlife management including the chemical immobilisation of lion and wild dog; use of Patrol Management Systems (ArcView 3.2) to measure patrol effectiveness; liaison with traditional leaders and other law enforcement agencies; infrastructure management; human wildlife conflict investigations and submission of claims.

Acting Park Manager: Marakele National Park

2003 – 2004 South African National Parks

Management and responsibility for all conservation and tourism related activities, personnel and assets; management of multi-stakeholder forums – contractual park, fire protection associations, community policing, tourism stakeholders, neighbouring cattle farmers, local communities; assessment of tenders; park development and expansion; budget planning and implementation; IEMS and SMP planning; funding proposals for Extended Public Works Programmes.

Section Ranger: Marakele National Park

2000- - 2003 South African National Parks

Management of law enforcement and maintenance staff; biological monitoring and rehabilitation programmes (emphasis on black rhino monitoring using tracking); management of large bush encroachment and alien plant eradication programme; infrastructure development particularly perimeter fence construction; and tourism infrastructure; wildlife introductions; visitor management.

Section Ranger: Karoo National Park

1997 – 2000 South African National Parks

Management of a small law enforcement and monitoring team; specific focus on black rhino reintroductions, boma management and monitoring with an emphasis on tracking; long term boma management of orphaned black rhino calf; rehabilitation of newly proclaimed areas; captive breeding of endangered riverine rabbits and monitoring of free ranging population.

Community Development Officer: Qwa Qwa National Park

1994 – 1997 Agri-Eco

Management of a nursery of 70 000 tree and vegetable seedlings; permaculture demonstration garden; establishment of community gardens including small-scale farmers in neighbouring Lesotho; environmental education courses run in conjunction with neighbouring schools and university.

Student Intern: Golden Gate Highlands National Park

1993 South African National Parks

Presentation of week-long environmental education courses; adventure activities; basic environmental management.

Additional Skills

SPSS, QGIS, Atlas.ti, Office suite, presentations, participatory video.

Specialised field craft skills (tracking and telemetry); Patrol Management Systems; Dan Inject darting systems; specialised skills in solar electrical fencing systems; Rhino Specialist Group accredited trainer; physical and chemical capture specialist knowledge; accredited assistant trainer in basic field ranger skills; advanced firearms handling, accredited range officer.

Referees

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