

Danger in Police Culture

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Danger in Police Culture: Perspectives from South Africa

BY

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

*In memory of a beloved South African friend who embraced words and championed
my work.*

Mrs Nanette Evans

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List of Acronyms

APC	Armoured Personnel Carrier
AVLS	Automatic Vehicle Location System
BRVs	Bullet Resistant Vests
CAS	Crime Administrative System
CCCF	Cluster Crime Combating Forum
CPF	Community Police Forum
CPU	Crime Prevention Unit
CSC	Community Service Centre/Charge Office or the Client Service Centre.
CSVR	The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation
DCS	Department of Correctional Services
DPS	Directorate of Police Safety
DSO	Directorate of Special Operations (also referred to as the Scorpions)
EHW	Employee Health and Wellness
FLASH	Firearms Liquor and Second-hand Goods Control
HAWKS	The Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (also referred to as Hawks)
ICD	Independent Complaints Directorate
IPID	The Independent Police Investigative Directorate
MDC	Multi-Disciplinary Enquiry Committee
NIJ	National Institute of Justice (the United States)
NIU	National Intelligence Unit
PCCF	Provincial Crime Combating Forum
PDR	Police Death Rate
PMG	Parliamentary Monitoring Group
POPCRU	The Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union

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R5	5.6 mm Assault Rifle
ROC	Resolving of Crime Learnership Course
SAP	The South African Police
SAPS	The South African Police Service
SAPU	The South African Policing Union
SJC	Social Justice Coalition
STF	Special Task Force
SWOT	Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threat Analysis
TRT	Tactical Response Team
VISPOL	Visible Policing Unit
WCOD	Western Cape Organisational Development

About the Author

Dr Gráinne Perkins is currently the Chief of Police and Executive Director of Public Safety at the University of Southern Maine. Prior to this, she held the position of Interim Director of Police Accountability for the Seattle Police Department. Her professional experience spanning three continents working with three different police agencies is complemented with sustained criminological research. She has published works on the occupational and organisational aspects of policing which include, but are not limited to, police trauma including police suicide, memorialisation in policing and the use of body-worn cameras. She holds two Master's from Ireland and was awarded the 2019 Richard Block Award for an outstanding thesis for her PhD in Criminology from the University of Cape Town South Africa. Her police experience ranges from community policing in Ireland to international work with Interpol and she has spent 15 years as an operational police detective investigating serious offences including homicide and organised crime. Dr Perkins was an adjunct Professor at Seattle University and has taught criminology courses and guest lectured at the University of Cape Town, University College Dublin and at the University of Zurich.

The author's proceeds from the sale of this book will be used to support the *Perkins Sióchána Scholarship* which was established to finance the continuous development of South African graduate students in Criminal Justice and Criminology studies in the Global South.

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Foreword

Clifford Shearing

Every so often a book appears that offers a novel perspective on a key feature of police and their policing that encourages scholars and police alike to look anew. This book by Gráinne Perkins, who began career as an Irish police officer and who is now the Police Chief at the University of Southern Maine, is such a book.

It is a book by a sophisticated policing scholar who has skilfully drawn upon her experience as a police officer to explore the relationship between police and danger and its impacts – impacts that shape police, their policing, the communities they operate in and the danger they face itself. This is a book that will transform thinking not simply about South African policing – which is the book's empirical focus, but about police, policing and indeed social studies more generally.

To do this Perkins draws on the theoretical lenses of Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu and Theodore Sarbin and couples this with a sensitive empathetic, appreciative enquiry of police and policing in a 'township' community in Cape Town, to provide a novel account of danger, police and policing. South African policing has experienced an extraordinary record of violence by police and to police, including the killing of police officers killed on and off duty.

In her account of policing and danger Perkins' builds upon, and extends, a rich literature on South African policing. This is itself a significant accomplishment.

But Perkins does much more than open wider the window on police and policing within South Africa. What is as significant is Perkins' ability to identify the general in the particular, the global in the local and to advanced police and policing studies generally. In doing so Perkins takes her place alongside an illustrious line of thinkers within police studies who have used ethnographies within particular locations to advance our understanding of policing. In doing so Perkins adds significantly to an expanding body of work from the Global South that is reconceiving policing studies and criminology.

As I have already suggested, Perkins does much more than this by contributing to a material turn in scholarship that insists, that social studies become socio-material studies that recognise that human activity is shaped both by what people do as actors as well as what things do as 'actants', to use Bruno Latour's term. This contribution is evident, for example, in Perkins's insightful analysis of police funerals, where she expands upon Manning's initial observations regarding the dramaturgy of police work. By focusing on this specific aspect, Perkins sheds

light on the significance of both verbal and visual elements within these solemn ceremonies.

Perkins conceptualises danger as both a socio-material phenomenon that is constantly being constituted and reconstituted. One of the ways she does this is by paying attention to the artefacts that police engage with as they go about their work. This focus enables Perkins to break new conceptual ground as she explores how these engagements ‘make up’ – to use Richard Ericson phrase – police, policing as well as the worlds they police, and that ‘police’ them. There is, of course, nothing new in a recognition of the artefacts of policing, as tools of policing – be they weapons, uniforms, vehicles, communications tools, barriers, buildings, computers and most recently the growing assortment of artificial intelligences (AI) that contribute to police work. What is different about Perkins’ examination of these artefacts is the attention she pays to the way in which they shape, police – their mindsets and their actions and, in doing so, their worlds, including danger.

In considering Perkins’ analysis there is much that policing scholars, will be able to draw upon as they explore, and extend, this socio-material turn. There is also much that police will find useful as the worlds they police, and the demands on them, shift.

Clifford Shearing

*Professor Emeritus at the Universities of Toronto
and Cape Town*

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