

ARTICLE

# The South African Cash-In-Transit Heist Enterprise: Managing its Wellspring and Concatenation

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## Abstract

South African cash-in-transit (CIT) robberies appear to be in a state of flux. According to the Minister of Police, Mr Bheki Cele, the incidence of these crimes has steadily decreased due to rapid response by the police in arresting more than 200 suspects between June and November 2018. Given the rhizomatic, eclectic nature of this crime type – and possible mechanical linkages and/or linear causality within the genesis of the crime – it is debatable whether arrests and incarceration offer a long-term solution. CIT robbers interviewed for this study reported that they were career criminals, less likely to be rehabilitated and that incarceration was only an interruption to their career. These findings were backed by life-course theories. This article contends that if the South African Criminal Justice System wants to curb CIT robberies, an investigation into proactive methods for combating the crime should be developed and risk reduction strategies crafted. After investigating possible causes of CIT robberies, this research made recommendations based on holistic measures involving the public, family, and various government and non-governmental departments. The research was conducted for a Master of Arts degree in Criminology. A mixed-method approach was followed and 40 incarcerated offenders who committed robbery with aggravating circumstances participated in the study.

**Keywords** cash-in-transit heists/robberies; criminal careers; South Africa; crime prevention

## INTRODUCTION

The cash-in-transit (CIT) industry has, over the years, fallen victim to violent attacks because it handles a commodity most human beings strive to earn in order to make a living. CIT robbery is defined as the unlawful and violent interception of cash, while under the protection of a security company, from an armoured vehicle en-route to deliver or collect cash from a bank/ATM (automated teller machine or cash machine). Phillips (2008) comments that cash is a very prominent mode of

trade. It is the most targeted product by those committing robberies. Since cash is regarded as the “leading enabler for business”, Phillips (2008:29) argues that the following are the primary reasons why cash is typically sought after:

- Cash does not raise concern. It is accepted without any question.
- Upon presentation, cash allows instant settlement.
- Cash is the easiest mode of payment. The use of cash may even attract a mark-down in goods or services.
- It is very easy to count, reconcile and account for.
- Cash guarantees anonymity. As a result, when cash is used as a mode of payment neither the payee nor the payer can be identified.
- Cash is endorsed by the government.

Furthermore, in South Africa cash is an incomparable method of payment accepted by most traders. It is reported that in 2017 alone a total of R165 billion was transported by CIT companies across the country, of which R465 million was stolen in only 10 robberies (Hosken 2018). The harm and monetary cost incurred by the banking and CIT industries, as a result of violent crime and its influence on employees and clients, are immeasurable (Rossouw 2004). The consequence of armed robberies is costing the banking and CIT industries large sums of money, not only in cash being stolen, but also due to money being spent on fighting the crime. The expenditure of these industries on target hardening and surveillance measures is increasing dramatically as perpetrators become more professional and sophisticated. The biggest concern, where CIT robberies are concerned, is the violence associated with the attacks and the loss of human life.

The primary aim of the research on which this article is based was to explore the possibility of using criminal career research in the development and/or evaluation of crime prevention strategies for armed/CIT robberies.<sup>1</sup> According to Blumstein, Cohen, and Farrington (1988:12), a criminal career is the “characterization of the longitudinal sequence of crimes committed by an individual offender”. Piquero, Farrington, and Blumstein (2007:9) further explain that criminal career research is interested in four key questions: (1) when and why individuals start committing crime (onset); (2) why and how do individuals continue offending (persistence); (3) whether or not offending becomes more frequent or serious and the reasons for it more serious (escalation); and (4) when/why do offenders stop offending (desistance).

Life-course theorists emphasize that criminal career research is important, as it offers an opportunity to understand important fundamentals regarding offenders’ pathways to offending, such as onset, frequency, duration and desistance (Soothill, Fitzpatrick, and Francis 2009). Moreover, criminal career research should not only influence decision-making by the criminal justice system, but also assist in the development and evaluation of crime control strategies. As a consequence, criminal career knowledge may be closely linked to crime intervention strategies focused on prevention, career modification and incapacitation.

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<sup>1</sup>CIT robberies and armed robberies are, in this study, used interchangeably.

- **Prevention strategies:** These strategies are concerned with the general decrease of offending onset. Through the use of prevention strategies, the chances of law-abiding citizens engaging in offending behaviour are minimized.
- **Career modification strategies:** This deals with the lessening of frequency and seriousness of those who are already exhibiting offending behaviour. Deterrence and rehabilitation are the central themes of career modification strategies.
- **Incapacitation strategies:** Incapacitation includes selective incapacitation such as imprisonment (Piquero et al. 2007).

This article outlines the methodology used in the research, as well as the findings based on varying criminal career issues which are believed to have policy implications, namely: offending onset and seriousness/escalation; specialization; offending persistence and desistance; motivation for committing CIT robberies; as well as offending persistence and desistance. It is important to note that in South Africa offenders who commit CIT robberies are convicted under the robbery with aggravating circumstances crime category, with CIT robbery as a sub-category. It is for this reason that these two terms may be used interchangeably here.

## METHODOLOGY

The research adopted a concurrent triangulation mixed-method approach because the aim was to develop a more complete understanding of the topic and to converge and corroborate findings from the quantitative and qualitative data. Equal weight was given to both the qualitative and quantitative methods: firstly, because gaining an understanding of underlying reasons and motivation for offending as well as offenders' personal opinions and views of CIT robberies was sought through the use of the qualitative approach; and secondly, the researcher envisaged measuring frequencies of various actions (i.e. offending, re-offending) and offender characteristics through a quantitative inquiry. Because an exploration and comparison of the different cases of offenders constituted an important aspect of the study, a combination of instrumental and collective case study was employed.

Incarcerated offenders sentenced for CIT robberies and their pathways to criminality constituted a point of departure and the unit of analysis. Due to the fact that the literature revealed that violent crimes (especially against the banking and CIT industries<sup>2</sup>) are predominately committed by males, this study consisted only of male participants. Only convicted male offenders took part in the study. Thus, a total of 40 offenders who had committed bank-related aggravated robberies, and were incarcerated in six correctional centres across Gauteng, namely Baviaanspoort, Johannesburg, Kgoši Mampuru II, Krugersdorp, Leeuwkop and Zonderwater, took part in the research.

The research followed a non-probability sampling method to identify participants. Reasons offered for using this type of sampling method concur with those mentioned by Denscombe (2010). Firstly, the researcher had insufficient

<sup>2</sup>The researcher makes constant reference to both the banking and the CIT industries because both are affected by CIT robberies.

information regarding the offender population to make use of probability sampling. Secondly, it was insurmountable to identify participants via randomized methods, since the South African Department of Correctional Services (DCS) was unable to provide lists of offenders who were specifically convicted for armed robberies against the banking and CIT industries. Finally, challenges to gain access to the offenders made it difficult to include a larger number of participants in the study. As revealed by Schlosser (2008), conducting research in correctional facilities requires patience because officials are overwhelmed by the routine of their daily activities and lack the time and resources to respond to queries outside their scope of work. It is for this reason that establishing initial contact with the correctional centres which formed part of this study was laborious, as telephone calls and e-mails were often unanswered.

Furthermore, when the researcher was finally able to reach correctional officials willing to assist, long lists were provided (from which samples were supposed to be drawn) of offenders sentenced for various types of robbery with aggravated circumstances, such as vehicle or truck hijacking, robbery at residential premises, robbery of businesses, CIT robbery, bank robbery and street robbery. Written on most of the lists for each offender were only the offender's registration number, a surname and initials, birth date and age – with no mention of either a *modus operandi* or the sub-type of the robbery committed. As a result, the researcher had to sift through the long lists of offenders sentenced for all the various types of robbery with aggravated circumstances as classified by the South African courts with the help of correctional unit managers in each centre who knew the offenders personally and the crimes they were convicted for. Therefore, selecting the correct sample was a strenuous and impractical exercise. It is for this reason that, after the first participants had been selected through purposive sampling (i.e. through identification with the help of unit managers), snowballing was utilized by requesting the initially identified participants to provide names of other offenders with similar characteristics who may be interested in taking part in the study. As a result, the latter sampling technique assisted in the drawing up of a satisfactory sample size of the hard-to-reach research participants.

Data collection took place concurrently, in one phase, through the use of structured questionnaires to collect quantitative data followed by in-depth qualitative interviews. Important to note is that interviews were informed by the questionnaires. As a result, a mixed-methods approach allowed for a “more balanced” and “holistic” exploration. Below is a summary of information collected through each of the data collection methods.

### **Structured Questionnaire**

The structured quantitative questionnaire consisted of questions clustered under three sections, which were asked in the same order and manner to each of the research participants. Due to the fact that the offenders were classified as “hard-to-reach” research participants and considering the rigid correctional environment, participants were not handed the questionnaires to complete in their own time. The researcher read the questions to the participants during one-on-one interview sessions and the relevant responses provided by the participants were

ticked off by the researcher. In this way, all the questionnaires were completed and during instances where participants did not understand specific questions, the researcher was present to explain. Additionally, after completing the questionnaire, participants were allowed a short break after which the qualitative interview session followed. This was necessary as it minimized going back to the correctional centre for the same person. In this way, the chances of not being able to gain access to the participant during a follow-up trip were minimized.

The structured questionnaire was divided into the following sections:

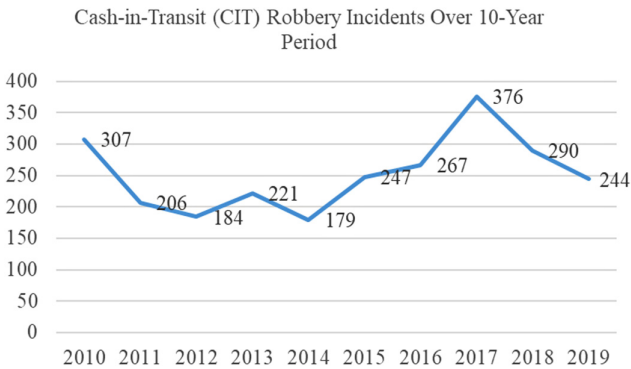
- **SECTION A:** Biographical information (gender; race; home language; age; marital status; educational background; military training; employment history).
- **SECTION B:** Risk factors (familial; community; individual; peers; school).
- **SECTION C:** Criminal data (offending onset; age at first arrest; age at first offence; offending frequency; repeat offending; career length; length of sentence).

The SPSS statistical program was used to analyse the quantitative data, after which descriptive statistics were promulgated. Through the use of descriptive statistics, basic features of the data were described and simple summaries of the sample were provided via frequencies and means. Important to note is that, due to the small sample size, findings from this study cannot be generalized to the entire population. Nonetheless, results from this study may motivate other researchers to conduct research on a similar topic. Furthermore, the findings of this study may make a contribution in the monitoring and evaluation of current crime prevention programmes and/or policies (i.e. armed robberies/violent crimes in general and CIT robberies specifically).

### ***Semi-Structured Interview Schedule***

An interview schedule prepared beforehand was utilized to collect qualitative data. It is, however, important to note that the interview schedule was merely a guideline and the outcome was not dictated by it. As a result, the flexibility of the semi-structured interviewing method allowed for the collection of rich and in-depth information from the participants. The following are questions that the interview schedule was made up of:

1. What were your reasons for starting to commit crime?
2. What were your reasons for offending against the banking or CIT industry?
3. Why did you start committing offences against the banking or CIT industry?
4. Why did you continue to offend against the banking or CIT industry?
5. Did you commit the offences against the banking or CIT industry alone or in a group?
6. How many members were in the group?
7. How were the members recruited into the group?
8. What function(s) did each of the role-players perform?
9. How was the cash allocated after each offence?
10. How did you usually spend your cash?



**Figure 1.** Cash-in-Transit Robbery Incidents 2010–2019. *Source:* Adapted from the South African Banking Risk Information Centre (SABRIC) (2019, 2020).

11. What is your opinion of the effectiveness of the rehabilitation programmes offered by the DCS?
12. Besides your co-offenders, did anyone else assist you, in any way, to commit the offences?
13. Were you under either the influence of alcohol or drugs when you committed the robberies?
14. In your opinion, does a person stop offending?

To analyse the qualitative data, Atlas.ti (qualitative data analysis software) was used where a process of deconstruction or breaking the data down into smaller parts through thematic analysis took place. The latter followed a three-step coding process, namely open coding, axial coding and selective coding. First, during open coding the researcher read through interview transcripts, after which themes were identified and initial codes were assigned as a way of compressing the data into feasible categories. Secondly, through axial coding, core themes were broken down and categories or concepts related to each other were combined. Lastly, central categories emerging from the coded data were identified and further developed and refined and the results were promulgated in a narrative format.

For the purpose of this research paper, attention and findings (discussed later in this article) will be mostly focused on Section C of the quantitative questionnaire as well as questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 8 and 14 of the qualitative interviews.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *An Overview of CIT Robberies in South Africa*

Figure 1 depicts that CIT robberies have been showing a decreasing trend during the three-year period from 2010 to 2012. In 2012, at inception of this study, there was a decrease of 10.6 % in the number of incidents in comparison with 2011. The then Minister of Police, Mr. Nathi Mthethwa, attributed the decline to the “arrest of key criminals and the police’s rapid response”. Nonetheless, when motivating

why this study needed to take place – even when it seemed that CIT robberies were declining – the researcher argued that the impact of police interventions (i.e. arrests of key robbers) could more often than not be temporary; incidents of CIT robberies may flare up at any stage when resources are under strain. The increasing trend resurfaced in 2015. In 2017, CIT heists in South Africa reached an epidemic stage, showing an increase of 40.8 % compared with the previous financial year.

According to Newham in Hlatshaneni (2018), one of the reasons attributed to this rapid increase (over the years i.e. 2014–2017) is the deteriorating quality of policing due to political interference and the constant reshuffling of the ministerial cabinet, resulting in the South African Police Service (SAPS) being led by multiple ministers over a short period of time. “The real question that should be asked is what is being done to fix crime intelligence?” (Newham in Hlatshaneni 2018). It is for this reason that police crime intelligence is one of the recommendations made by the author of this article and other experts as a key strategy for the combating of CIT heists in South Africa.

Nevertheless, during the second half of 2018, CIT incidents started decreasing again. The decreasing trend continued in 2019, when the number of incidents from January 2019 to May 31, 2019 decreased by 30 % compared with the same period in 2018 (South African Banking Risk Information Centre (SABRIC) 2019, 2020). The newly appointed minister of police at the time, like the 2012 minister, attributed the declining trend to the rapid police arrests of more than 200 suspects between June and November 2018.

Even though it seems that the risk has been hugely diminished, the risk of this crime taking place at any time, as previously predicted, is possible. According to criminal career researchers a small group of chronic offenders is responsible for the majority of crimes (Piquero et al. 2007; Siegel 2008). In agreement with the latter authors, Staff Writer (2018) opines that “it is believed that most heists are run by a few organised crime groups that operate nationally under a so-called ‘mastermind’ that oversees them with the help of insider information”. In addition, McKean and Ransford (2004) are of the opinion that at least two-thirds of released inmates will go back to committing crime within three years of their release. Against this background, one is then compelled to ask what the South African criminal justice system is doing to ensure that these arrested offenders do not return to a life of crime upon their release. Also, what measures are being put in place to ensure that those who were deterred from starting or continuing to commit this type of crime due to the high volume of arrests will remain discouraged? Moreover, if a small fraction of offenders is responsible for the majority of the crime, then one may ask if incarceration does indeed lead to desistance from crime.

### ***The Criminal Career***

The focus of this section is the criminal career in terms of offending onset, offending escalation/seriousness, crime specialization, motivation for committing robberies as well as persistence and desistance.

*Offending Onset and Seriousness/Escalation*

Onset is explained by Soothil et al. (2009) and DeLisi (2005) as the initiation of a criminal career or the beginning of antisocial behaviour. It is further contended by Soothil et al. (2009) that, due to the lack of universal agreement on how the onset of a criminal career ought to be measured, two methods can be employed to determine criminal career onset. Criminal records can be utilized to find out the age of the offender when he/she was first arrested or convicted of a crime; or self-reports can be used where an individual reports the age when he/she was first in conflict with the law. Patterson, DeBarshy, and Ramsey (1989) are of the view that antisocial behaviour begins during the early stages of an offender's life, and continues into youth and ultimately into adulthood. It is important to note that the onset of a criminal career has an impact on one's career length, seriousness and the intensity of the criminal career. It is for this reason that Patterson et al. (1989) opine that, if one shows serious antisocial behaviour too early in one's life, one's criminal career will persist longer and will escalate in the seriousness of the types of crime committed. DeLisi (2005) adds to the latter by explaining that the criminal career of an offender, who was in conflict with the law as a child, will be more serious than an offender who is arrested for the first time during adulthood. In addition, DeLisi (2005) explains that offenders who start their criminal careers earlier in life are found to be the most dangerous and versatile criminals.

When South African CIT subject matter experts were interviewed for the sake of building literature, one of the questions asked was their opinion on when do they think offenders who commit robberies against the banking and CIT industries start offending. Maree (Interview 2013) expressed that offenders who end up committing high-risk crimes such as CIT robberies, started offending during the adolescence stage. Zonke (Interview 2013) added that one of South Africa's notorious bank robbers started committing robberies against the banking industry during his early twenties. Crafford (Interview 2013) and Louw (Interview 2013) agreed that offending usually starts with petty and less serious crimes at a very young age and then progresses to more serious crimes. Furthermore, Louw (Interview 2013) explained that a bank or CIT robber's first robbery often takes place when he is 18 years of age or older. In agreement with the former mentioning by Crafford (Interview 2013) and Louw (Interview 2013), another subject matter expert, Burger (Interview 2013) emphasized that bank and CIT robbers begin their career with less serious crimes at a very young age, after which they graduate and move up the crime ladder. Consequently, armed robbers tend to move up from criminal activities such as theft, vehicle hijacking and burglary to bank and CIT robberies (Burger, Interview 2013). Burger (Interview 2013) went on to explain that it is often the better "qualified" perpetrators who move up to violent crimes such as CIT robberies, which require a great amount of planning. It is for this reason that offenders who commit high-risk offences, such as CIT robberies, are said to be at the top of the robbers' "food chain".

*Specialization*

Specialization is defined by Soothill et al. (2009) as the degree to which offenders focus their offending on only one type of crime or a certain cluster of crimes. The opposite of a specialist offender is described by the same authors to be a versatile



offender who commits various types of crime and is continually seeking opportunities to become involved in any kind of criminal activity. Prinsloo (2012) defines criminal versatility as the “cafeteria style”, meaning that perpetrators do not focus on only one type of crime but choose from diverse criminal activities. Resultantly, Prinsloo (2012) explains that one may find that one day a certain offender is committing a burglary; the following day he/she is involved in robberies and he/she hijacks a motor vehicle later on the same day. Adding to this debate, Decker (2005) postulates that it makes sense to classify offenders based on the particular crime they have been convicted for, but it is inaccurate to assume that he/she specializes only in that specific offence. Therefore, Prinsloo (2012:70) concludes that there is a small number of “pure” or specialized offenders. According to Prinsloo (2012), the majority of crime is committed by serial offenders. As a result, even though CIT robbery is seen as a highly specialized crime characterized by agile motives, CIT robbers are also versatile in their offending.

Maree (Interview 2013) explains that CIT robbers are specialized in specific sets of skills and not the robbery itself. An offender is, for example, recruited to join a group of CIT robbers as the driver of a getaway vehicle if it is well known that he has exceptional driving skills. One who has great shooting skills may be recruited as one of the shooters. Roles of each of the members of the CIT robbers are explained later in the article. Zonke (Interview 2013) emphasizes that in order to be recruited into these criminal groups, one must be highly skilled. Recent incidents of CIT heists in South Africa, where robberies are executed with military precision, are evidence that highly skilled experts or professional robbers are committing these crimes.

### *Persistence and Desistance*

Criminologists, such as Piqueoro, Brame, and Lynam (2004), affirm that one’s criminal career length is linked to characteristics associated with the specific crime being committed. According to Farrington (2005:73), “an early age of onset predicts relatively long criminal career duration and the commission of relatively many offenses”. In agreement with the aforementioned, Moffit’s developmental taxonomy (Moffit 1993) in the next section explains that the adolescent-limited group starts offending during the adolescence stage and abandons the criminal life before adulthood, while life-course offenders start offending during childhood and continue offending during adulthood.

Initial attraction and excitement brought about by committing crime have been highlighted by Laub and Sampson (2001) as some of the reasons why some offenders are persistent in their criminal career. Other reasons identified for criminal career persistence are factors such as a lack of positive turning points in one’s life, the abuse of alcohol and the criminalization effect brought by incarceration (Laub and Sampson 2001). In support of the latter, one of the participants in Laub and Sampson’s research retorted that “prison toughens you up to the point you don’t care” (Laub and Sampson 2001:168). South African subject matter experts Maree (Interview 2013), Crafford (Interview 2013) and Louw (Interview 2013) concur that even after imprisonment, one never stops offending. Maree (Interview 2013) added that one normally stops offending due to old age or ill health. Recently found with the scourge of CIT robberies in 2018, is that the disregard

of the rule of law by some corrupt correctional officials has fuelled the smuggling of mobile telephones into correctional facilities. It has thus been alleged that some of the incarcerated CIT robbers continue planning the robberies from inside correctional centres through the use of mobile telephones which connect them with their co-offenders who have not been arrested. In addition, Maree (Interview 2013) explained that even though CIT robbers who are in correctional custody may not be actively involved in committing the robberies, they may plan future robberies while in custody and/or transfer skills to other inmates. Zonke (Interview 2013) explained that desistance from offending is dependent on the reasons that put an individual in that situation in the first place. Zonke (Interview 2013) underscored that if crime is the only life one knows, the chances of desisting from committing crime are very low.

More reasons for crime desistance, as found in the literature, were as follows:

- Introspection: When offenders start to introspect on their lives and decide that they want to change (Zonke, Interview 2013).
- During his one-on-one interview Crafford (Interview 2013) explained that some CIT robbers will stop committing crime if they were able to use their earnings to start a business such as a taxi operation or a *shebeen*.<sup>3</sup>
- Sampson and Laub (1993) add that job stability and strong marital attachment may change one's routine activity and as a result minimize the chances of taking part in committing crime.
- According to Burger (Interview 2013), the provision of occupational skills to inmates by the DCS gives them the desire to want to practise what they were taught during incarceration. Burger (Interview 2013) strongly believes that if offenders are given opportunities, they may change their mind-set of crime being the only source of income and in turn desist from offending.
- Based on undertakings provided by Louw (Interview 2013) offenders only stop committing crime after they have been shot, incarcerated or when they die. The latter reason implies that offenders are not likely to desist from committing crime.

As explained by Laub and Sampson (2001), one can only understand desistance by examining both motivation and the social circumstances (i.e. on the individual, situational and community level) in which offenders find themselves. It is for this reason that the next section focuses on offender motivation.

### *Offender Motivation*

Maree (2008), a South African expert in bank robberies, posits that CIT robbers are, in the beginning, motivated to commit robberies by the need for money to provide for basic needs. On the other hand, robbers continue to commit the crime in order to maintain "the high life" (Maree 2008). Nugent et al. (1989) report that, additional to the need for money to support family members and themselves, participants in

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<sup>3</sup>A *shebeen* is an informal licenced social or drinking place. In South Africa, *shebeens* are mostly situated in peri-urban areas.

their research listed unemployment and being unable to pay for debts as the main reasons for committing robberies. Added by Willis (2006) is that only a small number of armed robbers commit crime to earn an income in order to pay bills and to support members of their family. In addition, Willis (2006) states that even though most robbers may report obtaining cash for drugs as their key motivation for committing the crime of robbery, perpetrators involved in high-risk robberies such as CIT often report that they are not habitual drug users. Success at offending has been put forward by Soothill et al. (2009) as a practical reason which encourages robbers to continue committing the crime.

### *Life-Course Theories*

The four life-course/developmental theories which underpinned this research are: Moffitt's developmental taxonomy; Sampson and Laub's age-graded theory; Loeber's three-pathway model; and Farrington's Integrated Cognitive Antisocial Potential (ICAP).

#### *Moffitt's Developmental Taxonomy*

Moffitt's developmental taxonomy (Moffitt 1993) clusters offenders into two categories: adolescent-limited and life-course persistence. Offenders who fall under the adolescent-limited category are said to be a group of young people who take part in antisocial activities during their adolescence, but desist from offending when they enter the adulthood stage (Moffitt 1993). Important to note is that even though offenders who fall into this category may desist during early adulthood, this group comprises a larger number of offenders in comparison with the life-course persistence group (Moffitt 1993). The two offending causal factors, as explained by Moffitt (1993), are the maturing gap and peer social context.

The former means offenders take part in criminal activities because of an internal conflict where adolescents start feeling like adults and wish to be treated like adults but are not allowed to behave like adults (Moffitt 1993). As a result, due to the maturity gap, the life of delinquency becomes appealing to the adolescent and he/she starts committing crimes to express independence from his/her guardians. Moreover, association with delinquent peers is said by Moffitt (1993) to be a risk factor for involvement in criminal activities by the adolescent-limited group. Also, association with delinquent peers is according to Moffitt (1993) a risk factor for the development of delinquent behaviour by the adolescent-limited group. In agreement with the latter, Piquero and Moffitt (2005:53) state that "peer social context reflects the observation that similarly situated adolescents biologically and socially 'grow-up' together, and as a result, look to each other for support during the time period when they are not allowed to be adults".

Conversely, life-course persistent offenders start committing crime early during their childhood, commit a large number of offences – including violent crimes – and rarely desist from offending during adulthood (Moffitt 1993):

Across the life course, these individuals exhibit changing manifestations of antisocial behavior: biting and hitting at age 4, shoplifting and truancy at

age 10, selling drugs and stealing cars at age 16, robbery and rape at age 22, and fraud and child abuse at age 30; the underlying disposition remains the same, but its expression changes as new social opportunities arise at different points in development (Moffitt 1993:679).

Furthermore, this group is made up of a smaller number of offenders, as opposed to the adolescent-limited group, because they start committing crimes at a very young age and are thus excluded by their peers (Moffitt 1993). Also as explained by Moffitt (1993), a child who is at risk of becoming a life-course persistent offender is known to exhibit hereditary or acquired neurological variations which are, at the beginning, exhibited as subtle deficits in cognition, a difficult personality, or being too energetic.

### *Sampson and Laub's Age-Graded Theory*

The building of strong bonds and relationships with society at all stages through one's life course is emphasized by the age-graded theory (Sampson and Laub 1993). Informal social controls from the family (such as consistency in disciplining a child, monitoring and building positive attachments) and social controls from school (such as attachment to school) are said to lessen the chances of one taking the path to offending (Sampson and Laub 1993). Furthermore, primary institutions which a child needs to form bonds with are the family, school, peers and the community (Sampson and Laub 1993). For a young adult, institutions such as higher education, work and marriage are pertinent for the purpose of forming bonds, while for those in middle adulthood institutions such as marriage and work investments are important (Sampson and Laub 1993). "Childhood pathways to crime and conformity over the life course are significantly influenced by adult social bonds" (Sampson and Laub 1993:243). Consequently, age-graded theoreticians believe that strong social bonds may lead to desistance from criminal activities during adulthood. However, important to note is that this theory does not merely focus on exposure to these social bonds, but the depth and prominence of the bonds. Also emphasized by this theory is that major life-changing events such as the death of a family member, divorce and retrenchment possess the potential to amend one's criminal trajectory significantly (Sampson and Laub 1993).

### *Loeber's Three-Pathway Model*

Loeber's three-pathway model combines pre-delinquent behaviour and delinquent behaviour in order to explain which young people among the three types of offenders are more likely to become chronic offenders (Loeber and Hay 1994). The following are the three pathways or types of offenders (Loeber and Hay 1994):

- **Authority-conflict pathway:** Reflected under this pathway to offending is stubborn behaviour such as defying and evading authority before a child reaches the age of 12 years.
- **Covert pathway:** Young offenders falling under this group show a sequence of minor but concealed behaviours. They then progress to property crimes such as vandalism and move up the crime ladder to more serious criminal activities.

- **Overt pathway:** Escalation in the severity of aggression takes place during the overt pathway. One starts with antisocial behaviours such as annoying or bullying others followed by acts of physical fighting before escalating to more violent and serious crimes such as assault or rape.

Important to note is that there are possibilities that one may follow more than one of the above-mentioned pathways (Loeber and Hay 1994). Loeber and Hay (1994) explain that the combination of pathways is attributed to the increased rate of offending. Based on research conducted by Loeber and Hay (1994), offenders in the dual overt and authority-conflict combination depict the lowest rate of offending, whereas those in other dual pathways such as covert and overt and authority-conflict or those in the triple pathway, where all three pathways are combined, show the highest rate of offending.

#### *Farrington's Integrated Cognitive Antisocial Potential (ICAP) Theory*

The focus of this theory is the explanation of offending by lower-class males, even though it may be applied to females as well (Farrington 2005). This theory amalgamates ideas from varying theories such as strain, control, learning and rational choice theories. The key concepts of the ICAP theory are antisocial potential, defined as a person's risk of engaging in criminal activities, and cognition, which includes thinking or decision making that turns potential into reality (Farrington 2005; Walsh and Ellis 2007). According to the founder of the theory, Farrington (2005), the ICAP theory deduces that conversion from antisocial potential to antisocial behaviour depends on cognitive processes, which evaluate opportunities to commit crime as well as victims. An individual with a higher level of long-term "antisocial potential" is at high risk of offending over his/her life course. On the other hand, an individual with a lower level of antisocial potential is more likely to conform to the law (Farrington 2005). However, there are short-term influences on antisocial potential such as life events which may lead one to commit crime. A person with a very low long-term antisocial potential, for example, may increase their antisocial potential level because of having drunk too much alcohol, being bored or exasperated (Farrington 2005). In concluding, "according to the ICAP theory, the commission of offences and other types of antisocial acts depends on the interaction between the individual (with his immediate level of antisocial potential) and the social environment (especially criminal opportunities and victims)" (Farrington 2005:83).

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

Findings are organized under the following themes: offending onset and seriousness/escalation; crime specialization; offending persistence and desistance; and motivation for committing CIT robberies.

### ***Offending Onset and Seriousness/Escalation***

Data for these themes were collected through the use of the structured quantitative questionnaire. Questions asked were clustered under Section C: Criminal data,

where questions were asked relating to offenders' crime history such as offending onset, age at first offence, age at first arrest, offending frequency, repeat offending, career length and length of the sentence. This article focuses on offending onset and age at first offence. Crime escalation/seriousness is also discussed, followed by a section on offending persistence and desistance.

Owing to the fact that there is no universal agreement on how criminal career onset must be measured, as previously explained in this article, Soothil et al. (2009) emphasize the two methods which may be used: (1) official criminal records to find out how old the offender was during first arrest or sentence; and (2) self-reports where individual offenders give a report of when they first became involved in criminal activities. The latter method was used during this research to measure offending onset. The vast majority of research respondents undertook that they started committing crime between the ages of 11 and 15 years. According to Moffitt's developmental taxonomy (Moffitt 1993), discussed above, it could be claimed that because participants in this study started committing crime at a very young age (between 11 and 15 years), they could be classified as life-course persistent offenders. Theft of items (such as cigarettes, small change from a mother's purse, fruits from a tree, bicycle, radio tape and cold drink/soda or beer bottles to be redeemed for cash) was reported as the most common crime committed as a first offence. The second most common crimes reported to have been committed by research participants were theft of motor vehicles and residential robbery. Other crimes included hijacking, common robbery, supermarket robbery, bank robbery, warehouse housebreaking and store burglary. The vast majority of respondents reported that they were never caught for their first offences. As a result, they continued committing their initial offences until they moved up the crime ladder as previously explained by Burger (Interview 2013) in the literature review section. Findings from this study showed that the average age at which respondents started climbing the crime ladder, or showed an escalation in offending by committing high-risk violent crimes against the banking and the CIT industries, is 25 years. Results of this study, where offending escalation is concerned, match the discussions from the literature, in that offenders reported to have started their criminal career with less serious crimes such as theft before moving up to CIT robberies, a more violent and riskier crime. Also explained by DeLisi (2005) earlier in this article, and related to the results under this theme, is that the criminal career of individuals who break the law during their childhood is more serious than individuals whose first arrests are during adulthood.

Furthermore, concomitant with Farrington's ICAP theory as discussed above, it is probable that CIT robbers, who participated in this study, had a higher level of antisocial potential and are at risk of continuing to offend throughout their life course. This is also a confirmation of Moffitt's developmental taxonomy that participants in this research may be persistent offenders because they continued committing a number of crimes (including CIT robbery which is a violent crime) and did not desist from offending during adulthood. The 40 offenders in this research were convicted for robbery with aggravating circumstances, murder, attempted murder, illegal possession of firearms and ammunition. In the above categories, two out of the 40 participants had the same charges with an additional charge of theft of a vehicle and escape, respectively. Arising from the preceding section is the indication

that for every armed robbery being committed, numerous other crimes such as vehicle theft or hijacking, illegal possession of firearms and ammunition, attempted murder, murder and malicious damage to property are committed. Therefore, taking the latter into consideration, it is highly probable that the criminal career principle, which insists that the majority of crimes are committed by less than 10 % of the offender population, may be accurate. Moreover, based on the fact that the participants stated that they were never arrested for their first offences, they had committed far more crimes before the crimes for which they were arrested. They also broke numerous laws while trying to carry out one major crime (i.e. a CIT robbery). As a result, by interrupting the criminal career of this small group of offenders, the criminal justice system may substantially decrease the high rate of criminality in South Africa.

### **Specialization**

When offenders were asked during the qualitative interview whether or not they specialize in CIT robberies, the golden thread among all responses was that they were not specialists in the crime itself but in a specific skill. The latter is in agreement with the literature as discussed above. Below is a verbatim response from one of the offenders to highlight the issue around specializing in a specific skill and not necessarily a crime type:

I was arrested at age 23 for the first time and I was sentenced to 110 years imprisonment for a bank robbery. But after 13 months in prison I appealed and then I was acquitted. I started committing bank robberies at 21 and then after my release from prison I started doing CIT robberies at age 25. But I took a 2-year break to complete my studies because I was still having money from the first CIT robbery. I was then hired at BMW as an apprentice and I continued with my studies. But shortly after I started working for BMW I met a guy who was in need of cars and needed information about BMWs. Because driving from the crime scene to the safe house had to happen in less than 10 minutes due to response from the police, you need fast cars and a very good driver. I then went and did my homework. I researched which cars had a great braking system and take off time. Because I knew so much about the mechanics of a vehicle and I studied metals and the body of a car including the inner and outer shell, I was recruited as a driver. But I was mostly the driver of the vehicle that rams the cash van. Then I started mixing CIT robberies with bank robberies.

To emphasize the importance of specializing in a specific skill, the roles of each member in the CIT robbery group were explained by the research participants during qualitative interviews.

- **Front men:** It was explained by the participants that the primary responsibility of front men is to attack security personnel in a vehicle used as an escort (if there is any) for the armoured vehicle or cash van. In addition, if the armoured vehicle being targeted has an escort, the front men will be made up of two groups. The one group will focus on attacking the escort while the second

group focuses on attacking and disarming the CIT crew members. However, if there is no escort, only the latter will take place. The lack of an escort was said by the robbers to make the execution of the robbery easier. Emphasized was that these individuals who play the role of a front man must be fast and flexible as he has to start the robbery.

- **Cash collectors:** Participants explained that cash collectors are responsible for opening the armoured vehicle, removing the cash and passing it to “**ground men**” who are responsible for loading the cash in the getaway vehicle.
- **Guards/spotters:** The responsibility of guards or spotters is to control traffic, take away mobile telephones, car keys and weapons from eyewitnesses. The most important job done by these robbers is to check for and react against armed response.
- **Machaisa<sup>4</sup>/Madubula<sup>5</sup>:** Depending on the *modus operandi* used to stop the armoured vehicle, either a *machaisa* or *madubula* will form part of the group. A *machaisa* is said to be the driver who will stop the armoured vehicle by ramming into it and a *madubula* stops the armoured vehicle by shooting its tyres. If the armoured vehicle cannot be stopped through ramming into it, a *madubula* will be on standby to shoot at the tyres. Another popular *modus operandus*, which was used by CIT robbers in the 1990s, was the laying down of a three-hook chain across the road. When the armoured vehicle drives over the chain its mechanics are broken and the tyres are punctured, which forces it to stop. The latter *modus operandi* was said to have been motivated by the movie *Heat*.
- **Rovers:** The responsibility of these individuals is to meander around the crime scene to ensure that their co-robbers do not spend too much time on the robbery. It was said that a robbery must not take more than 10 minutes. Participants explained that in order to avoid a chase from the police it is important that the robbery is committed as quickly as possible. One participant retold a story when a robbery took longer than the usual time. As a result, they had to drive the armoured vehicle away from the crime scene in order to get away from armed response.
- **Drivers:** This category is made up of individuals who possess excellent driving skills.
- **Off-ramp driver:** An off-ramp is a get-away vehicle which parks a few kilometres from the crime scene, as it is not supposed to be spotted on the scene. After the robbery has been committed, the group of robbers on the scene climb in the getaway vehicles, discussed above, and dump the get-away vehicles which were spotted at the crime scene where the off-ramp is parked. An off-ramp driver is an offender who waits in the vehicle a few kilometres from the crime scene while the robbery is taking place. Once the robbery has been executed and the group has reached the place where the off-ramp is parked, they get away (in the off-ramp) to a safe house which is normally 10 minutes away from the crime scene. Most importantly, it was emphasized that an off-ramp must be parked at places such as on-ramps, where it is easy to access the

<sup>4</sup>*Chaisa* in the Zulu language (one of the 11 South African languages) means to hit or to ram.

<sup>5</sup>*Dubula* in the Zulu language means to shoot.



main road in order to get away from the chase as quickly as possible. Participants further explained that the off-ramp is usually a big vehicle which is able to carry a large number of passengers. As a result, all the offenders are able to drive off to the safe house in one vehicle. A worrying revelation was made by all participants that police vehicles are also preferred as off-ramps for the loot and the weapons. Reasons provided for using police vehicles as an off-ramp were that a police vehicle will not be stopped during a roadblock and that, if offenders are stopped in a roadblock, the police will not find any cash and weapons in their possession. As a result, there would be no evidence to prove that they committed the robbery. The above was explained, verbatim, by one of the participants who was a police officer but was arrested for colluding with CIT robbers.

“As a police detective my job was to escort the gang, to protect the loot and the guns. If the guys get arrested I got rid of the evidence. If there is a chase, the guys must see to finish. It would be easier for them if they are arrested with no evidence on them. I was always on the off-ramp using police vehicles. But sometimes I didn’t have an official car. Then I arranged a car that resembles a police vehicle.”

Corruption, or the role of police officers as facilitators of the CIT crime, was one of the contentious topics covered in the broader study from which this article has been extracted. However, this topic is not within the ambit of this paper.

This section highlights the assertion that one is recruited into a CIT robbery group and is allocated a role based on a specific skill he possesses. The issue of police officers colluding with the robbers is also driven by the fact that, due to the nature of their vocation, the officers possess resources or skills that offenders require in order to execute successful robberies. Over and above confirming the notion from the literature that CIT robbers specialize in a skill and not the crime itself, the above case study validates two other important factors tackled in the literature study:

1. The case study confirms the declaration by Decker (2005), Prinsloo (2012) and Soothill et al. (2009) that offenders are versatile in their commission of crime and are continually looking for a chance to commit crime.
2. Incarceration is only an interruption to one’s criminal career and not a measure for desistance; soon after their release they are likely to go back to committing crime (Louw, Interview 2013).

### ***Offending Persistence and Desistance***

Data for this section were collected through the use of semi-structured interviews where offenders were specifically asked if one can stop committing crime. When answering this question, all of the participants seemed to be of two minds, in that even though they agreed that it was possible to desist from committing crime, they stressed that it was not easy. Nonetheless, the following were reasons offered by participants for desistance from offending:

- Incarceration.
- Marriage.
- Family responsibilities.
- Taking care of family.
- Being shot.
- Death.
- Owning a successful business.
- Getting a good job.

All of the reasons mentioned above are in line with the reasons offered in the literature review. Likewise, the above reasons confirm Sampson and Laub's (1993) age-graded theory that forming strong bonds with social institutions, such as work and marriage during young and middle adulthood, has the potential to encourage desistance from criminal activities.

Conversely, offenders still held a very strong opinion that one can never truly stop committing crime. Some reasons provided, quoted verbatim, are as follows:

- You can't get away or stop easily. When you are well known for this crime they will keep on approaching you or else you'll get into trouble.
- Committing crime is simple, because people are pushed into crime by circumstance. In South Africa it's easier to commit crime.
- I can't say you stop. You enjoy the money and can do a lot with it in a short time. It is quick money and you are not used to waiting until month-end before you have money. It is difficult to stop. There are so many old people committing crime.
- Those who do not stop may not have support to start a better life. They may also be pressured to maintain their status.
- Committing crime does not stop. Even at 80 a person can continue committing crimes.
- You can't stop, once you are in, you are in for life. But you can take a break or divert to another crime. Crime becomes your lifestyle.

The researcher further asked offenders if, in their opinion, they think that one does desist from committing crime at a certain age and the following was said:

- Age doesn't count. A person can say I can no longer commit an armed robbery but resort to something easier.
- When I was 28 I used to commit crimes with a 68-year-old.
- I know an old man of 50 something years who was imprisoned for 20 years and when he was released he continued to commit crime.
- No. When I was 19, one of our group members was 55 years old and he was an ex-convict.
- After 20 years of imprisonment a 60-year-old accomplice of ours still continued with robberies.
- There is no age of stopping. Some people die while committing crime.
- No, one of my co-accused is 83 years old. When he got out of prison at 62 he continued with crime.

- Joh! There is no age limit. One of my co-accused is 84 years old.
- But it all depends on an individual. Some people grow old even before their time. Calling yourself old and you are not even 50 yet. It is a state of mind. Even at my age (58) I still feel I can do a lot of things.

It is clear from the above section that desistance from crime amongst CIT robbers is not common. Also emphasized is that age is not a determining factor where desistance from criminality is concerned. The above undertakings by the offenders confirm the inference by Patterson et al. (1989), as previously discussed, that if an offender shows antisocial behaviour too early in his/her life (as is the case with offenders in this study), his/her criminal career will persist longer.

### ***Motivation for Committing CIT Robberies***

When asked during the qualitative interviews what their motivation for committing CIT robberies was, respondents stated that the need for money was their biggest contributing motivation. This corroborates the opinion of Maree (Interview 2013). Participants admitted that they engaged in CIT robberies because they needed money to survive, while only one respondent reported that he committed the crime because he was recruited by his friends.

Although the majority of participants reported the need for money as a primary motivation for committing armed robberies, offending still continued even after they had earned large amounts of cash. Reasons offered for continuing with crime varied from crime being a lifestyle and the only job they knew, being pressured to raise the money lost due to legal fees and lack of income whilst imprisoned, being financially responsible for family, engaging in criminal activities for the thrill and excitement, being educated but unable to work as a result of a criminal record, to wanting to be materially successful. Most of these reasons corroborate the reasons discussed earlier in this article in the literature study. In agreement with Maree (Interview 2013), participants reported that continuation on the path of criminality is often motivated by greed and the need to maintain a lavish lifestyle.

The ability to identify the type of offender being dealt with and what motivates him is of great importance, as this information provides guidance for appropriate crime prevention strategies. When one's motives are understood, affected stakeholders are able to use the knowledge to increase their efforts in fighting the specific crime and use the knowledge to limit opportunities by reducing rewards. Moreover, accurate information on offender motivation may also inform decision making with regard to the implementation of rehabilitation strategies.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Tibbetts and Hemmens (2010) explain that developmental theories show that various life events and experiences during different stages of one's life have a momentous effect on the criminological trajectory that one's life takes. More importantly, it is recognized by developmental theorists that early stages of an individual's development play a crucial role in the determination of whether or not the individual will engage in criminal acts over his/her life course (Tibbetts and Hemmens

2010). It is for this reason that the writer recommends that policymakers focus on crime prevention strategies which focus on preventing criminality during the early stages of one's life. As shown in the findings of this research, CIT robbers start committing crime at a very young age, with the first crimes being petty, after which seriousness in offending occurs. Consequently, in order to uproot the cause of the crime, prevention strategies should focus on interrupting criminal careers before they even begin. These criminal career interruption interventions may be focused on the five different risk factors, namely: family risk factors, community risk factors, individual risk factors, peer risk factors, and school risk factors. This emphasizes that factors which lead individuals to crime are many and varied, and would require a "whole of society" response, rather than simple "crime prevention" strategies.

### **Offending Risk Factors**

As underlined by Sampson and Laub's age-graded theory, forming a bond by the child with his/her family is an important deterrent for following a pathway of crime. The four life-course theories used in this study agree that the signs of constant and persistent criminality arise early during childhood and are recognizable. Examples of these identifiable signs, as previously discussed, are at-risk temperaments such as annoying others, bullying, physical fighting, aggressive behaviour and having too much energy as well as at-risk environments. Important to note is that these at-risk personalities, on their own, do not necessarily lead to persistent criminality in adulthood. However, the combination of at-risk temperaments and at-risk environments may lead to adult criminality. As a consequence, an interruption of criminal careers can only take place if young people at risk of committing crime are identified early in their life and the steps necessary to influence the environment can be taken to reduce the risk. Further positive environmental influences, which could be taken advantage of when in the process of deterring a young person from following the criminal pathway, are consistent monitoring and discipline by parents as previously discussed in the theory section. It is important to be cognisant of the fact that parenting is a big responsibility and many people do not necessarily know how to play this important role. Consequently, many children suffer and grow up under harsh conditions characterized by abuse, lack of attention, and lack of love and care. To counteract all these mentioned risk factors, it is recommended for parenting programmes to be introduced in schools so that young adults are taught the importance of parenting and trained on parental practices that reduce delinquent behaviour.

To offset individual risk factors, it is recommended that families, schools and communities promote protective pro-social behaviours such as helping, sharing and cooperating, while antisocial behaviours (aggressive and oppositional behaviours) are discouraged. Through formal programmes in the family, community, nursery school and at primary school level, children may be taught at a very young age to be proud of upholding pro-social behaviours.

Social skills programmes that focus on a group of children who are at high risk of developing antisocial behaviour might solve the issue of peer risk factors. The scope of such programmes may cover conflict resolution skills, refusal skills (more especially where drugs and alcohol are concerned), reinforcement and focus on pro-social alternatives to aggression and building friendships with law-abiding peers.

Equally important, it is recommended that these programmes also focus on dissuading young people from joining gangs.

Demonstrated by life-course theories, and also endorsed in this study, is that a small number of offenders are responsible for the bulk of criminal activities. For this reason, the researcher believes that if policymakers are able to come up with strategies that can successfully modify the criminal careers of this small number of high-risk perpetrators, and deter them from committing further crimes, then general crime levels (not only CIT heists) in South Africa may be significantly reduced.

### ***The Criminal Justice System***

The previous section focused on programmes aimed at the deterrence of delinquency before it develops or before the individual is in contact with the criminal justice system. This section mainly focuses on making recommendations on measures to modify a criminal career which has already developed. For offenders who have already been incarcerated, it is important that the DCS review their current or development programmes, which will facilitate the rehabilitation and re-integration of the offenders into the community. One of the research participants in this study suggested that the DCS should pay more attention to up-skilling and offering services which will facilitate re-integration into society. Mentioned by all participants in this study was that, at the time when the research was conducted, the rehabilitation programmes offered by the DCS were a one size fits all and as a result their needs were not met by these programmes. The latter could to a certain extent be pointed out as one of the reasons why offenders continued committing crime after release. Based on the latter, it could be deduced that imprisonment is only a short- to a medium-term crime prevention method. As such, in order to win the war against CIT robbers, the criminal justice system needs to come up with long-term and holistic prevention strategies such as the ones suggested above, together with the review of legal policies that prevent ex-offenders from being employed due to a criminal record. The latter was found in the literature as one of the reasons why offenders continue committing crime after release from correctional custody.

One of the reasons attributed to the rapid increase in the number of CIT incidents during 2018 is the lack of criminal intelligence by the SAPS. As explained by INTERPOL (2018), criminal intelligence analysis is a crucial element of policing at both the operational and strategic level. Crime intelligence focuses on studying issues relating to the criminal, the incident, and emerging issues and threats. The collection and assessment of this study then facilitates the identification of relations and connections between various crimes in different places. Flood (2004) adds that there are four steps that can be followed to manage criminal activity through police criminal intelligence, namely:

- Targeting individual offenders or crime syndicates as opposed to policing the whole community.
- Identifying and managing crime hotspots.
- Identifying and investigating crime series.

- Applying varying prevention measures such as legislative and policy changes and developments, closed circuit television (CCTV) and the latest technology and innovations.

In his South African-based research on focusing on the sourcing of crime intelligence from incarcerated house robbers, Zinn (2010) argues that the inability by the SAPS to reduce house robberies is linked to the reactive style of policing and the lack of the use of crime intelligence to inform a successful intelligence-led approach of policing. Zinn (2010) emphasizes that obtaining crime intelligence information will lead to a better understanding of who the offender is and what is driving a specific crime, as well as answers around where and when the crime is taking place. Highlighted by Zinn (2010) is that there is no better place where this important information can be sourced, as is the case in this current study, than from the offender himself/herself. It is for this reason that the central message of research by Zinn was the importance of sourcing crime intelligence from the robbers. Zinn (2010) further advises that instead of focusing on investigating crime that has already been committed, resources should be devoted to developing intelligence systems with crime-predictive abilities. The aforementioned is aligned to the recommendation made earlier in this section that it is important that criminal careers should be interrupted before they emerge. Stemming from the recommendation by Zinn (2010) that crime intelligence is more proactive than reactive, the writer recommends for the SAPS to take advantage of the Fourth Industrial Revolution by exploring the use of artificial intelligence for crime analysis. Artificial intelligence can be used by both CIT security companies and the SAPS to predict crime trends and patterns, or when and where a CIT heist will take place next, based on previous reports, and thereby prevent the crime from taking place. It is further recommended that both the CIT industry and the SAPS need to adopt changes in their crime analyses and mapping processes. In the Fourth Industrial Revolution one may improve on crime analysis by taking advantage of technologies such as:

- Block Chain Technologies, where large databases are distributed among the various CIT companies, banks and the police (Mearian 2018).
- Big Data and artificial intelligence to collect big data and manage patterns which did not occur before and to profile offenders based on specific characteristics (Araujo 2018).
- Latest technology such as facial recognition cameras and the latest developments in the biometrics space to assist with investigations.

Crime analysis is important because it supports a number of functions in an organization such as investigations, crime prevention and administration entailing budgeting and planning for programmes.

## LIMITATIONS

Traditionally, criminal career research is conducted over a specific period of an individual's life course by means of a longitudinal study where change over the life of a research participant is noted. However, this study was done over three months, from

June 2013 to August 2013, where data were collected through interviews or self-reports. As a result, changes over the participants' life course were analysed via retrospective information. Therefore, results were limited to what was reported by the respondents. The reason for conducting this research in a shorter period of time is attributed to both financial and time constraints. Because the author was, at the time of this research, part of a university programme which required that one completes their Master's qualification in two years, the researcher was unable to conduct a longitudinal study.

## CONCLUSION

This article has highlighted that CIT crime in South Africa is an uncontrollable epidemic which seems to have no cure. CIT robberies peaked in 2006, with 467 incidents being reported in that year alone (Staff Reporter 2018). However, incidents showed a dramatic decrease after 2017, before spiralling out of control again in 2018 with at least an average of one incident being reported daily. The callous and brutal violence used to commit this crime is of greatest concern, as it has led to people being brutally injured or losing their lives. As a result, CIT heists were declared a national crime emergency in 2018. This is also attributed to the fact that when one CIT robbery is committed, many other crimes occur such as theft or hijacking of a vehicle, illegal possession of firearms and ammunition, attempted murder, murder and malicious damage to property. It is for this reason that the author is of the opinion that success in the combating of CIT robberies may lead to a decrease in the rate of other crimes in the country. The writer further opines that this state of flux where CIT robberies are concerned may be attributed to a lack of long-term prevention strategies. It is for this reason that the author embarked on a research study which advances the use of criminal career research as part of the solution. Criminal career research does not only influence decisions made by the criminal justice system but it also plays a pivotal role in terms of prevention, career modification and incapacitation strategies. Moreover, understanding matters related to offending onset, frequency and escalation is pertinent for crime prevention. Having knowledge of when and how individuals become involved in criminal activities has the potential of informing crime prevention programmes and policy.

Findings presented in this article, which are backed up by both literature as well as four prominent life-course theories, are that CIT robbers who participated in this study started committing crime very early during their childhood and are less likely to desist from offending during adulthood. Also found was that offending is orderly rather than random, in that CIT offenders launch their criminal careers by committing minor offences before an escalation to serious and violent crimes takes place. The author has recommended that attention should be paid to devising strategies which will interrupt the offending onset of at-risk children/adolescents. Career modification strategies, for offenders who are already in conflict with the law or have been incarcerated, should also be prioritized. As recommended in this study, these strategies include but are not limited to the development of suitable rehabilitation programmes by the DCS and dealing with the criminal record issue which prevents offenders from being employed after release.

Found in this study was that, in the beginning, armed robbers are motivated to commit robberies due to a financial need. However, motivation to continue committing armed robberies is attributed to the need to maintain an extravagant lifestyle. The former and the latter reasons for committing CIT robberies are proof that the offenders are driven to this crime type due to its lucrative nature.

Established by life-course theorists and also legitimated in this study is that a small number of offenders are responsible for the bulk of criminal activities. As a result, if policymakers are able to successfully modify the criminal careers of the small number of chronic offenders, crime reduction in South Africa may take place. However, important to note is that response from the criminal justice system alone will not be able to achieve the aforementioned. As detailed under the recommendations section, the fight against the scourge of CIT heists in South Africa should be a collaborative effort between various institutions such as the criminal justice system, the public in general, schools, the banking and CIT industries, as well as government and non-government organizations.

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## TRANSLATED ABSTRACTS

**Abstracto**

Los robos de efectivo en tránsito en Sudáfrica (CIT) parecen estar en un estado de cambio. Según el Ministro de Policía, Sr. Bheki Cele, la incidencia de estos crímenes ha disminuido constantemente debido a la rápida respuesta de la policía al arrestar a más de 200 sospechosos entre junio y noviembre de 2018. Dada la naturaleza rizomática y ecléctica de este tipo de delito, y posibles vínculos mecánicos y/o causalidad lineal dentro de la génesis del delito, es discutible si los arrestos y el encarcelamiento ofrecen una solución a largo plazo. Los ladrones de CIT entrevistados para este estudio informaron que eran delincuentes profesionales, con menos probabilidades de ser rehabilitados y que el encarcelamiento fue solo una interrupción de su carrera. Estos hallazgos fueron respaldados por teorías del curso de la vida. Este artículo sostiene que si el Sistema de Justicia Criminal (CJS) de Sudáfrica (SA) quiere frenar los robos de CIT, se debe desarrollar una investigación sobre métodos proactivos para combatir el crimen y elaborar estrategias de reducción de riesgos. Después de investigar las posibles causas de los robos de CIT, esta investigación hizo recomendaciones basadas en medidas integrales que involucran al público, la familia y varios departamentos gubernamentales y no gubernamentales. La investigación se realizó para una maestría en criminología. Se siguió un enfoque de método mixto y participaron en el estudio 40 delincuentes encarcelados que cometieron robo en circunstancias agravantes.

**Palabras clave:** atracos/robos de efectivo en tránsito; carrera criminal; Sudáfrica; prevención del delito

**Abstrait**

Le vol d'espèces en transit en Afrique du Sud (CIT) semble en pleine mutation. Selon le ministre de la police, M. Bheki Cele, l'incidence de ces crimes a régulièrement diminué en raison de la réponse rapide de la police lors de l'arrestation de plus de 200 suspects entre juin et novembre 2018. Compte tenu de la nature rhizomatique et éclectique de ce type de crime, et les liens mécaniques possibles et/ou la causalité linéaire dans la genèse du crime: on peut se demander si les arrestations et les emprisonnements offrent une solution à long terme. Les voleurs du CIT interrogés pour cette étude ont indiqué qu'ils étaient des délinquants professionnels, moins susceptibles d'être réadaptés et que l'emprisonnement n'était qu'une interruption de carrière. Ces résultats ont été appuyés par les théories du cours de la vie. Cet article fait valoir que si le système de justice pénale (CJS) d'Afrique du Sud (SA) veut freiner le vol de CIT, une enquête sur les méthodes proactives pour lutter contre la criminalité et développer des stratégies de réduction des risques devrait être développée. Après avoir enquêté sur les causes possibles du vol de CIT, cette enquête a formulé des recommandations basées sur des mesures globales impliquant le public, la famille et divers services gouvernementaux et non gouvernementaux. La recherche a été menée pour une maîtrise en criminologie. Une approche mixte a été suivie et 40 criminels incarcérés qui ont commis un vol qualifié dans des circonstances aggravantes ont participé à l'étude.

**Mots-clés:** vols/vols d'argent en transit; carrière criminelle; Afrique du Sud; prévention du crime

**摘要：**

南非的在途现金抢劫案呈现出不断变化的状态。据警务部长贝奇-赛莱称，由于警方在2018年6月至11月期间迅速采取行动，逮捕了200多名犯罪嫌疑人，这些罪行的发生率已经稳步下降。考虑到这种类型犯罪不拘一格的性质，以及犯罪起因中可能存在的机制联系和/或线性因果关系，逮捕和监禁是否能为此提供一个长期的解决办法值得商榷。本项研究对在途现金劫匪的采访报告表明，他们是职业罪犯，不太可能被改造复原，监禁只是中断他们的职业生涯而已。这些发现得到了生命历程理论的支持。本文认为，如果南非刑事司法系统想要遏制在途现金抢劫，就应该开展对积极主动打击犯罪方法的探讨，并制定减少风险的战略。在探讨了在途现金抢劫可能存在的原因后，本项研究以涉及公众、家庭、政府各部门和非政府部门的整体措施为基础，提出了建议。这项研究是为了获得犯罪学硕士学位而进行的。采用混合研究方法，40名抢劫情节严重的在押罪犯参与了本研究。

**关键词：** 在途现金盗窃/抢劫；犯罪生涯；南非；预防犯罪

**ملخص**

يبدو أن عمليات السطو على النقد العابر في جنوب إفريقيا في حالة تغير مستمر. فبحسب وزير الشرطة، السيد بيكي سيلي، لقد انخفض عدد هذه الجرائم بشكل مطرد بسبب التجاوب السريع مع قبل الشرطة في اعتقال أكثر من 200 مشتبه به بين حزيران وتشرين الثاني 2018. وبالنظر إلى الطبيعة الانتقائية لمثل هذا النوع من الجرائم - والروابط الميكانيكية المحتملة و/أو السببية الخطية في نشأة الجريمة - تبقى الاعتقالات والسجن كحل طويل الأجل مسألة مثيرة للجدل. أفاد لصوص النقد العابر الذين تمت مقابلتهم لإنجاز هذه الدراسة أنهم مجرمون مهنيون، ومن غير المحتمل إعادة تأهيلهم، وأن السجن لم يكن سوى انقطاع تحلل حياتهم المهنية. أُسندت هذه النتائج إلى نظريات معمقة. تؤكد هذه المقالة أنه إذا كان نظام العدالة الجنائية في جنوب إفريقيا يعمل على الحد من عمليات السطو على النقد العابر، ينبغي تطوير التحقيق إلى أساليب استباقية لمكافحة الجريمة ووضع استراتيجيات للحد من المخاطر. بعد التحقيق في الأسباب المحتملة لسرقات النقد العابر، يقدم هذا البحث توصيات تستند إلى تدابير شاملة تشمل العامة من الناس والعائلة ومختلف الإدارات الحكومية وغير الحكومية. أعد البحث لنيل شهادة ماجستير الآداب في علم الجريمة. تم اتباع منهج الأسلوب المختلط وشارك في الدراسة 40 من الجناة المسجونين الذين ارتكبوا السرقة في ظروف مشددة.

**الكلمات الرئيسية:** سرقات / سطو على النقد العابر؛ مهنة إجرامية؛ جنوب أفريقيا؛ منع الجريمة

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