



# EXAMINING THE MEANING OF CRIME PREVENTION WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF A METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT

Ernst H van Biljon  
15 August 2014

# Introduction

- Metropolitan police departments have existed in South Africa for approximately 14 Years.





# Introduction

- Metropolitan police departments have existed in South Africa for approximately 14 Years.
- The meaning of the term 'crime prevention' is still a matter of constant debate.

# Introduction

- Metropolitan police departments have existed in South Africa for approximately 14 Years.
- The meaning of the term 'crime prevention' is still a matter of constant debate.
- It seems that there is a public and political uncertainty as to what exactly the role of the MPD in this regard is.

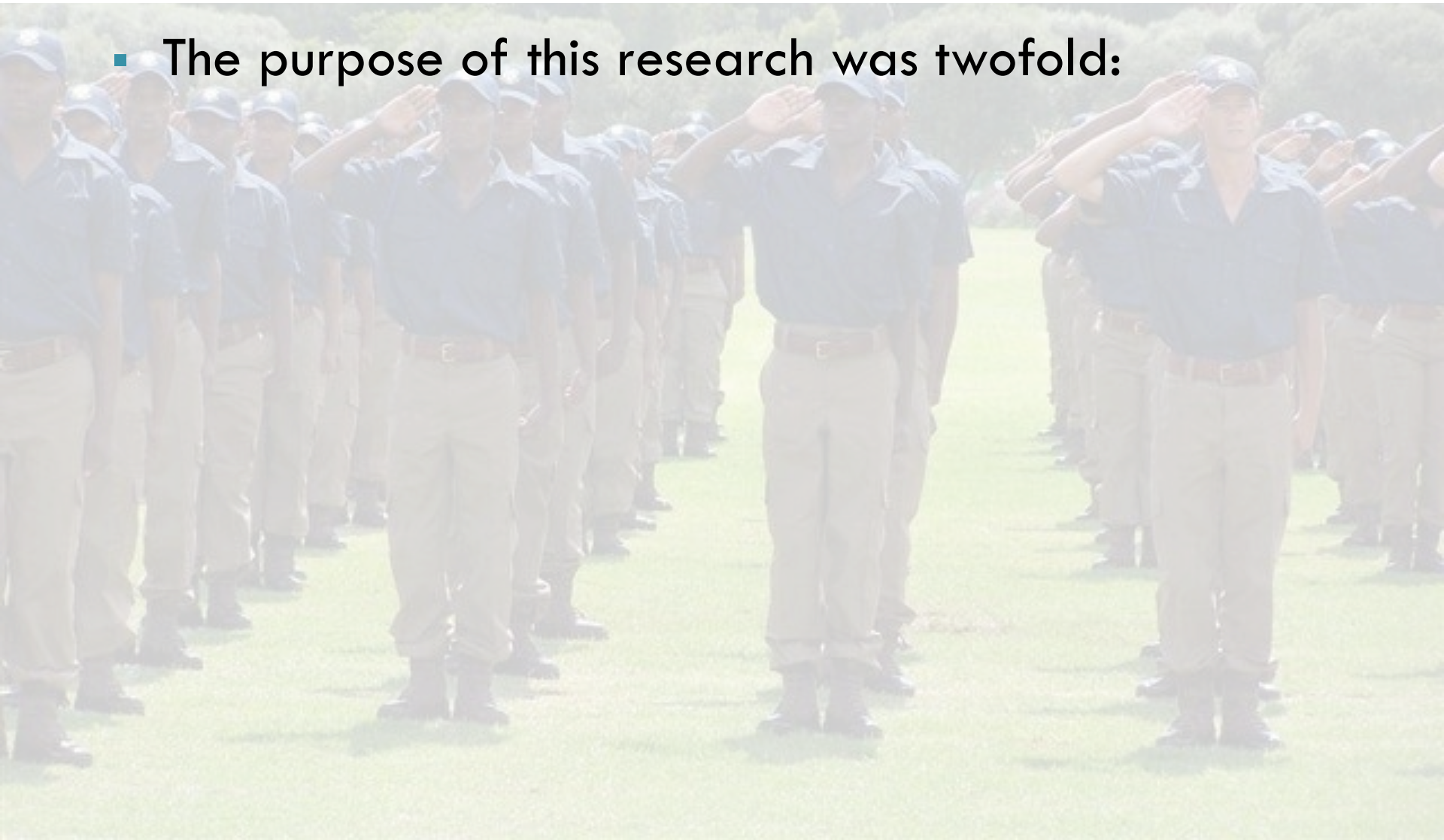


# The Purpose of the Research



# Purpose of the Research

- The purpose of this research was twofold:





# Purpose of the Research

- The purpose of this research was twofold:
  - Firstly, it attempted to create a realistic picture of the crime prevention capabilities of a MPD. This was achieved by isolating unique characteristics of a MPD and applying them in several headlining crime prevention models like situational crime prevention, social crime prevention, CPTED and crime prevention through effective criminal justice.

# Purpose of the Research

- The purpose of this research was twofold:
  - Secondly, this research investigated if members of a MPD share these public and political misconceptions. Various interviews, relating to crime prevention, were conducted within a MPD. These interviews were analysed and the results were compared to the actual crime prevention capabilities of a MPD.



# Characteristics of a MPD that influence crime prevention



# Characteristics of a MPD

- The crime prevention capabilities of a MPD are described as the actual contribution that a MPD can make towards the prevention of crime within the limitations imposed upon them by law.



# Characteristics of a MPD

- The crime prevention capabilities of a MPD are described as the actual contribution that a MPD can make towards the prevention of crime within the limitations imposed upon them by law.
- It therefore is necessary to investigate the mandate of the MPD.

# Characteristics of a MPD

- The crime prevention capabilities of a MPD are described as the actual contribution that a MPD can make towards the prevention of crime within the limitations imposed upon them by law.
- It therefore is necessary to investigate the mandate of the MPD.
- This analysis revealed three characteristics of a MPD that have an impact on how a MPD participate in crime prevention.



# Characteristics of a MPD

## 1. The main objective of a MPD



# Characteristics of a MPD

## 1. The main objective of a MPD

- When describing the functions of a MPD, the legislator lists the three functions of a MPD in a specific order:
  1. Traffic Policing
  2. By-law Policing
  3. Crime Prevention



# Characteristics of a MPD

## 1. The main objective of a MPD

- When describing the functions of a MPD, the legislator lists the three functions of a MPD in a specific order:
  1. Traffic Policing
  2. By-law Policing
  3. Crime Prevention
- The fact that the legislator places traffic policing first when listing these functions places a special emphasis on this function.

# Characteristics of a MPD

## 1. The main objective of a MPD

- Listing the policing of municipal by-laws in the second place seems appropriate in this context, as by-law policing plays a supportive role to both the functions of traffic policing and crime prevention.



# Characteristics of a MPD

## 1. The main objective of a MPD

- Listing the policing of municipal by-laws in the second place seems appropriate in this context, as by-law policing plays a supportive role to both the functions of traffic policing and crime prevention.
- By placing crime prevention in the third position, it is implied that the lawmaker sees the prevention of crime as an implicit result of the two preceding functions.

# Characteristics of a MPD

## 1. The main objective of a MPD

The sequence in which these functions are listed suggests that contrary to popular believe, the main function of a MPD is not the prevention of crime, but the policing of road traffic and municipal by-laws.



# Characteristics of a MPD

## 1. Criminal investigations by a MPD



# Characteristics of a MPD

## 1. Criminal investigations by a MPD

- The mandate of metropolitan police departments does not mention anything about criminal investigations.





# Characteristics of a MPD

## 1. Criminal investigations by a MPD

- The mandate of metropolitan police departments does not mention anything about criminal investigations.
- Subsequently, it can be concluded that metropolitan police departments may not investigate crime, unless if such an investigation is directed at internal matters of the municipality.

# Characteristics of a MPD

## 1. Criminal investigations by a MPD

- The mandate of metropolitan police departments does not mention anything about criminal investigations.
- Subsequently, it can be concluded that metropolitan police departments may not investigate crime, unless if such an investigation is directed at internal matters of the municipality.
- This places these departments in a rather peculiar position in relation to crime prevention.



# Characteristics of a MPD

## 1. Criminal investigations by a MPD

- In order to generate crime information that is useful for the purpose of crime prevention, reported crimes must to be thoroughly investigated.

# Characteristics of a MPD

## 1. Criminal investigations by a MPD

- In order to generate crime information that is useful for the purpose of crime prevention, reported crimes must to be thoroughly investigated.
- Such an investigation scrutinizes the suspect, the modus operandi, the victim and the place where the crime was committed.



# Characteristics of a MPD

## 1. Criminal investigations by a MPD

- In order to generate crime information that is useful for the purpose of crime prevention, reported crimes must to be thoroughly investigated.
- Such an investigation scrutinizes the suspect, the modus operandi, the victim and the place where the crime was committed.
- All these elements are critical to truly understand crime causation and subsequently are critical to any crime prevention strategy.

# Characteristics of a MPD

## 1. Criminal investigations by a MPD

- As metropolitan police departments do not investigate crime, it becomes evident that metropolitan police departments cannot generate this type of information themselves.



# Characteristics of a MPD

## 1. Criminal investigations by a MPD

- As metropolitan police departments do not investigate crime, it becomes evident that metropolitan police departments cannot generate this type of information themselves.
- The most obvious place to obtain this type of information from is the SAPS. This information in general is out dated, open to manipulation and imprecise.

# CHARACTERISTICS OF A MPD

## 1. Criminal investigations by a MPD

- Metropolitan police departments have other methods to obtain crime information:
  - CPF meetings
  - representation in operational rooms of the SAPS
  - crime report lines for tip offs and other crime related information.



# Characteristics of a MPD

## 1. Criminal investigations by a MPD

- Metropolitan police departments have other methods to obtain crime information:
  - CPF meetings.
  - Representation in operational rooms of the SAPS.
  - Crime report lines for tip offs and other crime related information.
- None of these, however, will provide a MPD with the type of crime information needed for an extensive participation or MPD leadership in multidisciplinary crime prevention programs.

# Characteristics of a MPD

## 1. Criminal investigations by a MPD

As a MPD do not investigate crime, they have limited access to properly dissected crime information that is useful to crime prevention.



# Characteristics of a MPD

## 1. JURISDICTIONAL LIMITATIONS



# Characteristics of a MPD

## 1. JURISDICTIONAL LIMITATIONS

- Members of a MPD may only exercise their powers within the area of jurisdiction of the municipality concerned.



# Characteristics of a MPD

## 1. JURISDICTIONAL LIMITATIONS

- Members of a MPD may only exercise their powers within the area of jurisdiction of the municipality concerned.
- Unless if mutual aid agreements exist between municipalities, or if a member is in pursuit of a suspect, and the pursuit originated within the area of jurisdiction of the municipality by which the member is employed.

# Characteristics of a MPD

## 1. JURISDICTIONAL LIMITATIONS

- If a community is separated by a municipal boundary, a MPD will only be able to operate in a specific section of that community.



# Characteristics of a MPD

## 1. JURISDICTIONAL LIMITATIONS

- If a community is separated by a municipal boundary, a MPD will only be able to operate in a specific section of that community.
- Should the SAPS not be able to fill this gap sufficiently, this jurisdictional restriction, may lead to the onset of vigilantism and / or violent service delivery protests within the affected community

# Characteristics of a MPD

## 1. JURISDICTIONAL LIMITATIONS

A MPD can only participate in crime prevention within a limited geographical area.

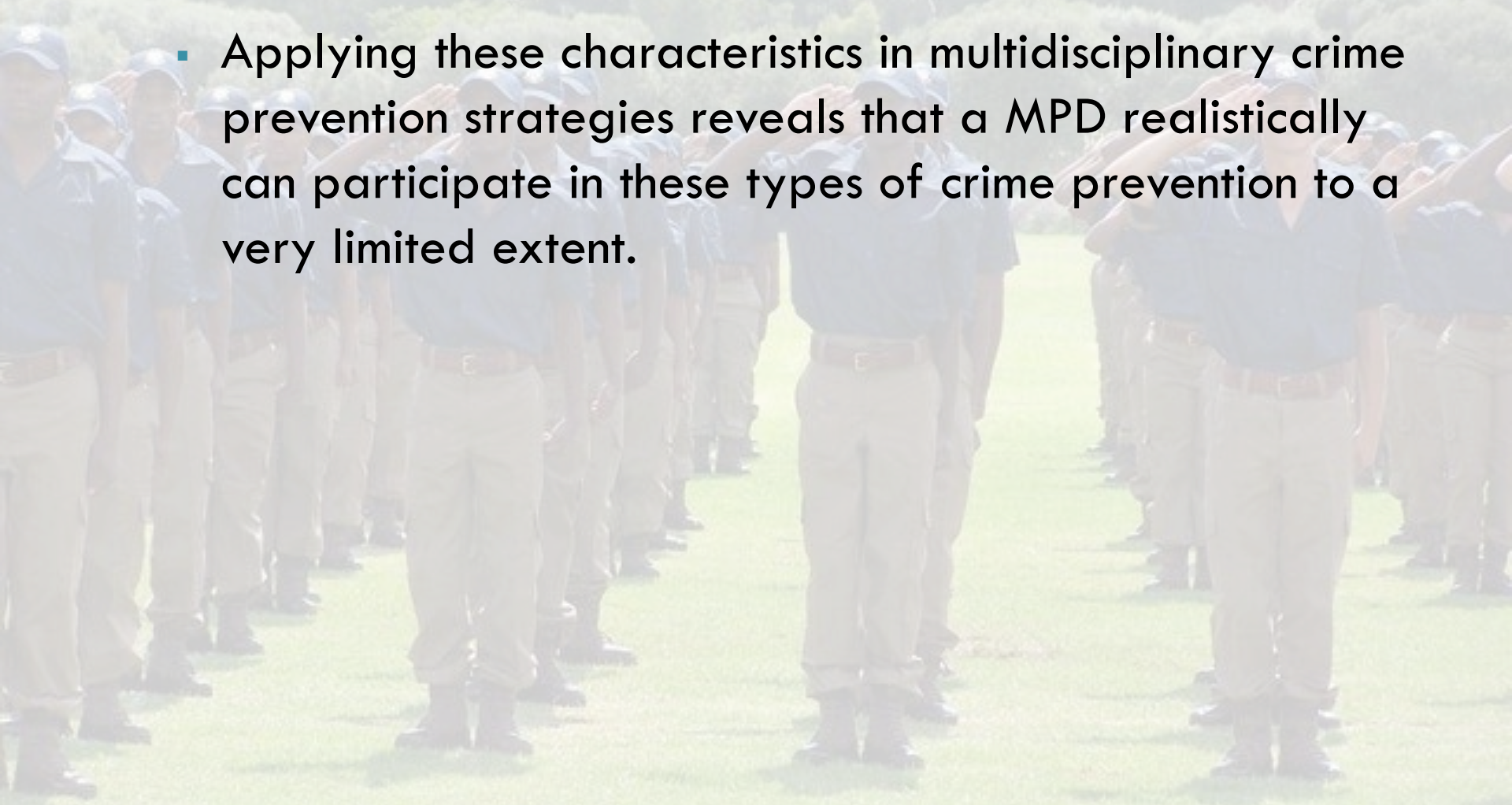


# Examining the crime prevention capabilities of a MPD



# Crime prevention capabilities of a MPD

- Applying these characteristics in multidisciplinary crime prevention strategies reveals that a MPD realistically can participate in these types of crime prevention to a very limited extent.



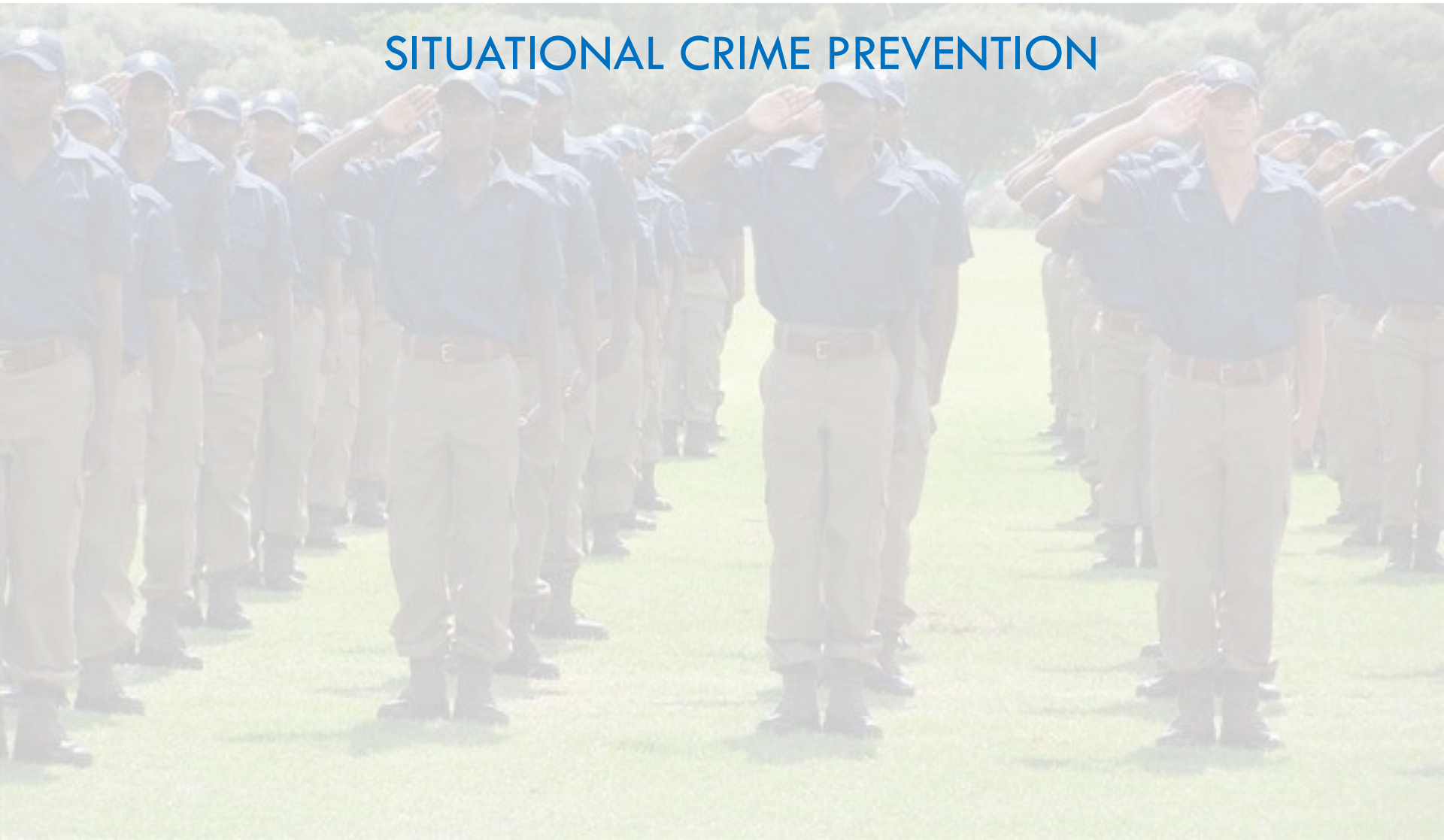


# Crime prevention capabilities of a MPD

- Applying these characteristics in multidisciplinary crime prevention strategies reveals that a MPD realistically can participate in these types of crime prevention to a very limited extent.
- These characteristics were applied in various crime prevention strategies like situational crime prevention, social crime prevention, CPTED and crime prevention through effective criminal justice.

# Crime prevention capabilities of a MPD

## SITUATIONAL CRIME PREVENTION





# Crime prevention capabilities of a MPD

## SITUATIONAL CRIME PREVENTION

- From the 16 activities normally associated with situational crime prevention, a MPD can only partially participate in eight of these activities.

# Crime prevention capabilities of a MPD

## SITUATIONAL CRIME PREVENTION

- From the 16 activities normally associated with situational crime prevention, a MPD can only partially participate in eight of these activities.
- The role of a MPD in situational crime prevention will be limited to visible policing, by-law policing, registration and licensing, education and the reporting of potential crime risks, should they be able to identify them.



# Crime prevention capabilities of a MPD

## SOCIAL CRIME PREVENTION



# Crime prevention capabilities of a MPD

## SOCIAL CRIME PREVENTION

- From the seven activities normally associated with social crime prevention, metropolitan police departments can only engage in five of these activities.



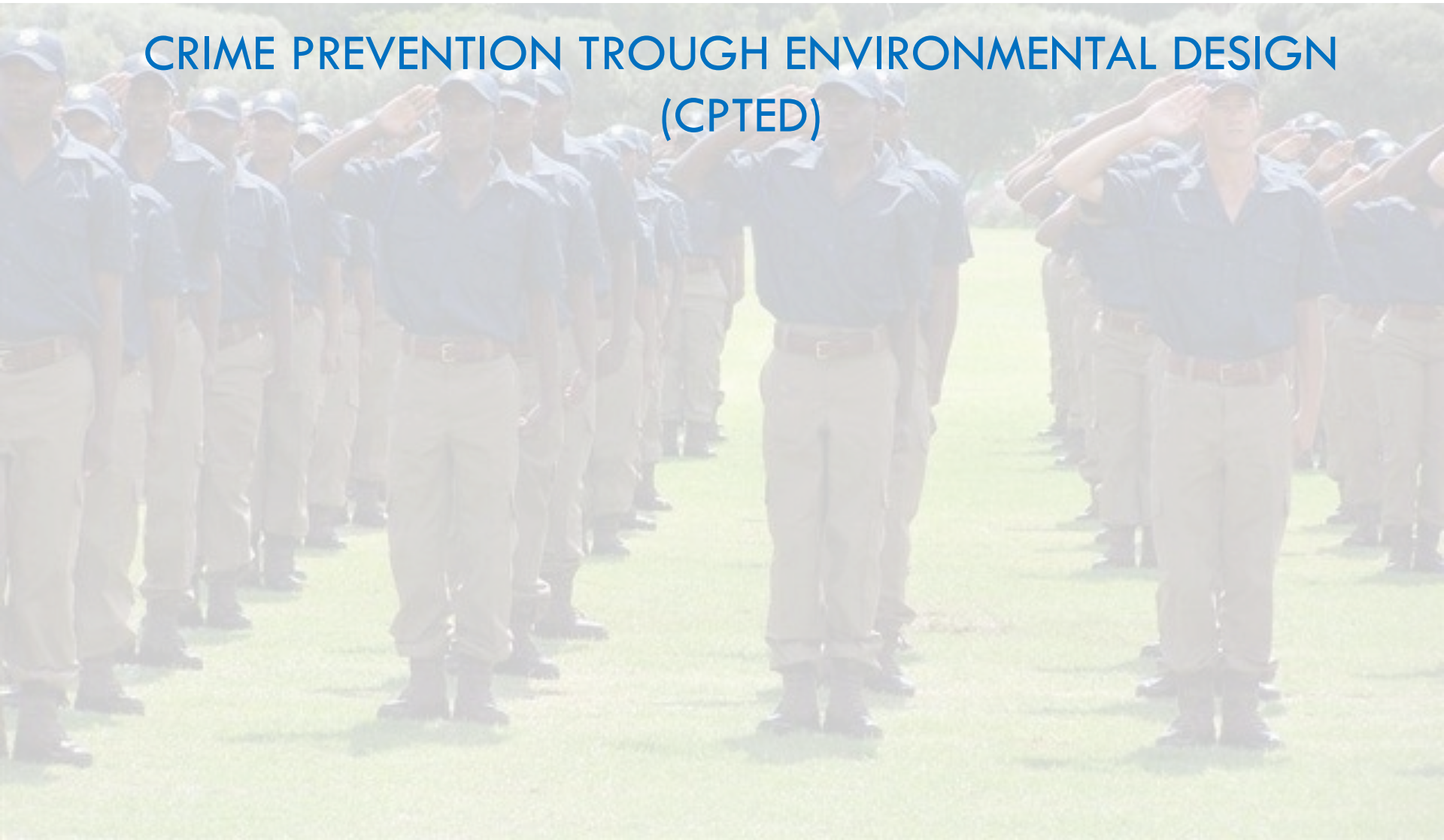
# Crime prevention capabilities of a MPD

## SOCIAL CRIME PREVENTION

- From the seven activities normally associated with social crime prevention, metropolitan police departments can only engage in five of these activities.
- The role of a MPD in this regard will be limited to road traffic and by-law policing, formal observation, education in terms of road traffic and municipal bylaws and reactively responding to incidents of family violence

# Crime prevention capabilities of a MPD

CRIME PREVENTION TROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN  
(CPTED)





# Crime prevention capabilities of a MPD

## CRIME PREVENTION TROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN (CPTED)

- CPTED in South Africa is based on five principles, of which a MPD can only contribute towards three.

# Crime prevention capabilities of a MPD

## CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN (CPTED)

- CPTED in South Africa is based on five principles, of which a MPD can only contribute towards three.
- The role of metropolitan police departments in this type of crime prevention will be limited to the observation of crime hotspots and the policing of municipal by-laws.



# Crime prevention capabilities of a MPD

CRIME PREVENTION TROUGH EFFECTIVE CRIMINAL JUSTICE



# Crime prevention capabilities of a MPD

## CRIME PREVENTION TROUGH EFFECTIVE CRIMINAL JUSTICE

- In order to create a criminal justice system that acts as an effective deterrent to aspiring offenders, the 1998 Whitepaper on Safety and Security proposes that five activities should be engaged in, of which a MPD can only participate in three of these activities.



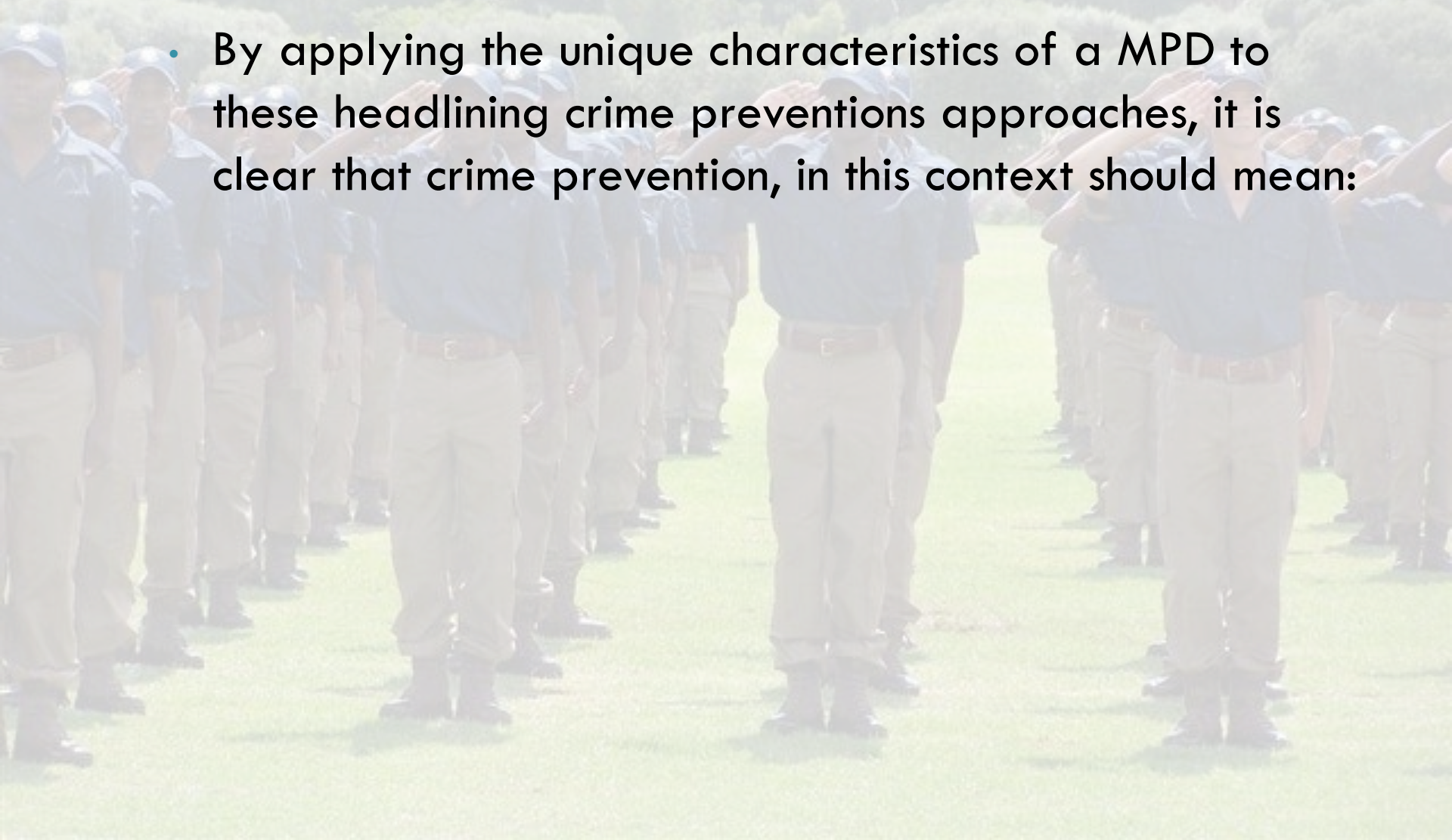
# Crime prevention capabilities of a MPD

## CRIME PREVENTION TROUGH EFFECTIVE CRIMINAL JUSTICE

- In order to create a criminal justice system that acts as an effective deterrent to aspiring offenders, the 1998 Whitepaper on Safety and Security proposes that five activities should be engaged in, of which a MPD can only participate in three of these activities.
- The role of a MPD in crime prevention through effective criminal justice will be limited to visible policing, law enforcement, and victim support.

# Crime prevention capabilities of a MPD

- By applying the unique characteristics of a MPD to these headlining crime preventions approaches, it is clear that crime prevention, in this context should mean:





# Crime prevention capabilities of a MPD

- By applying the unique characteristics of a MPD to these headlining crime preventions approaches, it is clear that crime prevention, in this context should mean:

*‘Preventing crime and the fear of it, by maintaining a strong observable police presence through the persistent and effective policing of road-traffic and municipal by laws.’*

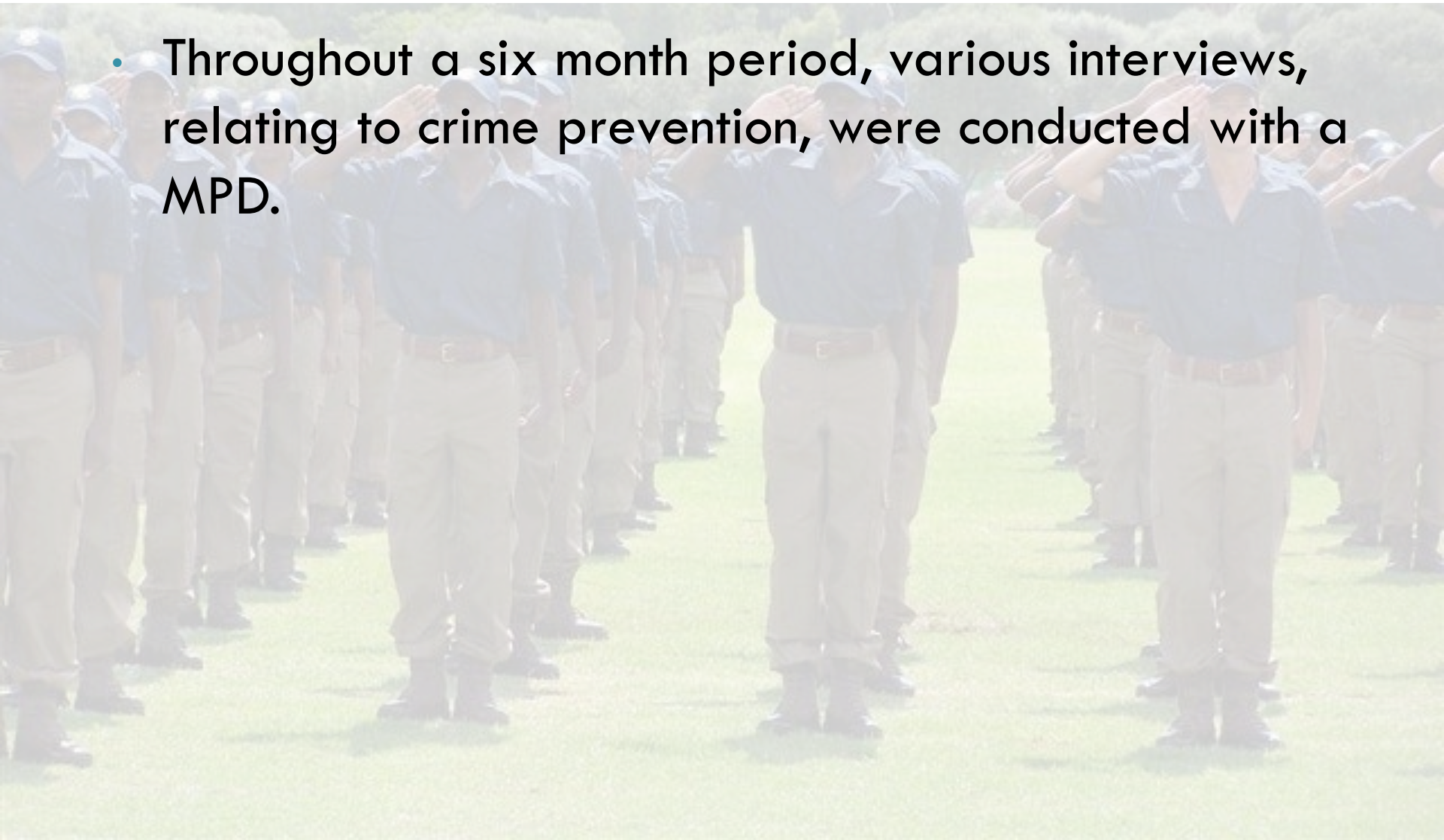
# Examining members perceptions of crime prevention





# Examining Members Perceptions

- Throughout a six month period, various interviews, relating to crime prevention, were conducted with a MPD.



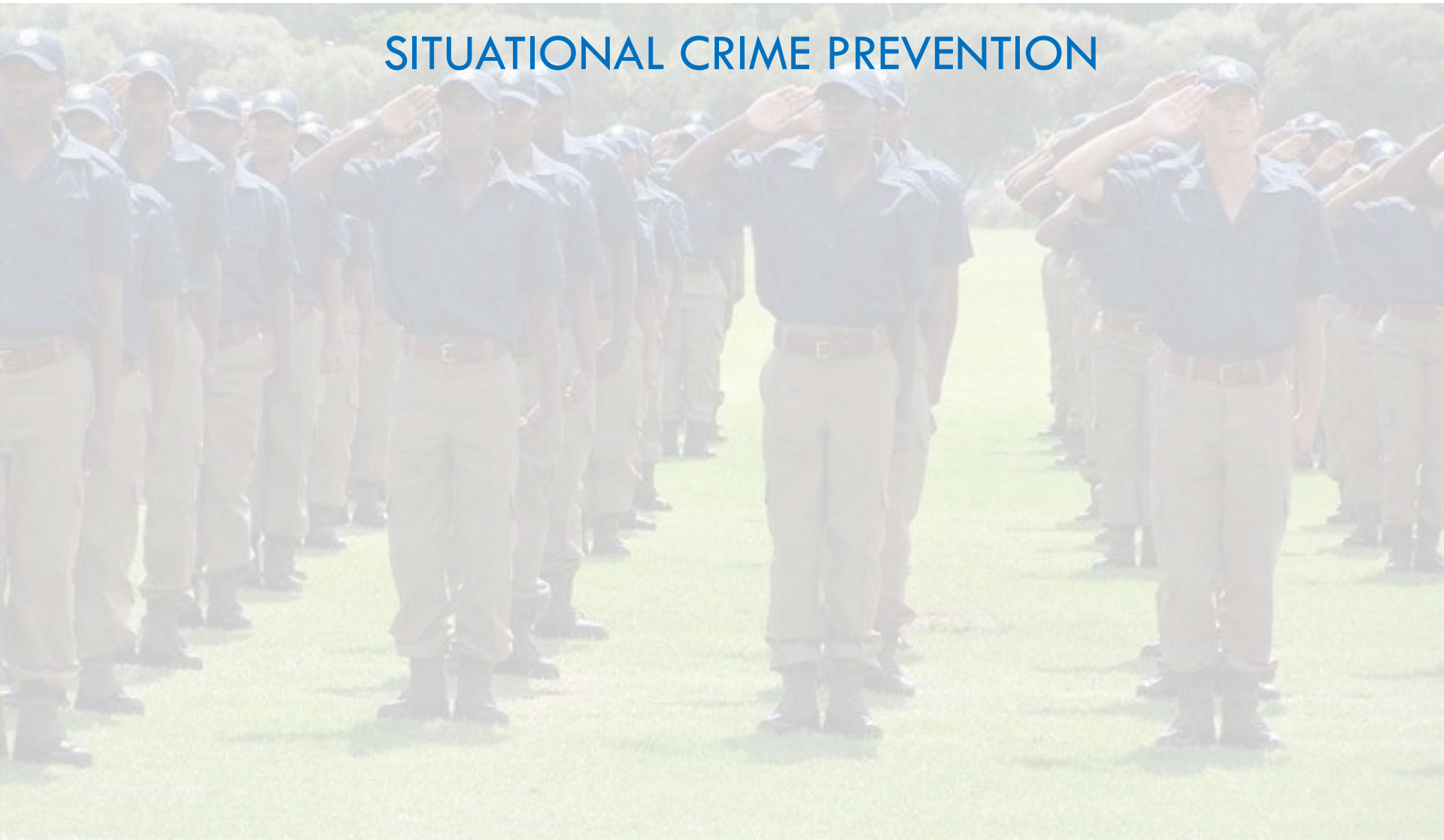
# Examining Members Perceptions

- Throughout a six month period, various interviews, relating to crime prevention, were conducted with a MPD.
- Although six metropolitan police departments have been established in South Africa, interviews were limited to members of the Tshwane Metropolitan Police Department (TMPD), as the TMPD, is the largest MPD in the Republic.



# Examining Members Perceptions

## SITUATIONAL CRIME PREVENTION



# Examining Members Perceptions

## SITUATIONAL CRIME PREVENTION

- Of the 27 participants, 26 were of the opinion that a MPD, and especially the TMPD can participate in all activities normally associated with situational crime prevention.



# Examining Members Perceptions

## SITUATIONAL CRIME PREVENTION

- Of the 27 participants, 26 were of the opinion that a MPD, and especially the TMPD can participate in all activities normally associated with situational crime prevention.
- These participants also indicated that the TMPD should comprehensively engage in this type of crime prevention.

# Examining Members Perceptions

SOCIAL CRIME PREVENTION





# Examining Members Perceptions

## SOCIAL CRIME PREVENTION

- All participants were of the opinion that a MPD, and especially the TMPD, can participate in all elements associated with social crime prevention.

# Examining Members Perceptions

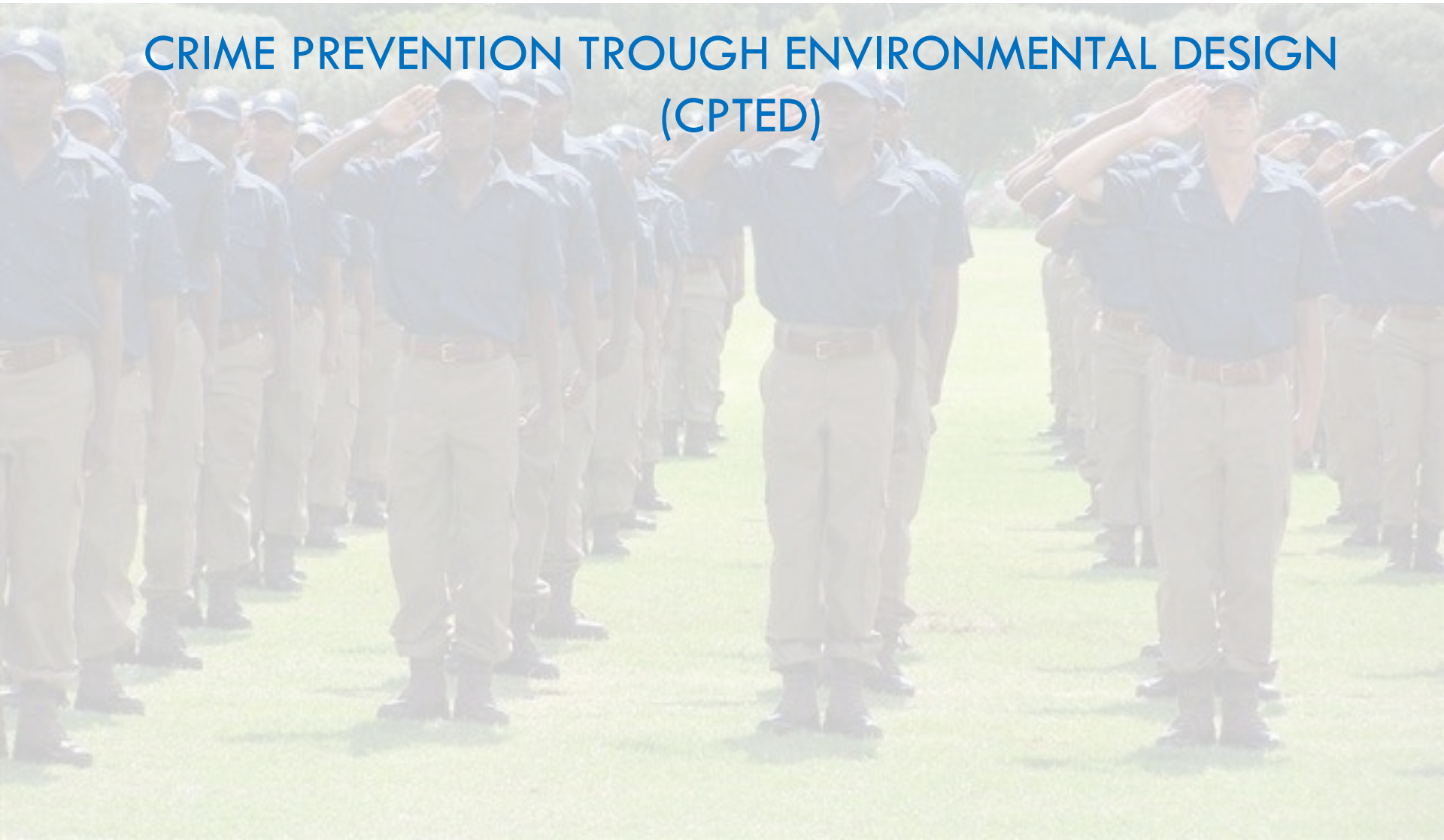
## SOCIAL CRIME PREVENTION

- All participants were of the opinion that a MPD, and especially the TMPD, can participate in all elements associated with social crime prevention.
- Participants indicated that social crime prevention should be a core element of the TMPD's crime prevention approach.



# Examining Members Perceptions

CRIME PREVENTION TROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN  
(CPTED)



# Examining Members Perceptions

## CRIME PREVENTION TROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN (CPTED)

- 19 Participants were of the opinion that a MPD, and especially the TMPD, can participate in all aspects relevant to CPTED.



# Examining Members Perceptions

## CRIME PREVENTION TROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN (CPTED)

- 19 Participants were of the opinion that a MPD, and especially the TMPD, can participate in all aspects relevant to CPTED.
- Participants advocated TMPD leadership in this regard.

# Examining Members Perceptions

CRIME PREVENTION TROUGH EFFECTIVE CRIMINAL JUSTICE

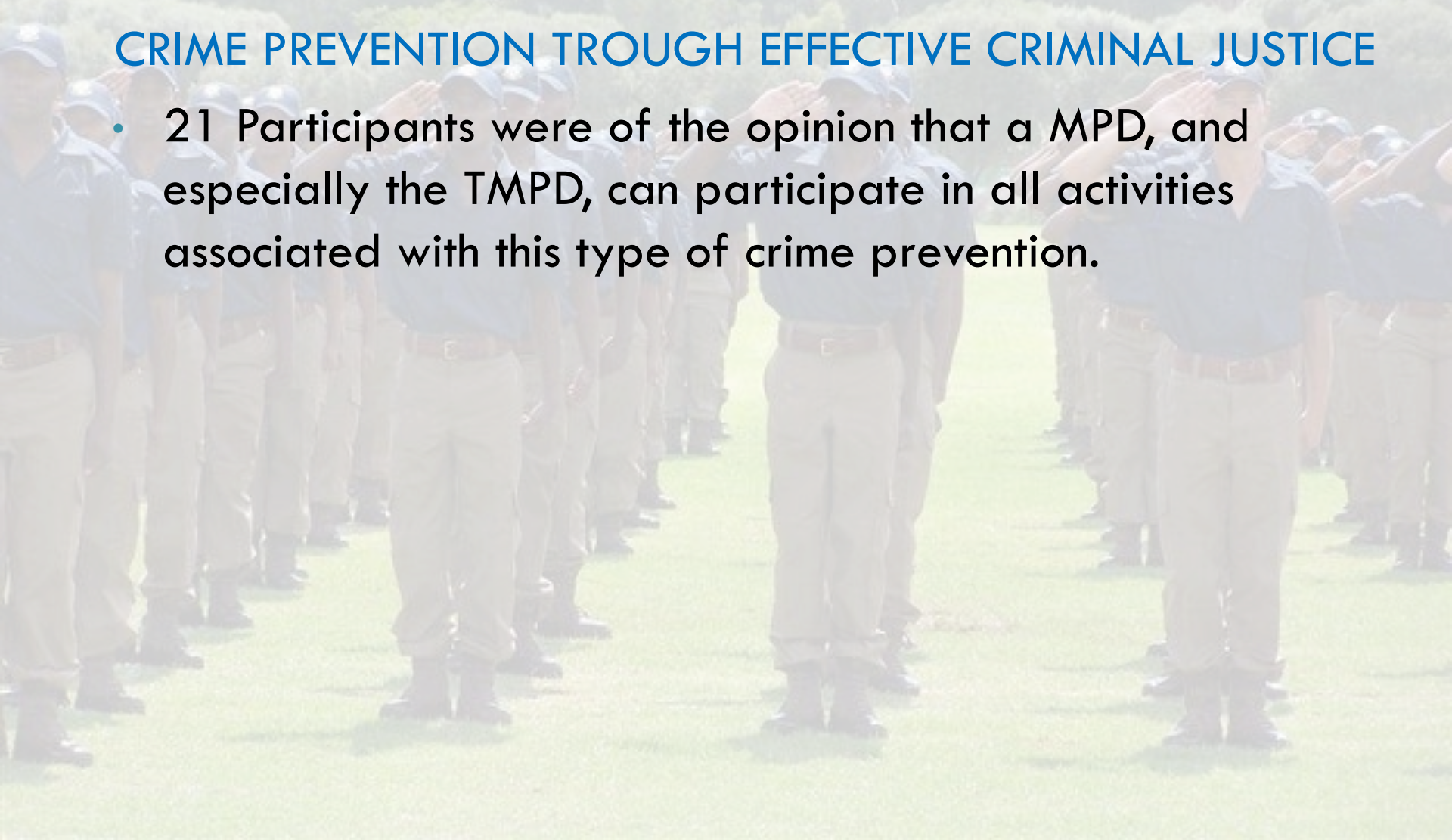




# Examining Members Perceptions

## CRIME PREVENTION TROUGH EFFECTIVE CRIMINAL JUSTICE

- 21 Participants were of the opinion that a MPD, and especially the TMPD, can participate in all activities associated with this type of crime prevention.



# Examining Members Perceptions

## CRIME PREVENTION TROUGH EFFECTIVE CRIMINAL JUSTICE

- 21 Participants were of the opinion that a MPD, and especially the TMPD, can participate in all activities associated with this type of crime prevention.
- More than half of participants indicated that the TMPD should be given control over local municipal courts.



# Examining Members Perceptions

## ADOPTING A CRIME PREVENTION MODEL



# Examining Members Perceptions

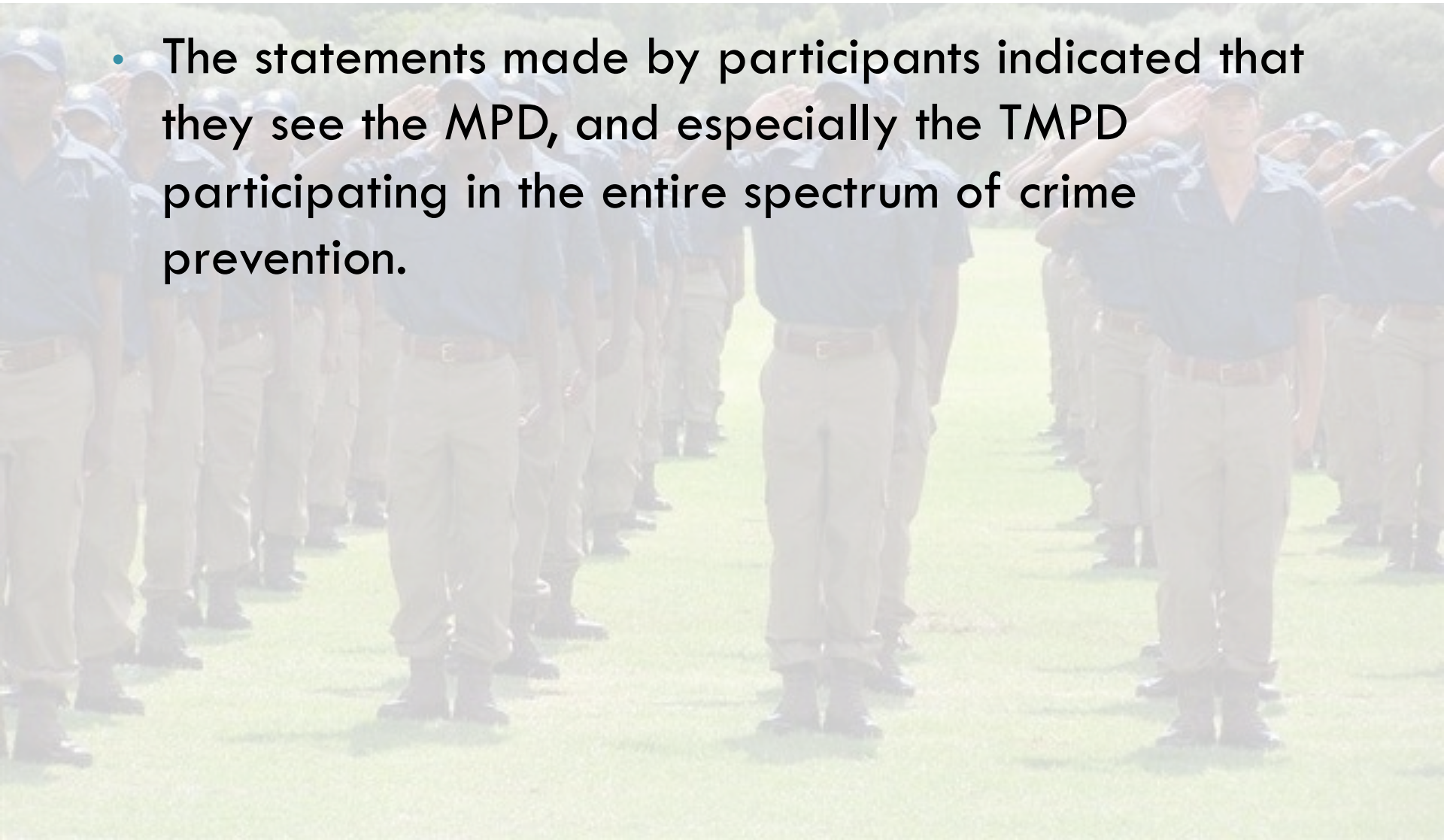
## ADOPTING A CRIME PREVENTION MODEL

- The majority of participants indicated that a MPD should not adopt any single one of these approaches, but that rather that a MPD should be involved in a combination of all these approaches.



# Examining Members Perceptions

- The statements made by participants indicated that they see the MPD, and especially the TMPD participating in the entire spectrum of crime prevention.



# Examining Members Perceptions

- The statements made by participants indicated that they see the MPD, and especially the TMPD participating in the entire spectrum of crime prevention.
- Comparing this idea of crime prevention with the actual capabilities of the organisation, indicates that members are not truly familiar with the meaning of crime prevention in the context of municipal policing.



# Conclusion



# Conclusion

- It is clear that members of a MPD, in this case the TMPD, share the public and political uncertainty as to what exactly the role of a MPD in the prevention of crime is.



# Conclusion

- It is clear that members of a MPD, in this case the TMPD, share the public and political uncertainty as to what exactly the role of a MPD in the prevention of crime is.
- Participants were of the opinion that a MPD, and especially the TMPD can holistically participate in all aspects of crime prevention, while the actual capabilities of the organization indicated that the role of a MPD should not extent beyond the scope of visible policing.

# Conclusion

- As participants had different opinions as to how a MPD should participate in the prevention of crime, it becomes evident that crime prevention has no single meaning within this context.



# Conclusion

- As participants had different opinions as to how a MPD should participate in the prevention of crime, it becomes evident that crime prevention has no single meaning within this context.
- Subsequently, the meaning of crime prevention even evades those who are entrusted with this tremendous responsibility.



Thank you for attending this session

*Ernst H van Biljon*

084 228 4651

[ernstvanbiljon658@gmail.com](mailto:ernstvanbiljon658@gmail.com)