

# Exploring the traumatic experiences of South African strike managers during strikes

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## DECLARATION OF AUTHENTICITY OF RESEARCH

I, Chrizanne Nel, hereby declare that this dissertation titled "*Exploring the traumatic experiences of South African strike managers during strikes*", is my own work and that the views and opinions expressed in this work are those of the author and relevant literature references as indicated in the references.

I further declare that the content of this research will not be submitted for any other qualification at any other tertiary institution.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chrizanne Nel', is written over a horizontal line.

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9 November 2016

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## ABSTRACT

**Key Words:** Trauma, Psychological Trauma, Strike Action in South Africa, Violence

Exploring traumatic experience of South African strike managers during strikes is a reality many organisations face. Strikes are common phenomena found in South African organisations and are actions that strike managers face daily. The Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995 also gives employees the right to strike. It is found that strike managers in South Africa experience psychological trauma during strike action and it is the organisations responsibility to implement programs such as interventions, policies and structures for strike handlers to deal with their psychological trauma experiences. Psychological trauma is a concept well understood by strike managers and who also experience psychological trauma during and after strike action has taken place within the organisation. Psychological trauma experienced by strike managers are those of violence, harm, stress, fear, feeling threatened, behavioural change, emotional reactions, loss of control, self-guarding.

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## Chapter 1

### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1 Problem Statement

This dissertation focuses on the traumatic experience strikes managers suffer when strikes take place within an organisation. In this section of the dissertation the problem statement is discussed, which is followed by a description of objectives pursued in the dissertation. This is followed by a discussion on the research method adopted in the dissertation and the section closes with a layout of the organisation of the thesis. For purposes of this study, strike managers may be identified as the owner, HR managers or any person that is in control of or is dealing with the strike within the organisation.

Strikes may have been among the most prominent objects of study in the field of industrial relations. The material costs of strikes are well-documented in economic research and focus on losses in volume and quality of production. The aftermath of a strike may be of long duration and may involve severe personal and relational costs. The reason for this is that strikes may provide fertile ground for emotional confrontations between employees that participate in a particular strike and employees that refuse to participate in the strike and remain at work (Thommes, Akkerman, Torenvlied & Born, 2014). The result of this may be that friction may occur between management and employees, but also among groups of employees. The interpersonal conflict arising from the contrasting behaviours of employees during a strike may badly influence work relations and may lead to sub-optimal or poor productivity, even long after the strike has been settled (Thommes et al., 2014).

According to Bhana (as cited in Seedat, 2013) collective bargaining and strike activity (if legal) should not always be viewed as a negative occurrence. It should rather be considered a sign of a healthy economy where negotiation and communication may take place. Collective bargaining may be used as a psychological outlet for employees to relieve themselves from the feeling of hatred or bitterness towards the organisation, which has accumulated from previous negotiations. In addition, the fact that employees go on strike should be an indication to shareholders that management may not be acting in line with corporate social responsibility towards employees, *e.g.* not paying a minimum ‘living wage.’

The unprotected (illegal) strike actions witnessed in South Africa over the past few years involved acts of violence and intimidation by employees participating in these strikes. These occurrences have a negative impact on the affected companies and also on the South African economy (Seedat, 2013).

Nel (2002) points out that, strikes may be caused by a number of factors, including:

General unrest, which is not always easily perceptible, may be regarded as a major cause of strike action. Usually it is a general feeling of dissatisfaction with existing circumstances in society. When the unrest becomes more noticeable, however, the employees begin to form groups, and the affair degenerates into an emotional issue, which can eventually lead to a strike.

Nqapela (as cited in Tustin and Geldenhuys 2010) further that ‘a strike is a “temporal cessation or withdrawal of work” in order to force employers to listen to the demands of the workers, and a lock-out is an exclusion of employees from the employer’s place for the purpose of compelling the employees to accept an employer’s offer’ (p. 24). Nqapele 2016 also explains that research situates different causes of labour-management conflict, which include the following: wages and fringe benefits issues, layoffs/dismissals, working conditions, dependency of management on unions, institutional failure in management, social welfare and recruitment practices.

A clear distinction can be drawn between two types of strikes –, protected and unprotected strikes. A protected strike requires the employees to comply with Section 64 of the Labour Relations Act, unless different procedures are provided for in a collective agreement, which is binding on employees. According to Hijzen and Pedro (2016) states that collective bargaining coverage is enhanced by government-issued extensions that expands the reach of collective agreements beyond their signatory parties to all organisations and employees in the same sector.

Lately there has been an unprecedented spark of unprotected strikes. Employees are protected under the labour law in terms of job retention during protected strikes. However, during unprotected strikes employers have the legal right to dismiss employees by means of a court process in the case where they do not return to work. In addition, during unprotected strikes legal procedures are not followed; hence employers are not able to adequately prepare

for the strike action, resulting in a possible greater loss than that which may occur under a protected strike. On the contrary, if procedures allows for sufficient time for employers to put measures in place losses can be minimised (Seedat, 2013).

Rapatsa (2014) explains that the South African labour law distinguishes between two types of disputes. There are disputes of rights and disputes of interest. A dispute of right is a dispute arising from dissatisfaction by workers regarding the exercise, protection or enjoyment of a right in the South African Constitution or other legislation. A dispute of interest includes *inter alia* disputes concerning failure to reach an agreement, for example a disagreement on salary increases. Employees cannot strike against a dispute involving their right. However, they are able to strike against a dispute involving their interests.

Employees will collectively raise their voices through unions pertaining their interest dispute or demand against an employer through a strike. During a strike, employees participating in the strike typically picket or demonstrate dissatisfaction inside or outside the premises of the employer, depending on their agreement. This situation is mostly characterised by singing, chanting slogans and waving banners outlining their demands. In some instances strikes are, unfortunately, accompanied by some acts of violence and crime such as looting, assault, damage to property and even killing people (Rapatsa, 2014).

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996, states that every South African has the right to strike. The Constitution further requires legislation to be passed in order to give effect to the rights contained in the Bill of Rights. To this effect, the legislature of 1995 passed the Labour Relations Act. The Labour Relations Act recognises the employees' right to strike and sets out procedures, which have to be followed. Furthermore, since a strike involves a gathering of employees, the Regulation of Gathering Act 205 of 1993 becomes necessary to regulate the activities, conduct and actions of the employees during a strike. Hence, employees employ the help of trade unions to ensure that they conform to these procedures.

According to Hayter (2015) 'trade unions have an important role to play in stemming the rising tide of inequality. As actors in political processes they can influence the direction of economic and social policy and shape the pattern of growth and the distribution of income' (p. 95).

Rapatsa (2014), states that after 2000, it seems that South African trade unions appear to have lost their primary role of promoting and protecting the employment rights and interests of employees. Nevertheless, trade unions became more like political parties by aligning themselves to adapt the same views as known political parties or to represent political parties in employment sectors. Being an active union representative or shop steward seems to be a political ticket to better employment positions, lucrative salary and incentives at the expense of the members.

Based on these actions, the following questions arise: 1. What are the roles and responsibilities of trade unions where workers are participating in a strike (protected or unprotected)? 2. Are the trade unions an extension of political parties? 3. Who should be held responsible for Delicts (both civil and criminal) committed by workers while engaging in a strike (Rapatsa, 2014)?

A discussion of strike action according to The Constitution of 1996 and The Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995.

At the dawn of democracy in 1994, the right to strike was initially envisaged in the interim Constitution. The Constitution of 1996 provided in part that, "...workers shall have the right to strike for the purpose of collective bargaining." Furthermore, the Constitution also provided for the employer to have recourse to lockout striking workers. This recourse related to the bargaining power between the employer and the employees. It has since been removed from the final Constitution when it replaced the interim Constitution in 1996.

According to Section 23 of the Constitution, it reigns supreme in all laws of the republic. In addition to the worker's right to strike in Section 23, the Constitution further allows everyone to associate freely as well as to assemble, picket, demonstrate and present petitions peacefully and unarmed. The Labour Relations Act was passed primarily to give effect to Section 23 of the Constitution and to regulate the right to strike and the recourse to lockout in conformity with the Constitution.

The Labour Relations Act defines a strike in Section 23 as the partial or complete concerted refusal to work, or the retardation or obstruction of work, by persons being or having been employed by the same employer or by different employers, for the purpose of remedying a grievance or resolving a dispute in respect of any matter of mutual interest between employer and employee, and every reference to 'work' in this definition includes overtime work, be it voluntary or compulsory (The Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995).

Section 65 of the Labour Relations Act prescribes the various limitations on the right of employees to strike. Strikes are summarily prohibited if, (a) the provisions of any collective agreement prohibits any strike in respect of the issue in dispute, (b) an agreement requires the issue in dispute to be referred to arbitration, (c) the issue in dispute may be referred to arbitration or to the Labour Court or (d) the person engaged in an essential service or a maintenance service. Strikes are also prohibited, subject to a collective agreement, where a person is bound by, (a) a provision in any arbitration award or collective agreement which regulates the issue in dispute, (b) any determination made by a statutory council that regulates the issue in dispute or (c) where the employer or employee is bound by a provision in any wage determination, which regulates the issue in dispute during the first year of operation.

In terms of Section 66 of the Labour Relations Act, secondary strikes are allowed, only if the following three criteria are met, namely if (a) the strike being supported complies with all the provisions of the Labour Relations Act (*i.e.*, the primary strikes is procedurally correct), (b) the employer (or employees' organisation) of the employees taking part in the sympathy strike has received written notice of the purpose of the secondary strike to strike action and, (c) the nature and extent of the sympathy strike is reasonable in relation to the possible direct or indirect effect the secondary strike may have on the business of the primary employer.

In order for employees to embark on strike action, the following criteria need to be met, (a) the dispute should have been referred either to a bargaining or statutory council or to The Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) for conciliation, and where a certificate has been issued stating that the dispute remains unresolved and 30 days have lapsed since the referral of the dispute, (b) if the dispute concerns a refusal to bargain, which includes a refusal to recognise a trade union as a collective bargaining agent, or the withdrawal of such recognition or a dispute concerning appropriate bargaining units, levels or

subjects then an advisory award by the Commission is required in addition to the requirements under paragraph (a) above and, (c) at least 48 hours written notice of either strike or lockout must be given to the other party or parties involved, or their respective representatives.

Nel (2002), points out that factors triggering strike action among employees can be classified under the following:

1. Economic factors which include: the average monthly wages of employees, the cost of living along with the consumer price index, the incidence of unemployment and the inflation rate.
2. Political factors which include: labour legislation, the power of the ruling party, the political leaders' attitude and policy and election periods.
3. Employment relations factors which include: the number of actively organising trade unions, the power of these trade unions in terms of membership, the number of committees within the undertaking and the incidence of wage adjustment and employment relations agreement.

These factors do not exhaust the possibilities affecting the incidence of strikes. The incidence of strikes among employees may usually be ascribed to a combination of economic, political and employment relations, and even social reasons, and these factors must be regarded as an integrated whole in interpreting strikes. It will not always be possible to take into consideration all the variables during an analysis of strikes, and occasionally the actual reasons for striking are overlooked, while secondary ones are regarded as casual. Furthermore, it should be borne in mind that the cause of strikes must not be confused with the aspects being negotiated. In other words, the formal issue in strikes should not be identified with the causes of strikes (Nel, 2002).

Strikes, which occur in compliance with the Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995, are referred to as protected strikes and accordingly provide certain protection to employees or employers. According to the Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995, strike ballots by a trade union are no longer procedural requirements. Such protection is voided when, (a) the parties involved in the dispute are parties belonging to a bargaining or statutory council and the dispute has been dealt with by the council in terms of its own constitution and remains

unsolved, (b) the strike conforms to a collective agreement that is binding on the parties (*i.e.*, parties have negotiated their own procedures), (c) employees strike in response to a lockout which does not conform with the requirements of the Labour Relations Act, (d) an employer locks out its employees in response to a strike which does not conform with the requirements of the Labour Relations Act or (e) an employer unilaterally changes an employee's terms and conditions of employment and the employer refuses to comply with an order by a council or the CCMA to restore the *status quo*.

Strikes carried out or contemplated in accordance with the Labour Relations Act are known as protected strikes. An individual participating in a protected strike or conducting him/herself in contemplation or in furtherance of such strike does not commit a delict or a breach of contract. According to the Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995, an employer may not dismiss an employee for participating in a protected strike with the exception of:

1. Reasons related to the employee's conduct during the strike (theft, wilful damage to property, assault, endangering the safety of the employer, other employees and the public (these actions constitute fair grounds for a dismissal of an employee); and
2. Reasons based on the employer's operational requirements (in this case, procedures for a fair retrenchment must be satisfied).

Civil legal proceedings may not be carried out against any person participating in, or contemplating conduct in furtherance of a protected strike. The indemnity does not, however, apply to any act in contemplation or furtherance of a strike that constitutes an offence (Venter & Levy, 2011). The Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995, allows for the employment of replacement labour (commonly referred to as scab labour) with the following two important exceptions:

1. Where a part or a whole of an employer's business has been declared a maintenance service (strikes are not permitted in designated maintenance services) and replacement labour cannot be used in the rest of the business should there be a strike; and

2. Where employees are locked out (unless the lockout is in response to a strike).

When a strike fails to conform to the requirements of the Labour Relations Act, Section 68 of the Labour Relations Act provides that the Labour Court has jurisdiction in the following cases:

1. To grant an interdict or restraining order preventing an employee or employer from participating in or contemplating strike action. Forty-eight hours' notice of the application must be given to the respondent. The Court may permit a shorter notice period if good reason has been shown as to why a shorter period is necessary. Despite this, if at least 10 days' notice of the planned strike has been given, then the applicant must give at least five days' notice to the respondent of an application for an interdict or restraining order; and
2. To grant compensation in respect of any loss attributable to the strike. In making such an order and in deciding on the amount of compensation to be awarded, the court must consider the duration of the strike, the financial position of the parties, attempts made to comply with the required procedures, whether the strike was premeditated, and whether the action or conduct was in response to unjustified conduct.

In terms of section 69 of the Labour Relations Act, a registered trade union may authorise a picket by its members and supporters in any place to which the public has access, but outside the premises of an employer (or, with the permission of the employer, inside the premises) for the purpose of peacefully demonstrating in support of any protected strike in conformity with the Labour Relations Act. The CCMA may be asked by a registered union or employer to secure an agreement between the parties on picketing rules and, if there is no agreement, the Commission must establish rules, taking into account the particular circumstances of the workplace and any relevant code of good practice. The CCMA may also extend permission to employees to strike within an employer's premises should permission be unreasonably withheld. Disputes may be referred to the CCMA for conciliation. If the dispute remains unresolved, any party may refer it to the Labour Court for adjudication (The Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995).

According to the Labour Relations Act, a service is deemed essential if the interruption of that service (*e.g.* by strike action) endangers the life, personal safety, or health of the whole or part of the population. Parliament and the police have been declared essential services in terms of the Labour Relations Act itself. The essential services committee designates essential services. A notice must be given in the Government Gazette of an investigation into whether a service or part thereof is essential. Public admissions are invited, and on the basis of these the committee should make a final determination, again gazetting the findings. Strikes in the essential services domain are strictly prohibited. Despite this, collective agreement may be ratified by the committee, which designated part of essential services as a minimum service. In this case, striking is prohibited only in the minimum services. Disputes in essential services must be referred either to a bargaining or statutory council or to the CCMA for conciliation and arbitration (The Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995).

A maintenance service is a service, the interruption of which should have the effect of material physical disruption to any working area, plant, or machinery. Maintenance services are established either through a collective agreement or on application by an employer to the essential services committee. Strikes are prohibited in declared maintenance services. An employer whose services or part thereof have been determined as a maintenance service may not engage replacement labour to continue or maintain production in the rest of the business during a strike (Venter & Levy, 2011).

The Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995, grants every employee, except those in essential or maintenance services, the right to take part in socio-economic protest action to promote or defend the social-economic interests of workers. For protest action to be protected,

1. the protest action must be called by a registered trade union or trade union federation;
2. the trade union or trade union federation has given NEDLAC notice of such a call stating the reasons for, and the nature of, the intended actions;
3. the matter giving rise to the intended protest action has been considered by NEDLAC or any other appropriate participative forum in order to resolve the matter and;
4. the trade union or trade union federation has given NEDLAC at least 14 days' notice of its intention to proceed with the protest action.

All the protection afforded to procedural or protected strikes, as previously outlined, shall apply to protest actions complying with these preconditions. The Labour Court has jurisdiction to grant a restraining order preventing employees from participating in protest action not in conformity with these preconditions. The Labour Court is also empowered to issue a declaratory order, giving regard to both nature and duration of the protest action, and steps taken to limit the impact and conduct of participants. Participants forfeit their protection against dismissal if they participate in action, which is in breach of an order of the Labour Court (The Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995). Participation in trade union may take many forms, for example by attending membership meetings, holding paid or unpaid positions, being a union member, taking part in strikes and, in certain countries, voting for a union list in works council elections (Klandermans, 1986).

There is general consensus in the literature on strikes and that they are caused by asymmetric information. For example, unions overestimate the profitability of their employers and demand too high a wage (Brunnschweiler, Jennings & MacKenzie, 2014).

A strike is the most visible expression of organised conflict. In South Africa there is a tendency among employees to arrange organised strikes in order to attain their goals. The way in which such strikes are dealt with and industrial conflict is accommodated by crucial factors in the creation of a healthy labour dispensation. Negotiation, mediation and arbitration are mechanisms, which have been made available in local efforts to deal with strikes (Nel, 2002). In this dissertation the researcher will focus on dealing with strikes in South Africa and on exploring the psychological trauma associated with these strikes.

### Psychological trauma caused by strike action

Trauma is created when an individual is exposed, directly or indirectly, to an overwhelming event/experience that involves a threat to one's physical, emotional and/or psychological safety (Ramirez, 2014). Ever since people's response to overwhelming experiences was first systematically explored, it has been found that the psychological effect of trauma is expressed as change in the biological stress response (van der Kolk, 2003).

Events can be physical or psychological, and experiences may be sudden or gradual dramatic one-time events, or continuously occurring violations (Emerson & Hopper, 2011). Trauma survivors experience psychological and physiological repercussions following a traumatic event (Levine, 1997). Jorgensen (2012) lists four types of trauma reactions, (1) Psychological reaction, (2) Emotional reaction, (3) Cognitive disturbances and (4) Behavioural changes.

Psychological reactions include symptoms such as:

1. Nausea
2. Diarrhoea
3. Heartburn
4. Dry mouth or throat
5. Heart Palpitations
6. Shortness of breath
7. Physical weakness
8. Back ache
9. Sweaty hands
10. Muscle pains

Emotional reactions include symptoms such as:

1. Feelings that things are running out of control
2. Frustration
3. Aggressiveness/anger
4. Restlessness
5. Hopelessness and helplessness
6. Guilt feelings
7. Numbness
8. Anxiety
9. Nervousness
10. Loneliness

Cognitive disturbances include symptoms such as:

1. Inability to concentrate
2. Memory disturbances

3. Forgetfulness
4. Confusion
5. Flashbacks
6. Bad judgement
7. Tendency to blame and withdraw
8. Indecision
9. Absent-mindedness
10. Hypersensitivity, and

Behavioural changes include symptoms such as:

1. Disturbances of sleep, appetite and other life patterns:
  - Insomnia
  - Nightmares
  - Food aversion
  - Alcohol usage
  - Excessive smoking
2. Outbursts
3. Impulsive actions
4. Compulsive behaviour ( for example counting things again and again)
5. Reckless spending of money
6. Heightened or lowered sexual drive
7. Excessive smoking/drinking
8. Staying away from work

When the human body successfully responds to a stressful event, the brain and body work together to respond to the threat. Once the stressor or threat is no longer present, the body is able to 'rest and digest' or to restore equilibrium (Ramirez, 2014). For individuals that have experienced one or more extremely negative or traumatic event, their brains and bodies become overwhelmed and their nervous system is unable to return to equilibrium after the threat has passed. Instead, they continue to live day by day in this stress response mode, unable to relax or achieve a sense of safety. Left untreated, trauma survivors are perpetually scanning their environment for a threat and interpreting various events and interactions as potentially unsafe (Ramirez, 2014).

Corrigan, Fisher and Nutt (2010) point out that it has been established that exposure to threat or trauma stimulates the automatic nervous system (ANS), resulting in sympathetic hyperarousal and parasympathetic hyper-arousal states. Following cessation of the threat, many victims continue to suffer from automatic sensitivity to stimuli directly or indirectly related to the traumatic events.

Thus, threatening and traumatic experiences result in a bewildering array of cognitive, emotional and physiological symptoms: emotions of fear, shame and rage; numbing of feelings and body sensations; over activity of the stress response system; and painful, negative beliefs about the self that serve to intensify the distressing feelings and body response (Corrigan et al., 2010).

With a nervous system that cannot modulate either heightened emotional states or states of depression and numbing, patients often report difficulty tolerating emotional and physiological arousal without becoming overwhelmed, as well as problems in recovering from experiences of intense activation or depression. In addition, they report string somatic responses in which the body tends to become frozen, collapsed or driven: action becomes either impossible or impulsive (Corrigan et al., 2010). Non-threatening situational cues often activate the sympathetic nervous system (SNS) activity and fight-flight response, while dangerous situations instead elicit parasympathetic non-responsiveness or submission-compliance responses (Corrigan et al., 2010).

Although exposure to trauma serves as a valuable predictor of subsequent psychological dysfunction, literature increasingly suggests that additional factors may contribute to dysfunctional psychological functioning following exposure to trauma (Bernard, Whittles, Kertz and Burke, 2015). Martin, Cramer, DePrince and Freyd (2013) note that exposure to traumatic events, is frequently linked to poor psychological outcomes, including depression, dissociation, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Studies in the maltreatment literature focus on single types of trauma (e.g. only sexual abuse/assault, neglect, or interpersonal violence).

Such studies may not account for the effect of other types of traumas experienced by participants and may consequently overestimate the effects of the singular type of trauma examined. When studies include more than one type of trauma, the majority of trauma survivors report exposure to multiple categories of trauma.

Moreover, when compared with survivors exposed to a single trauma type, survivors of multiple trauma types, particularly adverse childhood events, are more likely to experience chronic psychological and health problems such as depression, anxiety, aggression, sleep disturbance, severe obesity, somatic complaints and substance abuse (Martin et al., 2013).

Nel (2002) accentuates the fact that psychologists have attempted to contribute to an understanding of why factors such as general unrest, wages, working hours, domestic disputes in the workplace, solidarity disputes, consultation, general causes and job security and safety result in strikes, while at other times it is not the case. The result has been a number of theories that attempt to explain the psychological causes of strikes. Three of these theories are as follows:

1. Frustration-aggression hypothesis. One psychological explanation for strike causation is that of aggression, which is thought to result from feelings of frustration. The frustration-aggression hypothesis states that aggression is always a consequence of frustration. A person will become frustrated when his or her goals are unexpectedly blocked. These feelings of frustration are then channelled into aggressive behaviour. In the context of strike action, workers may use strikes to express their feelings of frustration (Nel, 2002).
2. Relative deprivation theory. This theory identifies the feeling of deprivation of one group relative to another as a potential cause of strike action. Where employees operate in an environment where there is potential for inter-group comparison, and in such comparison find themselves wanting, they will be more likely to go on strike. As such, this theory postulates that employees do not focus solely on what they themselves have, but instead tend to look at what they have in relation to other groups of people in the organisation (Nel, 2002).
3. Expectancy-value approach. Klanderman (1986) developed an expectancy-value approach to strike causation based on the union's ability to influence employees to participate in strike action. This approach is based on the assumption that employees will do a cost-benefit analysis of engaging in the action, weighing up what the strike will cost them financially, emotionally, and socially, against what they are likely to benefit if the strike is successful. This theory comprises two components that of consensus mobilisation and that of action mobilisation. Consensus mobilisation is the process by means of which unions share their

objectives regarding engagement in the strike action, and attempt to achieve consensus around those objectives. Action mobilisation attempts to explain the motives employees have for agreeing to go on strike. These include goal motives (based on the belief that high employee participation is necessary for the strike to succeed and for the goals to be met, and that if they participate others will follow and the strike will be successful), social motives (based on the expected reaction of friends, family members, colleagues and other significant people, and the value of those reactions), and finally reward motives (what the employees stand to gain in relation to what it will cost him or her) (Nel, 2002).

The employees' willingness to participate in strike action is a weighted combination of these three motives. Many strikes in South Africa become violent, and are characterised by acts of aggression, assault, murder, vandalism, intimidation and destruction of property. Understanding the causes of violence in strikes is therefore very important, particularly if violence is to be avoided (Nel, 2002).

Another theory according to Nel (2002) explaining why strikes turn violent is the de-individuation theory. Very often people that become violent in crowd situations such as strikes have never been aggressive or physically abusive before, and are acting out of character. The theory of de-individuation attempts to explain the psychological processes that occur within an individual that will allow the person to become uncharacteristically violent. When individuals become part of a crowd, they begin to lose sense of themselves, and consequently have a diminished sense of self-awareness. Their focus moves away from themselves and into the crowd, and they start losing the capacity to evaluate their own behaviour. Once they have lost a sense of individuality (i.e. they have become 'de-individuated'), inhibited behaviour, or behaviour that they would otherwise have controlled, is released. This state of de-individuation is coupled with a sense of anonymity that occurs as a result of being surrounded by many other people. As such, the fear of punishment is lessened, as the person feels nameless and unidentified. These factors then contribute to people becoming violent when they would normally never do (Nel, 2002).

## 1.2 Research Purpose and Objectives

Following from the above problem statement, the following research questions have been identified:

### Article 1

1. How are strikes (protected and unprotected) conceptualised in the literature?
2. What was the cause of the strike?
3. Was the strike that had taken place within the organisation protected or unprotected?
4. Did the strike lead to any violent acts?
5. What was the time-frame within which the strike had taken place?
6. In what manner was the organisation set back due to the strike?
7. How was the strike managed?
8. Did the organisation make use of these policies to prevent the strike from taking place?

### Article 2

1. How is psychological trauma conceptualised in the literature?
2. What are the experiences of strike managers during strikes?
3. What psychological trauma symptoms do strike managers experience during strikes?
4. Does the experience during a strike negatively influence the strike manager's ability to perform his/her duties?
5. What steps did the strike manager take to address the negative experience?
6. What recommendations can be made for strike managers to prevent psychological trauma during strikes?

The research objectives are divided into a general objective and specific objectives.

### General Objective

The general objective of this study is to explore the traumatic experiences of South African strike managers during strikes.

### Specific Objectives

The specific objectives aim at answering the research question. The specific objectives of this research project are listed below.

1. To determine how strikes and psychological trauma are conceptualised in the literature.
2. To determine what the causes of strikes are and what strike managers experiences during strikes.
3. To determine whether the strike was protected or unprotected and what psychological trauma symptoms strike managers experience during strikes.
4. To determine whether strikes are violent acts.
5. To determine whether the experience during a strike negatively influences the strike managers' ability to perform their duties.
6. To determine the time-frame within which strikes take place.
7. To establish what steps the strike manager had taken to address these negative experiences.
8. To determine in what manner the organisation was set back and how strike managers managed the strike.
9. To establish if the organisation made use of strike policies to prevent strikes from taking place.
10. To determine what recommendations can be made for strike managers to prevent psychological trauma during strikes.

### 1.3 Literature Review

Venter and Levi (2011) define labour relations as '...the area of study and practice of the roles of and the interactions between the parties to the labour relationship, the various rules and regulations that govern that relationship, and the environment in which the relationship plays out' (p. 6).

A literature review will be conducted in a constructive and data-sensitive manner without forcing it on data, and it can assist the researcher in being more sensitive to data, as proposed by Thornberg (2012).

A literature study will be done on the following topics to gain a clear perspective on the subject studied.

1. The definition of a protected strike as well as an unprotected strike and the role strikes play in labour relations.
2. Reasons will be identified as to why employees take part in strikes.
3. An overview will be given of the effect of strikes on the organisation.
4. Factors that influence employees to take part in strikes.
5. How strikes are managed.
6. The level of psychological trauma experienced by strike managers as well as the kind of psychological trauma that can occur.

To conduct this specific research study, different literature resources will be used, including journal articles, textbooks, internet resources, dissertations of past students and the relevant legislation through EbscoHost, Google Scholar, JSTOR, Juta, Sabinet References and SAePublications. An empirical study will also be used in this research article. The empirical study will consist of the research design, participants, procedures followed to collect data and an analysis of this data in order to achieve the research objectives.

## **2. Research Design**

### **2.1 Research Approach**

For this study we will focus on social constructivism. According to Creswell (2009), social constructivists hold assumptions that individuals seek an understanding of the world in which they live and work. Individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences, meanings directed towards certain objects or certain things. These meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrowing meanings into a few categories or ideas. The goal of this research is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views and experiences of the situation being studied.

Constructivist researchers often address the processes of interaction among the individuals. They also focus on the specific contexts in which individuals live and work in order to understand the historical and cultural settings of each participant. The researcher recognises that their own backgrounds shape their interpretations and they position themselves in the research to acknowledge how these interpretations flow from their personal, cultural and historical experiences. This intent is to make sense of or interpret the meanings the participants attach to their personal experiences (Creswell, 2009).

A qualitative research design will be employed. Semi-structured face-to-face interviews will be conducted with each participant to achieve the research objectives. Adams (2010) finds a semi-structured interview especially useful when it is needed to ask probing open-ended questions and wants the individual to elaborate on a response following a fixed pre-determined question that had been posed. This approach will not limit the response of the interviewee within the constraints of a structured question; thus the researcher can follow it up if the participant did not understand the question correctly, consequently improving the validity of the response (Adams, 2010).

Qualitative research is concerned with interpretation and meaning and is interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds and what meaning they attribute to their experiences (Merriman, 2009). This will also assist in understanding the processes better, which underlies patterns of behaviour, people's emotions or their response to a specific situation (Hollins & Flemming, 2010). Capturing the individual's aspects of the human experience appears advisable in the endeavour to achieve a holistic picture of how unionised employees experience engagement in the workplace (Maree, 2012).

Denzin and Lincoln (as cited in de Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delpont, 2011), describe qualitative research as an interdisciplinary, trans-disciplinary, and occasionally counter-disciplinary field. It crosscuts the humanities, the social sciences, and the physical sciences. Qualitative research is many things at the same time. It is multi-paradigmatic in focus. Its practitioners are sensitive to the value of the multi-method approach. They are committed to the naturalistic perspective and to the interpretive understanding of human experience. At the same time, the field is inherently political and shaped by multiple ethical and political allegiances.

## 2.2 Research Strategy

Case study design is more of a choice of what to study than a methodological one. This assumption becomes clear when weighing its ability to adapt to a wide range of methodological frameworks such as life history, phenomenology, grounded theory and ethnographic research (de Vos et al., 2011). The qualitative research method will be an explorative approach. The explorative approach will be used due to the fact that there hasn't been much focus on psychological trauma of strike managers during strikes, and that a possibility may exist to implement help programs for these strike managers.

Since qualitative researchers are primarily interested in the meaning subjects attach to their life experiences, they have to use some form of case study to immerse themselves in the activities of a single person or a small number of people in order to obtain an intimate familiarity with their social worlds and to look for patterns in the research participants' lives, words and actions in the context of the case as a whole (de Vos et al., 2011).

The following types of case studies can be identified,

1. Descriptive case study, strives to describe, analyse and interpret a particular phenomenon. Extreme or unique cases may occur that justify a study in its own right. In this regard an intensive study of one instance or a small number of instances is undertaken in order to produce detailed descriptions of these cases. The purpose is not to understand a broad social issue, but merely to describe the case being studied (de Vos et al., 2011).
2. Collective case study is an instrumental case study extended to a number of cases. Cases are chosen so that comparisons can be drawn between cases and concepts and by doing so, theories can also be extended and validated.

Both of these case studies will be used in this study. This allows the researcher to obtain a familiar intimate interaction with the participants, which also allowed the researcher to gather important and valuable information.

## **Participants**

The participants in this study included the strike managers in South African organisations. The sample group consisted of these participants in different sectors such as, the mining sector and the metal sector. The population of this study would include a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 15 participants each of whom were interviewed. Combined purposive and convenient non-probability sampling was done to conduct the study and the data collection continued until data saturation was reached; thus the population may or may not exceed 15 participants.

To determine which participants would be included in the sample, the researcher applied the following selection of criteria.

1. The participants had to be employers in the organisation or the owner of the organisation.
2. The participants had to be in a managerial position.
3. They had to be willing to be recorded on an audio voice-recording device during the interview.
4. Participation was voluntary.
5. No attempt was made to control the race, gender or age of the participant.

The participants remained anonymous throughout the study and a confidentiality agreement was included with each participant at the time of the interview. Criteria for judging the soundness or trust-worthiness of the study was taken into consideration at all times while field notes were taken during these interviews.

### 2.3 Research Method

The research method comprised a combination of a literature study as well as an empirical study. The results obtained from the research were presented in article format.

**Research setting:**

Successful execution of the design and data gathering is usually determined by the accessibility of the setting and the researcher's ability to build and maintain relationships and agreements with the gatekeepers and participants (de Vos et al., 2011). The researcher identified particulars that prove that the credentials are vitally important in order to reassure a subject with regard to the *bona fide* status of the researcher.

Important qualities such as honesty and warmth throughout the interviews were demonstrated and also convinced gatekeepers of the sincerity of the intention to collect data in an objective manner. The aim and object of the proposed investigation was made clear and the participant fully understood the purpose of the interviews. The aspects of the research such as data collection methods and recording of data was also discussed in detail.

The participants were prepared for semi-structured interviews. The time and place was arranged in advance, where no interruptions would occur, and where the process would be facilitated. The setting also provided privacy, was comfortable for the participant, also took place in a non-threatening environment and was easily accessible. They were also provided with seating arrangements that encouraged involvement and interactions.

**Sampling**

The overall purpose of the use of the relevant sampling techniques in qualitative research is to collect the richest data. Rich data ideally means a wide and diverse range of information collected over a relatively prolonged period of time (de Vos et al., 2011).

The sampling procedure followed in this study was theoretical sampling. For this strategy the researcher used the study to decide which criteria are more or less important in terms of deciding which criteria are used to select a sample. This strategy was popularised by Glaser and Strauss (as cited in Wagner, Kawulich & Garner, 2012) who defined it as 'the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyses the data and decides what data to collect next and where to find it in order to develop his/her theory as it emerges.'

Often sampling in qualitative research is controlled by the need for developing theoretical arguments, which can be referred to as theoretical sampling. The sample is thus chosen to assist the researcher to understand the situation under study and to highlight the researcher's emerging theory.

As qualitative researchers progress in refining the various categories of their research, they may notice voids in their data. In such an event theoretical sampling can be used, in which only specific matters are studied in order to obtain more precise information which would cast further light on the developing theory; thus making it definitive and useful. This form of sampling seeks to refine ideas and not to enlarge the original sample. In such a case researchers could distance themselves from people, scenery, events or documents. They could also return to the same persons or situations for more information (de Vos et al., 2011).

Theoretical sampling assists the researcher in defining categories, identifying the context to which they are relevant, specifying the conditions under which they appear or are maintained, and in discovering the consequences. In the case of theoretical sampling, an increasing interest in the emerging theory guides the selection of sampling cases. But at some point during the data-gathering phase, the researcher will no longer find any new categories of data, or any new input into existing categories of data and can then proceed with the following topic (de Vos et al., 2011).

### **Data collection method**

Data collection usually is done by interviewing subjects (in the case of qualitative research) and can include other forms of data acquisition such as documents and literature (Jones & Alony, 2011). De Vos et al. (2011) describe interviewing as a method of data collection whereby researchers obtain information by means of direct interaction with an individual or group known to or expected to be capable of processing the knowledge they seek.

A semi-structured interview was conducted with each participant. Semi-structured interviews are not fully fixed interviews or fully free interviews, which are commonly viewed as flexible (Maree, 2012). The interview also consisted of open-ended questions, for example questions such as: (1) What are your experiences as a strike manager during strikes?

(2) What psychological trauma symptoms do you as a strike manager experience during strikes? (3) In what way does strike action influence your ability to perform your duties as a strike manager? (4) What steps did you as a strike manager take to address your negative experience?

The open-ended question focused on the trauma employers experience during or after unprotected strikes and how employers follow through on their duties thereafter. Each interview was voice recorded and documented for analysis.

### **Data recording**

Prior to data collection, the researcher planned for the recording of data will be done in a systematic manner appropriate to the setting or research participants or both, and which facilitated analysis.

A voice recorder was used during the interviews, and the data were transcribed. Transcription is an important stage of the analytic process since the intensity of engagement with the text means that many analytical insights are produced at this stage. Furthermore, transcription is also done by the researcher's own theoretical decisions regarding what is important and what can be omitted (Frost, 2011). Special attention was paid to the consideration that data-recording strategies were used which fitted the setting and the research participants' sensitivities, and that these would only be used with their consents, and would also practise and build habits for labelling audiotapes and, taking along extra batteries for the recorder, and found quiet places for taking notes. These practices paid off by keeping data intact, complete, organised and accessible. Systems to retrieve data for analysis were also planned.

Planning ahead took place, especially for writing the final product of the research, examples of which are; colour coding of notes and descriptions of settings that would be invaluable for piecing together patterns, defining categories for data analysis and planning further data collection, and especially for writing the final product of the research. Templates such as documentation sheets for interviews were also used (de Vos et al., 2011).

### **Strategies employed to ensure data quality and integrity**

Wagner et al. (2012) point out that in order to ensure that the data is trustworthy, the researcher applies the following criteria:

1. Credibility, the term used to address activities which make it more credible that the findings were derived from the data (i.e. prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing, and negative case analysis).
2. Transferability, the basis for making similarity judgement; it is achieved by maintaining all versions of the data in their original forms and by presentation of the description.
3. Dependability, a reliability measure achieved by triangulation of methods and providing an audit trail; this audit trail attests to the accuracy of translations of information from various data sources and provides the means for ensuring the confirmability of the findings, allowing for reconstruction of events and processes that had led to the conclusions in the research.
4. Confirmability, ensuring that the findings are grounded in the data and gauging the degree of biases present to demonstrate that the data and findings were derived from events, rather than being solo.

A co-coder was used to assist the researcher in extracting themes separately and to compare these themes afterwards. Interviewing is the predominant mode of data or information collection in qualitative research. The researcher obtained information through direct interchange with an individual that is known or expected to possess the knowledge they seek. The interview is a social relationship designed to exchange information between the participant and the researcher. The quality and quantity of information exchanged depends on how astute and creative the interviewer is at understanding and managing the relationship (de Vos et al., 2011). The data collected during these interviews were kept confidential and anonymous. This was stated clearly to all the participants.

The various ethical implications and considerations this study may face would be the avoidance of harm, voluntary participation, informed consent, deception of subjects and/or respondents, violation of privacy/anonymity/confidentiality, denial of treatment, compensation, debriefing of participant, action and competence of researchers, cooperation with contributors and sponsors and publication of the findings. The considerations are original planning, work plan and time schedule, and financial planning.

### **Data analysis**

The data collected by the researcher during the interviews were all documented and analysed.

Analysing the data involves the volume of raw information, sifting of information, identifying significant patterns and constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveals. The researcher used the thematic analysis, which is a general approach to analysing data that involves identifying themes or patterns in the data.

### **Expected contribution of the study**

#### Contribution for the individual

If the relevant personnel are aware of the psychological trauma level within the organisation, they can present assistance programs to assist the owner or strike manager that has experienced trauma during and after strike action.

#### Contribution for the organisation

The organisation may benefit from this in the sense that owners or strike managers can carry out their work-force-related duties in the organisation. This will lead to a profitable organisation, as all the untoward effects of psychological trauma can be managed more effectively.

### Contribution for the Industrial/Organisational Literature

The data gathered in the study will contribute to the field of industrial and organisational psychology, and specifically in the South African context. Strike action plays a very important role in the South African economy. The introduction of strike action in South Africa combined with psychological trauma contributes to the field of Labour Relations and Organisational Psychology.

### **Chapter Division**

Chapter 1: Research Proposal

Chapter 2: Strikes and dealing with strikes in South African organisations

Chapter 3: Psychological trauma and the psychological trauma experienced by strike managers due to strikes in South Africa

Chapter 4: Conclusion, Limitations and Scope for future research

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**Chapter 2: Strikes and dealing with strikes in South African organisations**

**Article 1**

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### Chapter 2

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## 1. Introduction

Brand (as cited in Odendaal 2014) points out that, South Africa has one of the highest rates of industrial action with its strikes being among the most violent in the world.

The history of strike action in South Africa may be traced back as far as the mid-nineteenth century (Beittel, 1995). Beittel, (1995) further explains, ‘Labour unrest first started in the transport and construction industries and later to spread to the Kimberley diamond field. In 1884, miners participated in the first major strike against diamond magnates. In 1890, the focus of labour protest shifted to the gold mine industry on the Witwatersrand and continued on through up until the 1920s. The 1922 Rand Revolt was one of the first turning points in South African history. The 1930s were characterised by only intermittent and isolated outbreaks of labour unrest, but the early 1940s were marked by a wave of successful strikes by workers in the transport, manufacturing and commercial sector’ (p. 88). Beittel (1995) then elaborates that, ‘during the 1950 apartheid regime, a policy were opposed by township residents, but from 1955 black labour played a more prominent role in the mounting protest, and there were waves of strikes by commercial, industrial and service workers on the Rand and in other urban centres. The main features of labour-capital are outbursts of strikes by industrial workers during 1973 and 1974. During the 1980’s a fundamental shift in the volume and character of labour-capital conflict in South Africa occurred. Strikes, stay-aways, boycotts, factory occupations and other forms of protests increased in one industry after another. The 1987 “Great Miners’ Strike” marked a pivotal shift in the historical relationship between labour, capital and state’ (p. 90).

In 2012, South Africa observed yet another huge turning point. Odendaal (2014) explains that the country had recorded a loss of 17 million working hours, 16 million of these occurring in the mining sector, as a result of 99 strikes, of which 45 were unprotected and between the period 2007 and 2011, South Africa experienced an average of 65 strikes per year. In addition, between the period 2006 and 2011, every 1000 working South Africans lost about 507 working days due to strikes.

In 2012, the famous strike at Lonmin mine in Marikana, during which 45 people were killed and hundreds injured during a wage-related strike, a misconception that all the workers receive a 22% increase in wages had spurred strike action across the mining sector (Odendaal, 2014). By 2013, all hopes for the turbulent 2012 labour environment were lost when 5.2 million working days were lost owing to continued strike action including Anglo American Platinum Limited, Impala Platinum Holding Limited and the Lonmin Plc (Bohlmann, Dixon, Rimmer and Van Heerden, 2015).

It is a generally observed phenomenon that strikes have formed part of South African organisations for quite some time. This article focuses on strikes in South Africa, the causes of strikes, the violence in strikes, the timeframe in which the strike takes place, the manner in which the organisation was set back, whether the organisation makes use of policies to prevent strikes and how the strikes were managed. This article explains how strikes are conceptualised in the literature and furthermore elaborates on the traumatic experiences of South African strike managers during a strike.

### 1.1 Literature Review

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996, section 23(2)c states that every worker has the right to strike. The Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995 (LRA) gives effect to the right to strike and also to regulate the strike (Manamela, 2012).

The Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995 elaborates that its purpose is to advance economic developments, social justice, labour peace and also the democratisation of the workplace. The primary objects of the Labour Relations Act includes the provision of framework within which employees, their trade unions and employer's organisation can collectively bargain in determining wages, terms and conditions of employment, other matters of mutual interest and also to formulate industrial policy. The Labour Relations Act also promotes orderly collective bargaining and collective bargaining at a sectorial level (Botha, 2015).

The Labour Relations Act makes provision for the advancement of the effective resolution of labour disputes and employee participation in decision-making in the organisation (Botha, 2015). According to the South African Labour Law stated in Article 4 of The Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining, Convention 98 of 1949 (as cited in Chicktay, 2012), ‘Measures appropriate to national conditions shall be taken to encourage and promote the full development and utilisation of machinery for voluntary negotiation between employer and employer organisation and workers organisation, with a view to the regulation of terms and conditions of employment by means of collective agreements’ (p. 260).

According to Kaufman (as cited in Murwirapachena and Sibanda 2014), ‘the right to strike in South Africa is a reflection that the country has embraced core principles that form the theoretical and policy foundations for the fields of industrial relations’ (p. 553). Murwirapachena and Sibanda (2014) state that ‘strikes have been rife in all sectors, leaving some economic commentators calling South Africa a striking nation. They have become a blunt weapon frequently wielded in an atmosphere of hostility and intimidation, with negative socio-economic consequences. The causes of strikes are multifaceted and the effects detrimentally catastrophic. South Africa faces a number of long-standing economic problems that still reflect the long-lasting and harmful legacy of apartheid’ (p. 554).

Although strikes are a threat to peace, violent strike action is not expressly prohibited by the definition of strikes and protest action as described in section 213 of the Labour Relations Act; they are implicitly prohibited elsewhere in the Labour Relations Act (Chicktay, 2012). According to the Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995, Section 67(8), ‘strikes may be contractually liable for offences committed during a strike. They may also be interdicted from continuing in the strike, and the strikers who disrupt the peace may be dismissed for misconduct.’ This allows for elaboration on the finding of violence in strike action.

Masiloane (2010) explains: ‘Violence and intimidation of non-striking employees are usually prominent features of any strike action in South Africa’ (p. 31). This erodes the employee’s freedom to choose whether or not to strike and it also effects the safety and security of the employee, who does not take part in the strike, during a strike (Masiloane, 2010).

Wallace, Cahn and Lloyds (as cited in Kgosimore 2004) defines violence as ‘any physical or non-physical (verbal) action or behaviour that is directed at imposing an individual’s will on another person and any behaviour aimed at restricting or denying another person’s right’ (p. 64). For this article, violence is any action or behaviour directed at influencing another individual’s behaviour, limiting such individual his/her freedom of choice (Masiloan, 2010). According to Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, Zwi and Lozano (as cited in Kgosimore, 2004), ‘violence has been an important part of the human experience from antiquity’ and the description of how individuals have used physical violence, either individually or collectively, to control power and authority and also non-physical (psychological) violence’ (p. 61). According to Engel (as cited in Kgosimore, 2004) soft violence refers to controlling or dominating others, or depriving them of their right and dignity.

The effect of strike action in South Africa has a far more negative influence on the country and its people. Murwirapachena and Sibanda, (2014) mention that, ‘on the far and wider reaching consequences in the economy as a whole, ranging from economic to social-political effects, and are both immediate and long terms’ (p. 556), and they also identify the effect of strike action in South Africa.

Murwirapachena and Sibanda, (2014) further list five effects of strikes in South Africa, the first being ‘loss in production, strike action usually lead to the decline in production levels, because for a strike action to be successful one must halt or slowdown production. Those who are willing to work are always under threat from the striking workers as they are accused of undermining solidarity and weakening the cause of the striking workers. During strike action many productive hours are lost through picketing, seat-ins, and negotiation. Management and workers’ representatives waste a lot of time locked in long and strenuous negotiations where workers will naturally be asking for more and employers offering less’ (p. 556).

Secondly, 'lost contacts, prolonged strikes usually result in firms losing business contacts with both their suppliers and customers who are lost temporarily during the strike action while others are lost permanently, which impacts negatively on the firms. Losing suppliers and customers is associated with losing trust which, when once lost, is difficult to regain. Due to the loss in production and lost contact, most firms are left with no option but to shut down operation. The loss in contacts has a multiplier effect on the government that stands to lose tax revenue from the employer's loss of contacts' (p. 557).

Israelstam (as cited in Murwirapachena & Sibanda 2014), argues that 'although some firms are strong enough to survive the damage caused by a strike, they can still lose market share, and weaker business could go under as a result of industrial actions' (p. 557). Murwirapachena and Sibanda (2014) further state that 'regardless of their strength in business, firms are substantially affected by strikes. Even though some may not reach shut down, they can still find it difficult to recover from the strike impact' (p. 557).

Third, 'loss in investment, this is a long-term effect of strike actions because it affects potential Gross Domestic Product. Over the past decades, the importance of investment on any economy's well being, as well as its role as a key component of aggregate demand, has augmented the world over. Investments are stimulated by boosting investors' confidence, which is normally perceived in a country's economic stability. Investors are usually risked averse and rely on the stability of a country encompassing the political, economic, and social stability before committing their capital and other resources' (p. 557). Fourth, 'loss of employment; the employers lose production through lost production hours in the same manner the employees lose wages. The impact is even more for prolonged strikes as, in some instances, some workers lose their jobs after the strike action, especially in cases of illegal strikes or where firms shut down. In most cases employment is affected directly by strike, and can also be effected indirectly on employment that emanate from shutdowns of firms, trade deficits and low investment' (p. 558).

The fifth and last effect as stated by Murwirapachena and Sibanda, (2014) is 'socio-political effects, where strike action do not only have an economic impact, but also affects the social fibre of the country. In most cases, the major strike action turns ugly with a lot of people dying and some being injured, owing to violence that can mount during a strike.

This exposes the workers and their families to a lifetime of poverty as some will not be able to work for their families in the future owing to injuries, retrenchments or even death. This translates into a government and society's burden of financially supporting the injured workers, retrenched people and bereaved families, especially through payment of the disabled, unemployment benefits and social grants, respectively' (p. 558).

Jordaan (2016) further states that, 'apart from the direct losses in terms of production or services, lower dividends for shareholders, and less labour income for workers, the economy is negatively affected by a number of other indirect impacts that are not easily quantifiable. These include impacts due to exchange-rate fluctuations and depreciation as a result of strike action and lost production, impact on inflation due to increasing unit labour cost (and exchange-rate depreciation), potentially higher rates due to the higher inflation, etc. Such impacts can also result in a loss of confidence that may lead to lower consumption, lower investment, lower production and lower future growth. Other indirect impacts include higher indebtedness of workers, as they cannot service their debt if they do not earn an income, loss of assets due to sequestration or blacklisting as a result of workers not being able to service their commitments, and a lower standard living' (p. 304).

To state the above-mentioned effects of strikes, we look at recent strike actions in South Africa. Sefako (2016) reports that, 'analysts say the country's current account deficit and the rand will be hit hard by the current strike' (para. 1). SAPA (2014) further reported that, 'the repercussions of the five-month-long platinum strike are still affecting the country's economy, the SA Reserve Bank (SARB) said' (para. 1). SABC (2016) reported that 'striking MyCiti Bus drivers in Cape Town are demanding better working conditions from their employers' (para. 1). SABC (2016) also reported, 'striking workers at the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein have blocked the main entrance at the institution with their vehicles' (para. 1). Lastly, Tiva (2016) reports: 'the continuing unprotected strike by South African Municipal Workers Union (Samwu) members in Phalaborwa, Limpopo, is affecting the provision of essential services' (para. 1). These are strike actions published in various newspaper articles and this is only an indication of the strike action in South Africa. These are only the strike actions published in newspapers and not those of private organisations or of domestic strikes.

Jordaan (2016) elaborates on policy implications with possible solutions to strike action in South Africa. 'Strike action does not only limit production in strike-related sector, but also result in unwanted impacts on the rest of the economy. Although the causes of strike action constitute a research topic on its own and will therefore not be addressed in the present research. Low wages, harsh working conditions, poor living conditions, over indebtedness, consumer price increases, and unions are at the core of such actions' (p. 314). Jordaan (2016) further states 'improvements in the general level of education and skills are needed to create long-term sustainable growth that will enable higher wages and a higher probability of employment. However, short-term labour problems also need to be addressed. A worrying factor is also that the next generation of workers is being failed by the education and skills development system in place. Consequently, they are being deprived of opportunities to improve themselves through human-capital development' (p. 314). Following, are possible solutions for the labour market in South Africa to apply.

Murwirapachena and Sibanda, (2014) state four possible solutions to a stable labour market in South Africa. The first being '...democratisation of labour relations, the government should introduce the requirement of balloting before strike as a measure to prevent violent strike action' (p. 558). Secondly, is in order '... to create sound stakeholder relationships, employers, managers, and leadership should create a sense of belonging in workers and society' (p. 559). Third will be to '...turn employees into employers through indigenisation policies, the black worker majority feels greatly infringed, exploited, overworked and underpaid' (p. 559). Lastly, is the '...implementation of a nation minimum wage policy, the government introduce and enforce a national minimum wage that extends to other sectors across all industries' (p. 559).

Muswaka, (2014) also points out possible thematic solutions extracted from the Marikana miners' strike. The first being 'employees should be viewed as key stakeholders, employees, like shareholders, contribute to the corporation. Shareholders contribute financial capital and employees contribute skill, time and effort. Given that both groups are investors in a company, and if we are to accept the premise of the stakeholder approach that each group of stakeholders merits consideration for its own sake, then there is perhaps a strong argument to be advanced for the equal treatment of employees and shareholders' (p. 65). The second possible solution is 'director's decisions should be cost effective in the economic, social and environmental context.

Cost and revenue appears to be crucial or central elements of business. Hence liquidity, profitability and solvency are key accounting elements that usually speak loudly about the future economic status of a company and reach to the point of understanding as to whether a company would meet the expectations of its shareholders. The key element of shareholders' expectations is to earn a significant amount of profit or net income from their investments thereby increasing their wealth. Their expectations are legally valid and ethically justifiable as they injected capital into the company with the aspirations of profit' (p. 65, p. 66). The third one is that 'directors should make stakeholder-oriented decisions. Good corporate citizenship requires that directors make stakeholder-oriented decisions. By this is meant that the board should take account of and respond to the legitimate interest and expectations of stakeholders linked to the company in its decision-making' (p. 66).

Fourth, 'directors should give due regard to sustainability considerations. Companies cannot operate in an economically viable manner over a prolonged period without due regard for long-term sustainability issues. When making decisions, directors should therefore, ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their needs' (p. 66). The fifth possible solutions might be that 'directors should carry out human rights impact assessments. Good corporate citizenship *inter alia* dictates that companies should comply with their human rights responsibilities. To this end, the board should carry out human rights impact assessments before making a decision and after carrying out the objective of the decision. The process entails assessing actual and potential human rights impacts, acting upon the findings and communicating how impacts are addressed' (p. 66).

The sixth is that 'directors should carry out environmental impact assessments. An environmental impact assessment is a pro-active and systematic process where potential environmental impacts both positive and negative associated with certain activities of a company are assessed, investigated and reported. The process contributes to giving effect to the objective of integrated environmental management as decision makers are informed of the desirability of such activities and on the conditions which authorised of the activity' (p. 66). The seventh and last possible solution is that 'companies need to address workers' economic/financial illiteracy.

The failure to understand the economic reality that some companies in certain sectors may only be able to afford inflation-linked wage increases means that workers will make and continue making unrealistic wage demands because they believe it is attainable. The unfortunate effect is that where settlements are above what the economy can afford, there could be job losses. An understanding of the economic context with-in which their companies operate would therefore, better inform the wage demands of workers' (p. 67).

Jordaan (2016) stated that, 'according to the World Economic Forum's (WEF) *Global competitiveness report 2013-104*, South Africa was rated among the worst with regard to labour-related factors. These ratings are produced from surveys that include 148 countries. Although South Africa received an overall rating of 53, labour-related factors received very poor ratings. South Africa's inadequately educated workforce was ranked the most problematic, followed by restrictive labour relations, inefficient government bureaucracy, corruption, policy instability and poor work ethics of the national labour force. One of the factors contributing to these poor labour-related rankings was strike action' (p. 303).

The most important aspect we focus on is how the strike manager deals with the strike, and what he/she experiences during the strike. It is important to establish the cause of the strike as well as how the strike was managed. By establishing this important aspect, the findings of strike violence, time frames, and organisation setbacks can be set out in this article.

## **2. Research Design**

### **2.1 Research Objectives**

The objectives of this article aim at answering the research questions set out in Chapter 1 and are listed as:

1. To determine how strikes are conceptualised in the literature.
2. To determine whether the strike had led to any violent acts.
3. To determine the timeframe within which the strike had taken place.
4. To determine in what manner the organisation was set back due to the strike.
5. To establish how the strike was managed.

6. To determine whether the organisation had made use of policies to prevent the strike from taking place.

## 2.2 Research Approach

For the purposes of this study the researcher focus on social constructivism. According to Hay (2016), social constructivism can be viewed as ‘a profoundly normative mode of political inquiry which seeks to discern, interrogate and elucidate the contingency of social, political and economic change’ (p. 520). ‘Social constructivism also has its origins in the attempt to establish the ontological distinctiveness of institutions as social facts. This leads it to a distinct understanding of the relationship between actors and the environment in which they find themselves and to its characteristic emphasis on the ideation mediation of that relationship’ (p. 520).

Individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences, meanings directed at certain objects or certain things (Creswell, 2009). This allows the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrowing meanings into a few categories or ideas. This research is to rely on the participants’ views and experiences of the situation (strike) under study (Creswell, 2009).

In this article we make use of qualitative research design where semi-structured face-to-face interviews are conducted with each participant. Qualitative research is broadly defined by Strauss and Corbin (as cited in Golafshani 2003) as ‘any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of qualifications’ (p. 600).

## 2.3 Research Strategy

The qualitative research method is an explorative approach as well as a case study approach. Patton (as cited in Galofshani 2003) states that ‘Qualitative research uses a naturalistic approach that seeks to understand phenomena in context-specific settings, such as real world setting where the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest’ (p. 600).

The explorative approach allows the researcher to focus on dealing with strikes and how the strikes had been managed. The following case studies are identified in this article, descriptive case study and collective case study.

## 2.4 Participants

The population of this research are 11 participants in the mining and metal sector. Combined purposive and non-probability sampling was used to conduct the study. These sampling approaches are the deliberate choice of a participant due to the qualities the participant passes. It is a non-random technique that does not need underlying theories or a set number of participants (Dolores & Tongo, 2007).

The researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find participants who can, and are willing, to provide the information by virtue of knowledge or experience.

The characteristics of the participants and characteristics of the workplace are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1  
*Characteristics of the participants*

<b>Item</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	8
	Female	3
<b>Year of Birth</b>	1950s	2
	1960s	2
	1970s	2
	1980s	4
	1990s	1
<b>Race</b>	White	9
	Black	2
<b>Language</b>	Afrikaans	6
	English	3
	Zulu	2

<b>Highest Qualification</b>	Grade 10	1
	Grade 12	4
	N4	1
	BA	1
	BCom	3
	Honours	1
<b>Job Description</b>	Member	1
	Contract Manager	1
	Financial Manager	2
	HR Manager	3
	Managing Director	1
	Director	3
<b>Years Employed</b>	1-5 years	3
	6-10 years	2
	11-15 years	2
	16-20 years	1
	21-25 years	2
	26-30 years	1
<b>Strikes Handled</b>	1-5	3
	6-10	4
	11-15	2
	16-20	1
	21-25	0
	26-30	1

*Characteristics of the Workplace*

<b>Item</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
<b>Cause of Strike</b>	Wages	7
	Employment Conditions	3
	Transport & Nightshift	1
<b>Protected or Unprotected strike</b>	Protected	9
	Unprotected	2
<b>Strike Policy</b>	Yes	0
	No	11

Table 1 reveals that the sample comprised 11 participants dealing with South African organisational strikes. From the 11 participants, most were male (73%) participants. The majority (36%) of the participants were born in the 1980s, while the youngest participant was born in the 1990s. The participants were mostly white (82%) and Afrikaans speaking (55%). The highest qualification obtained by one specific participant is a Honours degree. A distinction was made in the qualification between the courses of BA and BComm for the reason that these are two different degrees obtained by the participants. The job descriptions of the participants vary from members, to specific managers and directors. The years of employment are in the majority of 1-5 years (27%). The highest rate of strikes dealt with by the participants is 6-10 and the lowest rate of strikes dealt with by the participants was 16-20 and 26-30. The cause of strike was mostly wages (64%), employment conditions (27%) and transport and nightshift (9%). The majority of strikes (82%) were protected while the minority of strikes (18%) were unprotected. None of the participants had a strike policy in place for when a strike starts to occur.

### **3. Research Method**

The research method consists of a literature study as well an empirical study.

## **Sampling**

The sampling procedure is theoretical sampling. This allows the researcher to collect the richest data and points out which criteria are used to select the sample. This strategy was defined by Coyne and Strauss (as cited in Robinson, 2014) as ‘sampling that differs from the aforementioned purposive strategies, for it takes place during the collection and analysis of data, following provisional sampling and analysis of some data’ (p. 9).

The researcher can now define categories, identify the context to which they are relevant, specify the conditions and discover the consequences in the mining as well as steel industries.

## **Data Collection Method**

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with each participant and digitally recorded. Adams (2010) accentuates that this approach will not limit the response of the interviewee within the constraints of a structured question, thus the researcher can follow up on it if the participant did not understand the question correctly; consequently improving the validity of the response.

## **Data Analysis**

The data collected in each of the semi-structured interviews were all transcribed. The researcher applied thematic analysis. Analysing the data involves the volume of raw information, sifting of information, identifying significant patterns and constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveals (Creswell, 2009).

The thematic analysis is a general approach to analysing data that involves identifying themes or patterns in the data (Creswell, 2009).

## **Discussion of Findings**

In the discussion of dealing with strikes in South Africa as well as exploring the psychological trauma associated with these strikes, this article will focus on exploring strike action within an organisation.

## Findings

The findings of this article are catalogued into various categories, themes and sub-themes, along with the responses of the participants to support the findings. Each of the themes and sub-themes will be explained in the different tables set out.

The findings clearly indicated five categories that were found from the research questions, namely:

1. Strikes leading to violent acts
2. The timeframe in which the strike had taken place
3. The manner in which the organisation was set back
4. Organisation policies preventing strikes
5. Managing the strike

Table 2

*Strikes leading to a violent act*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Response</b>
<b>Vandalism</b>	<p><i>"...there where people that threw rocks at our trucks and we had to barricade the truck windows and so forth to protect the people that was in the truck as well as the company property."</i></p> <p><i>"...they just blocked the security gate, burning tyres in front of the gate, just damaging any car that tried to enter the premises."</i></p>
<b>Intimidation</b>	<p><i>"...what they did was threw rocks at company vehicle, intimidating people with pangas, sticks and things like that."</i></p> <p><i>"...they sang and chanted with signs outside the organisation and also in the street were some of the employees stay. So they were very intimidating and employees where scared."</i></p>
<b>Threatening/Attacking Employers or Employees</b>	<p><i>"...the employees who were on strike threatened to burn down the building and started fires at our gate, no one could get in or out of the premises."</i></p>

	<i>"...some of our employees who came to work got attacked by those employees who was on strike."</i>
<b>Lack of Safety</b>	<i>"...employees were being taken out of the factory, they couldn't get entrance into the factory. Employees couldn't come to work, even the managers couldn't come to work. It was not safe for us to come to work."</i>
	<i>"...at the security gate you'd get employees that wore t-shirts that were there, but they were from the company next door. So we could not even take action, because it was employees we did not know but they were part of the strike."</i>
<b>Job Overload</b>	<i>"...it most definitely does, because it is difficult to leave it at work. Because strikes are violent it is impossible to leave work at work, you constantly think about what you as manager can do to stop the strike, or you try and figure out what their next step is."</i>
<b>Protect Employees</b>	<i>"...we had to barricade the truck windows and so forth to protect the people that was in the truck."</i>
<b>Change in Employment Conditions</b>	<i>"...we had to start work earlier, we had to start work before shifts started to gain entrance to the company premises."</i>

The findings reflected in Table 2 were obtained by posing the question 'Did the strike lead to any violent acts?' The participants' responses were mostly yes, and indicated that strikes may be classified as having been violent. Participants had a clear experience of violent strikes, and most of the themes contained responses of Vandalism, Intimidation, Threatening/attacking employers or employees, Lack of safety, while only one participant experienced Protecting employees, and only one participant experienced Change in employment conditions. All these themes are an indication of violent actions from employees on strike. Participants who had the experience of protected and unprotected strikes stated that protected strikes are much more violent than unprotected strikes, because it is seen as a legal strike.

Table 3

*The timeframe in which the strike had taken place*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Response</b>
<b>Two Months</b>	<i>"...if I could remember correctly, it was two months."</i>
	<i>"...I think it was about two months."</i>
<b>One Month</b>	<i>"...it took place for thirty- one days."</i>
	<i>"...the strike took place over a period of about a month."</i>
<b>Six Weeks</b>	<i>"...six weeks."</i>
<b>Five Weeks</b>	<i>"...I think it was about five weeks."</i>
<b>Three Weeks</b>	<i>"...it was round about two to three weeks."</i>
<b>Two Weeks</b>	<i>"...about two weeks."</i>

Table 3 gives a numeric account of the participants' answer to the question as to what the timeframe was in which the strike had taken place. The majority of the participants had experienced a two-month strike period of which 82% were protected and 18% unprotected, while only one participant had experienced a six-week strike, only one participant had experienced a five-week strike, only one participant had experienced a three-week strike and only one participant had experienced a two-week strike.

Table 4

*The manner in which the organisation was set back*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Response</b>
<b>Loss in Production/Loss in Organisation Income</b>	<i>"...we had loss in income, because we could not work and we could not complete the work that we had set out to do and the company still had expenses."</i>
	<i>"...Production, I mean we could not meet our targets. Many clients were unhappy, we lost a lot of production time, even when the strike was over."</i>
<b>Financial Set-back</b>	<i>"...the organisation was also set back in a financial way, we lost a lot of income."</i>

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	<i>"...we had to let some of our employees go, because that work we lost set us back financially."</i>
<b>Loss of Employees</b>	<i>"...we lost a lot of income, and we also lost some of our employees."</i>
	<i>"...well we had to let some of our employees go."</i>
<b>Loyalty to Employees</b>	<i>"...we still had to pay employees who was at work and the people in higher positions still had to be paid their monthly salaries."</i>
<b>Increase in Employee Overtime</b>	<i>"...when the employees was back after the strike we had to increase the hours working overtime, weekends and Sundays."</i>

Table 4 depicts the opportunity participants were afforded to elaborate on the manner in which the organisation was set back due to the strike. It took most of the participants a few minutes to structure their thoughts and mention the difficulties they experienced during the strikes. Participants had experienced loss in production/loss in income, financial set-backs, loss of employees, while only one participant had experienced loyalty to the employees and only one participant had experienced an increase in employee overtime. None of the work arranged by the employers or managers could be done while employees were on strike. This was a very stressful period for the participants, because the organisation experienced a huge financial loss. The impact of such a strike is extremely influential on an organisation, because the production lost needs to be caught up with after the strike, accompanied with more production for the next month or period of work set out.

Table 5

*Organisation policies preventing strikes*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Response</b>
<b>No Policy</b>	<i>"...the organisation does not have any policy regarding strikes."</i>
	<i>"...there is no organisation strike policy."</i>

Table 5 indicates that none of the participants implement a strike policy in their organisation. This gives a clear indication that there is no specific structure strike handlers use during strike action. This can lead to strikes not being dealt with correctly or that strikes are dealt with differently each time.

Table 6  
*Managing the strike*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Response</b>
<b>Meetings/Discussions/Mutual Agreements/Meet Expectations</b>	<p><i>"...the union and the organisation had meetings and discussions, but at the end of the day I think we could not come to a mutual agreement."</i></p> <p><i>"...we negotiate with the union and its members to see if we can come to a mutual agreement."</i></p>
<b>Keep a Safe Environment</b>	<p><i>"...we try and create a safe environment for them or try for alternative arrangements to get to and from work, but it is not always possible."</i></p> <p><i>"...I then set out extra security detail, making sure that employees who still work are safe or in a more safe working environment."</i></p>
<b>Negotiation Process</b>	<p><i>"...we ask the union for all their members to take part so that the negotiation process can be effective and quick."</i></p> <p><i>"...well I normally start by negotiating with the union, trying to reason with them and trying to meet with their expectations, but that is not always possible."</i></p>
<b>Inform Police/Safety Precaution</b>	<p><i>"...if those taking part in the strike start violent acts we call the police to observe these violence and lock up those who damage company property or those who threaten other employees."</i></p> <p><i>"...if the strike gets violent I also notify the police to please come and assist in the matter."</i></p>
<b>Loss of Control</b>	<p><i>"...unfortunately some strike situations cannot be handles. You only have control over the employees that are on site. Sometimes you get employees that are trying to come to work that are blocked, their cars are damaged and they cannot report for duty."</i></p> <p><i>"...I try and reason with the employees on strike, but it is not always possible, because they threaten you and throw things at you etc."</i></p>
<b>Keep Production flowing</b>	<p><i>"...keep on-going production and safety to our employees who does not</i></p>

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	<i>take part in the strike.</i>
	<i>"...just for production to keep on going and to ensure that the organisation does not lose too much money."</i>
<b>External Labour Practitioner</b>	<i>"...we make use of a external labour practitioner. He does the organisations negotiation process with the unions and their representatives."</i>
	<i>"...I then appoint the person who deals with the organisations labour to assist me in any activity and decision-making to obey by the law."</i>
<b>Part-time Employees</b>	<i>"...we bring in part-time workers, paying the minimum lone, and reasonably working hours."</i>
	<i>"...if the organisation loses a lot of production, I make use of outside contractors to help keep production flowing."</i>
<b>Maintain awareness of the Organisation's Financial State</b>	<i>"...I usually look at how the organisation will be influenced and try to work out the work and the financial situations."</i>
	<i>"...throughout this process we try to keep employees who does not take part in the strike safe and then we look at the financial aspects."</i>
<b>Maintain Loyal Employees</b>	<i>"...we try to keep employees who are influential away from those employees who are not likely to take part in strike action."</i>
<b>Prevent employees on Strike from Entering the Premises</b>	<i>"...what is important to us is making sure that employees who are on premises are not hurt, and we prevent employees who are on strike not to enter company premises to prevent those from work."</i>
<b>Prevent violent Strikes</b>	<i>"...if those employees return to work, we try and work them out of the organisation to prevent violent strikes from taking place."</i>
<b>Take Disciplinary Steps</b>	<i>"...I then usually take disciplinary steps towards the employees that are on strike."</i>

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Table 6 indicates that participants were asked to elaborate on how the strike was managed. The majority of participants made use of the negotiation process were they themselves and the union and its members negotiated the term of their proposals. Other participants availed themselves of meetings/discussions/mutual agreements/meeting expectations, Keeping a safe environment, informing the police/safety precaution, loss of control, keep production flowing, external labour practitioners, part-time employees, maintaining awareness of the organisation's financial state, while only one participant

maintained loyal employees, only one participant prevented violent strikes, only one participant prevented employees on strike entering the premises and only one participant took disciplinary steps.

#### 4. Discussion

The specific objective of this study was to explore strike handling in South Africa as well as to explore the traumatic experiences of South African strike managers during strikes.

Concerning the *first specific objective* of this study, namely how strikes were conceptualised in the literature, the researcher could indeed establish that strike action is common in South Africa. The literature has shown violence in strike actions, it has shown the negative influences of strike action, not only in organisations, but also on the South African economy. The literature also set out the stress-related factors on strike handlers, which now has relevance to psychological trauma.

Concerning the *second specific objective* of this study, namely to determine whether strikes had led to violent acts, it was clear that participants had multiple experiences with strikes and that those strikes can be classified as having been violent. The violent acts participants experienced during strikes were vandalism, intimidation, threats, attacks on employers and employees not participating in the strike, lack of safety, job overload and a change in employment conditions. Crispen Chinguno, (2015) explains that ‘violence has persisted as part of the post-apartheid order despite South Africa’s transformation to a democracy. Violence is tied to a very long history in South Africa and has not disappeared with the demise of apartheid’ (p. 93). ‘The overarching argument for the apartheid period was that violence was linked to a repressive regime with no representative citizenship for black people and inadequate institutionalisation of industrial conflict. It is postulated that strike violence emerges when there is tension between collective and individual interest and that violence is a means of forging or destroying worker solidarity’ (p. 94).

Concerning the *third specific objective* of this study, namely the timeframe in which the strike had taken place, it became clear that strikes might vary between two weeks up until two months. This has various influences on an organisation, which we now can identify as negative influences, following the third objective. According to Bohlmann et al. (2015) literature has shown ‘that disputes regarding wages and conditions of services between the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCO) and the main platinum producers lasted five months’ (p. 403).

The *fourth specific objective* of this study was the manner in which the organisation was set back, and findings revealed that participants had experienced difficulty during strike actions. Participants experienced loss in production, which led to loss in organisation income, financial set-back (not only for the organisation, but also for the employer and employees). Participants also experienced a loss of employees, loyalty to employees willing to work during these strikes and lastly an increase in employee overtime. These are all factors, which had set back organisations negatively. Bohlmann et al. (2015) further explains that strike action reportedly affected most of the global platinum supply. Bohlmann et al. (2015) states that ‘the country’s overall investment situation was severely negatively affected’ (p. 409). Owolabi et al. (2014) also explains that organisation’s work delay can ‘instigate negative effects such as increased costs, loss of productivity and revenue many lawsuits between owners and contractors and contract termination’ (p. 197).

Concerning the *fifth specific objective* of this study, namely to determine whether the organisation implements strike policies, it was clear that none of the organisations implemented strike policies. This gave rise to the question as to whether strike policies would assist in preventing violent strikes. Strike policies can also assist in designing a process pertaining to a manner in which strikes can be dealt with and in assisting strike managers when strikes take place.

Concerning the *sixth and final specific objective*, namely to determine how the strike was managed, it became clear that participants mostly utilised a negotiation process in which both parties (employer and union) participated. Participants also held meetings to discuss mutual agreements and tried to meet each other’s expectations (where possible) and, to keep the environment safe and participants also applied safety measures by informing the police whenever strikes were taking place. The participants also felt a loss of control over

employees when they were not on the premises, but had to keep the production flowing and made use of external labour practitioners. Participants also made sure that the organisation's financial state was not in jeopardy and that the organisation kept their loyal employees. Disciplinary steps were taken against those employees participating in an illegal strike action.

The most common way to manage a strike is through a negotiation process. Fells (2013) explains that success in negotiation was defined in three ways, 'profit gained, satisfaction with the outcome, and perception of the other negotiator. The factors that influence whether a negotiation would be regarded as successful by any of these criteria were the nature of the goal that the negotiators set for themselves, the extent of their prior relationship, whether they expected cooperation, and whether there actually was any cooperation' (p. 134).

This gave a clear indication that strikes are violent and that organisations can implement strike policies that can assist strike handlers during strike actions.

## **5. Conclusion**

It was stated in the introductions that strikes have formed part of South African organisations for quite some time and that trauma is connected to these strikes. The article defined strikes and violence and highlighted the strikes within the Labour Relations Act, 66 of 1995. The literature review was supported by interesting and significant data gathered by means of a literature and empirical study. The one thing that is clear is that strikes do influence organisations and strike managers negatively, and that organisations do not implement strike policies. The following question arose from this finding: Will strike policies in the organisation help in preventing strikes? Participants also gave a clear description of how they manage strikes within the organisation.

It is clear from the findings in Article 1 that strike action can take place over a period of two months, organisations are set back in a financial way due to no production, organisations do not make use of strike policies, which may or may not prevent strike action from taking place and that strikes are managed through a negotiation process with the organisation and the union involved. It is also clear that participants harbour some form of

fear for strikes to take place within the organisation, and will do anything to prevent strikes within the organisation and also prevent handling or dealing with these strike actions.

Strike actions can result in violence in a physical or a non-physical manner. This can cause psychological trauma, which will be discussed in Chapter 3, Article 2.

## **5. Recommendations**

It would be interesting to determine whether strike policies would make a difference in the prevention of violent strikes or to traumatic experiences during strikes, since the strike manager would have a set plan he/she can work to accordingly.

The next recommendation will be to enlarge the population size to include a wider representation for future research. A sample size that included strike managers from other security industries as well may add to the value of the study and application to the workplace.

Organisational interventions should also be implemented to assist the organisation employees and employers in learning processes for organizational development. These structural activities will improve employees and employers social and personal task performances.

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**Chapter 3: Psychological trauma and the psychological trauma  
experienced by strike managers due to strikes in South Africa**

**Article 2**

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### Chapter 3

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## **1. Introduction**

In this article the researcher focus on the violence and crime that is found in strike actions and the trauma strike managers experience during these strikes. The article focuses on how psychological trauma is conceptualised in the literature, the experience of strike managers during a strike, and also the psychological trauma symptoms strike managers experience during these strikes. This article also elaborates on the negative influences strike managers experience and that these experiences influence their ability to perform their duties. The article also elaborates on the steps strike managers had taken to address their experience and the steps the organisations took to assist their strike managers in dealing with these negative experiences during and after the strike actions.

The essence of the article is to explain and elaborate on the psychological trauma strike managers experience during and after the strike has taken place. The participants have a clear understanding of the term psychological trauma and have identified causes and symptoms of psychological trauma. This article shows us that violent strikes can cause psychological trauma to individuals (strike managers) dealing with strikes. The participants have all experienced violence, crime and trauma, or have symptoms of psychological trauma during and after strike action.

### **1.1 Literature Review**

South Africa is a country that is marred by crime and violence (Zanella, 2014). Krug et al. (as cited in Kgosimore, 2004) pointed out that violence has played an important part in human experience from antiquity. Human history contains many descriptions of how people have applied physical violence, both individually and collectively, to control and assume power and authority over others (Kgosimore, 2004). Engel (as cited in Kgosimore, 2004) refers to non-physical (psychological) violence as soft violence, which has been used with equal success to control or dominate others, or to deprive them of their rights and dignity. Kgosimore (2004) states that criminologists' conception of crime and violence goes beyond the narrow legal definition of concepts. They define these concepts in terms that are as broad as possible in order to cover even those acts which have widespread and damaging consequences to social relationships (Kgosimore, 2004).

Henry and Milovanovic (as cited in Kgosimore 2004) define crime as ‘any reification in which victims suffer the pain of being denied their humanity as a result of being rendered non-persons, non-human beings or less complete beings’ (p. 63). Cahn and Lloyds (as cited in Kgosimore 2004) define violence as ‘any physical or non-physical (verbal) behaviour or action that is directed at imposing one’s will on another person’ (p. 64).

From the above discussion on violence and crime, trauma or traumatic experiences can also be seen as the influx of violent and urgent events, which exceeds the defensive capacity of an individual (Crocq & Crocq, 1987). Due to living in a country with a high violent crime rate, South Africa is not unfamiliar with trauma (Louw, 2015). An individual’s responses to certain events can differ, but also between those of individuals, as we have different perspectives and responses (Louw, 2015). An individual is not only exposed to his or her own response to traumatic events, but can also experience secondary exposure through other individuals’ responses (Louw, 2015). Norris (as cited in Hoffman 2002) describes a traumatic event as those life events involving violent encounters with a social environment and also with nature and technology. These traumatic events are characterised by extreme or sudden force; it involves an external agent and can also arouse intense fear (Hoffman, 2002).

Barlow and Durand (as cited in Hoffman 2002) explain that a traumatic event is a situation or an event where the individual had experienced or was confronted with actual or threatened with death or a serious injury, a threat to the physical integrity of him/herself or of other individuals and the individual’s response involving fear, helplessness or horror. Paley (1988) states that:

‘Trauma occurs when one loses a sense that there is a safe place inside or outside of oneself to which one can retreat in order to deal with frightening emotions or experiences. The resulting psychological state of helplessness, the feeling that one’s own actions have no bearing whatsoever on the outcome of one’s life, is a feeling which people will attempt to avoid at just about any price’ (p. 78).

According to Perry (as cited in van Dyk & van Dyk 2010), ‘trauma is a psychologically distressing event that is outside the range of usual human experience’ (p. 380). Louw (2015) also states that psychological trauma can be defined as ‘an injury resulting from an experience that overwhelms one’s ability to protect oneself and stay safe’ (p. 78).

These psychological injuries can be physical, developmental, emotional, relational or spiritual (Louw, 2015).

Trauma reactions are a coherent mental structure, which requires organised and interconnected representations of salient external and internal events (Schauer & Elbert, 2015). This may include sensory perceptions, an affective and behavioural response, and a conscious implication of a given context (Schauer & Elbert, 2015). Brewin et al. (as cited in Schauer & Elbert 2015) advocate that, ‘experience of overwhelming threat may interfere with the process of integrating active elements and thus result in disorders of the trauma spectrum’ (p. 109). Zanella (2014) explains that the word trauma is used commonly in our everyday language and tends to be used to refer to any highly stressful situation. We know that the key to understanding traumatic events is that these are events of extreme stress that overwhelm a person’s ability to cope. Individual differences exist regarding a person’s capacity to cope with catastrophic stress and as such, some people exposed to traumatic events will not develop psychopathology whilst others tend to develop Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (Zanella, 2014).

Roberts, Roberts, Jones & Bisson (2015) defines PTSD as ‘a debilitating mental health disorder that may develop after exposure to traumatic events’ (p. 1). The American Psychiatric Association (as cited in Skogstad, Skorstad, Lie, Conradi, Heir & Weisøeth, 2015) defines PTSD as ‘a delayed or protracted response to a stressful event or situation (of either brief or long duration) of an exceptionally threatening or catastrophic nature, which is likely to cause pervasive distress in almost anyone’ (p. 175). Depression, PTSD and phobic anxiety are most common after a traumatic incident has been experienced, whether or not there is evidence of previous psychological and social vulnerability (Mayou & Farmer, 2002).

Perry (as cited in van Dyk & van Dyk, 2010) contends that trauma often involves a sense of fear, terror and helplessness, and that trauma is an experience that induces an abnormally intense and prolonged stress response. Crocq and Crocq (1987) also explain that trauma can be seen as the influx of violent and urgent events which exceed the defensive capacity of the person, such that the person can-not master these events applying normal adjustment processes. Trauma is most often the result of a critical incident (rape), series of incidents (disaster) or a situation (Crocq & Crocq, 1987).

Lewis (as cited in van Dyk & van Dyk, 2010) further explain that a critical incident may be described as any unplanned, unexpected or unpleasant situation faced that causes individuals to experience unusually strong emotional reactions and which hold the potential of interfering with their ability to function either immediately or later. Trauma affects every part of a person's being; their thoughts, emotions, behaviour and physical reactions and traumatic incidents can also refer to overwhelming, uncontrollable experiences that psychologically impact victims by creating feelings of hopelessness, vulnerability, loss of safety and also loss of control (van Dyk & van Dyk, 2010).

Eckes and Radunovich, (as cited in Jooste & Maritz 2014) points out that trauma may also produce long-lasting psychological and physical effects on most people that are subjected to it. Eckes and Radunovich, (as cited in Jooste & Maritz 2014) also states that the impact of traumatic experiences on one's health, well-being and development of individuals has also been recognised with typical reactions such as fear, anxiety, sleep disturbances, antisocial behaviour, depression and sadness. Jooste and Maritz (2014) state that reactions result from trauma situations such as physical illness, harm, disability, abduction, torture, incarceration, persecution, relationship dissolution, job loss, migration/relocation, violence and/or sexual abuse.

Mayo and Farmer (2002) highlight the fact that psychological and interpersonal factors also contribute to the cause of trauma. Mayo and Farmer (2002) list five immediate effects of frightening trauma:

1. It causes a varied picture of anxiety, numbness, dissociation (feeling distanced from events, having fragmentary memories) and occasionally apparently inappropriate calmness.
2. Those who believe they are the innocent victims of others' misbehaviour are often angry, and this may be exacerbated by subsequent frustration.
3. The term 'acute stress disorder' is now used for a combination of distress, intrusive memories (flashbacks, nightmares), avoidance and numbing in the month after the trauma. It occurs in 20-50% of those who have suffered major trauma.

4. The severity of emotional symptoms is much more closely related to how frightening the trauma was than to the severity of the injury: even uninjured victims may suffer considerable distress.
5. Severe distress is usually temporary but indicates a risk of long-term post-traumatic symptoms.

Mayo and Farmer (2002) further explain the reactions of trauma such as acute anxiety, numbing, arousal (acute stress disorder), anxiety disorder, major depressive disorder, post-traumatic symptoms and disorder, avoidance and phobic anxiety, pain and apparently disproportionate disability, unexplained physical symptoms, and the impact on family (such as family arguments, depression in the family members).

Trauma can be found in our everyday lives, and includes hijacking, murder, assault, rapes, possession of illegal firearms, taxi conflict and gang violence (Geldenhuys, 2015) but it can also be found in the workplace and in strike actions. These traumatic situations leave an individual powerless and great danger may be involved. Trauma in the workplace may be seen as conflict and by which disputes can be created (Louw, 2015). Trauma symptoms can be visible or invisible, depending on the traumatised individual's response to the event.

The visible symptoms that can be identified constitute a behaviour pattern, including agitation, lack of focus, lack of concentration and memory, high reactivity, anger and aggression (Louw, 2015). Invisible symptoms are that an individual may withdraw him/herself, may seem physically present but mentally and emotionally absent, or the individual appears passive and compliant (Louw, 2015).

The importance of this study is to focus on the traumatic experiences strike managers suffer when a strike takes place within the organisation and how they can prevent the psychological trauma individually and within the organisation. We determine the traumatic experience, the impact it has on the strike manager, the impact on their personal life and also the impact on the organisation.

## **2. Research Design**

### **2.1 Research Objectives**

The research objectives of this article are the following:

#### General Objective

The general objective of this study was to explore the traumatic experiences of South African strike managers during strikes.

#### Specific Objectives

The specific objectives aim at answering the research question. The specific objectives of this research project are listed below.

1. To determine how strikes and psychological trauma are conceptualised in the literature.
2. To determine what the strike managers' experiences are during a strike.
3. To determine what psychological trauma symptoms strike managers experience during strikes.
4. To determine whether the experiences during a strike negatively influence the strike managers' ability to perform their duties.
5. To establish what steps strike managers have taken to address their negative experience.
6. To determine what recommendations can be made for strike managers to prevent psychological trauma during strikes.

## 2.2 Research Approach

This article used a qualitative research design in which a semi-structured face-to-face interview was conducted with each participant. Qualitative research, broadly defined by Strauss and Corbin (as cited in Golafshani 2003) means ‘any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of qualifications’ (p. 600). Patton (2001) points out that ‘qualitative research uses a naturalistic approach that seeks to understand phenomena in context-specific settings, such as real-world settings where the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest’ (p. 39).

Article two is based on social constructivism. Social constructivism emphasises the importance of understanding the relationship between people and their environment in which they find themselves and also to emphasise their characteristics on the ideation mediation of that relationship (Hay, 2016).

Individuals develop subjective meaning of their experiences, meanings directed at certain objects or certain things (Creswell, 2009). This allows the researcher to look for complexity of the views rather than narrowing the meaning into a few categories. The research is based on the participants’ views and experiences of the trauma being studied (Creswell, 2009).

## 2.3 Research Strategy

The research strategy employed in this study entails the case study approach. This approach allows the researcher to focus on the trauma experienced and the trauma-related symptoms and the impact strikes have on a specific case study. A descriptive case study is defined in this article.

## 2.4 Participants

Eleven participants in the mining and metal sector were included in this study. Participants were selected based on the following criteria: 1. Employees dealing with strikes within the organisation and 2. Previous dealing with strikes at their workplace.

The participants mostly included males, mostly having been born in the 1980s, being of a white race and speaking Afrikaans. The highest qualification was a Honours degree, while the majority of participants' highest qualifications are grade 12. The participants mostly fill the position as HR manager or Director of the organisation. The majority of participants employed at the organisation were those employed between 1 to 5 years, dealing with 6 to 10 strikes.

*Characteristics of the participants*

<b>Item</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	8
	Female	3
<b>Year of Birth</b>	1950s	2
	1960s	2
	1970s	2
	1980s	4
	1990s	1
<b>Race</b>	White	9
	Black	2
<b>Language</b>	Afrikaans	6
	English	3
	isiZulu	2
<b>Highest Qualification</b>	Grade 10	1
	Grade 12	4
	N4	1
	BA	1
	BCom	3
	Honours	1
<b>Job Description</b>	Member	1
	Contract Manager	1
	Financial Manager	2
	HR Manager	3
	Managing Director	1

	Director	3
<b>Years Employed</b>	1-5 years	3
	6-10 years	2
	11-15 years	2
	16-20 years	1
	21-25 years	2
	26-30 years	1
<b>Strikes Handled</b>	1-5	3
	6-10	4
	11-15	2
	16-20	1
	21-25	0
	26-30	1

*Characteristics of the Workplace*

<b>Item</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
<b>Cause of Strike</b>	Wages	7
	Employment Conditions	3
	Transport & Nightshift	1
<b>Protected or Unprotected strike</b>	Protected	9
	Unprotected	2
<b>Strike Policy</b>	Yes	0
	No	11

### **3. Research Method**

The research method comprised a literature study as well as an empirical study.

## **Sampling**

Combined purposive and non-probability sampling was used to conduct this study. These sampling approaches are the deliberate choice of a participant due to the qualities the participant passes.

It is non-random techniques that do not need underlying theories or a set number of participants (Dolores & Tongo, 2007). According to Bernard, Lewis and Shepard (as cited in Dolores & Tongo, 2007) the researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find participants who can, and are willing to, provide the information by virtue of knowledge or experience.

## **Data Collection Method**

Semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted with each participant and digitally recorded. Adams (2010) explain that semi-structured interviews will not limit the response of the interviewee within the constraints of a structured question; thus the researcher can follow up on it if the participant did not understand the question correctly, consequently improving the validity of the response. The researcher also took down field notes while conducting the interviews. The following questions were posed to the participants:

1. What do you view as a traumatic strike?
2. What do you view as psychological trauma?
3. Have you experienced any previous strikes as psychologically traumatic to yourself?
4. What did you experience during these strikes? (What psychological trauma symptoms do you as a strike manager experience during a strike?)
5. How does the experience during a strike influence your ability as the strike manager to perform your duties?
6. Does the strike influence your personal life? If yes, in what manner?
7. If the strike was experienced as traumatic, what steps did you as the strike manager take to address the experience?
8. What steps did the organisation take to assist you?

## **Data Analysis**

All the data collected in the semi-structured interviews were transcribed. The researcher made use of thematic analysis that involves identifying themes or patterns in the data. The thematic analysis is a general approach to analysing data that involves identifying themes or patterns in the data (Creswell, 2009). According to Creswell (2009) 6 steps are to be found in data analysis and will contribute to the thematic analysis of this study. These 6 steps are:

Step 1: Organise and prepare the data for analysis. This involves transcribing the interviews, optically scanning material, typing of field notes or sorting and organising the data into different types (Creswell, 2009).

Step 2: Read through all the data. This is done to obtain a general sense of the information and to reflect on the overall meaning (Creswell, 2009).

Step 3: Begin a detailed analysis with a coding process. Coding is the process of organising the material into segments of text before bringing meaning to information. This involves taking text data and labelling those categories with a term often based on the actual language of the participants (Creswell, 2009).

Step 4: Using the coding process to generate a description of the setting or people as well as categories or themes for analysis (Creswell, 2009).

Step 5: Advance how the description and themes will be presented in the qualitative narrative. This approach will narrow the passage to convey the findings or analysis (Creswell, 2009).

Step 6: This is the final step in data analysis and involves interpreting or making meaning of the data (Creswell, 2009).

## **Findings**

In the discussion of strike handling in South Africa as well as exploring the psychological trauma associated with these strikes, the article focuses on psychological trauma and the psychological trauma experienced by strike managers due to strikes in South Africa.

The findings clearly indicated five categories that were found, namely:

1. View of psychological trauma
2. View of a traumatic strike
3. Experiences during traumatic strikes
4. Effects of traumatic strike on job performance
5. Managing traumatic experiences

Next the themes are discussed, including the sub-themes substantiated with quotes from the findings.

Table 7

*View of psychological trauma*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Response</b>
<b>Behavioural Change</b>	<p><i>"...no sleep, stress and I was always aware of my surroundings. I was always on the look out, looking behind my back, aware that someone may attack me."</i></p> <p><i>"...psychological trauma is when something happens and there is effects after that like stress, depression, sleepless nights etc."</i></p>
<b>Life-changing event</b>	<p><i>"...your life has changes after an event has taken place, not able to live your life as you did before that specific event has taken place."</i></p> <p><i>"...psychological trauma you know is something that you see, or something that you hear about and then it keeps on clicking in your mind."</i></p>
<b>Trauma symptoms: Emotional</b>	<p><i>"...psychological trauma I think is when a situation accurse and it influence you as a person where you are depressed or sad or anxious."</i></p> <p><i>"...when you as person are influenced with fear, anger, and things like that."</i></p>
<b>Re-experiencing event</b>	<p><i>"...it is something that is traumatic, that you just cannot forget and something that is painful."</i></p>
<b>Unexpected life-changing event</b>	<p><i>"...it is something that is traumatic and something you have no control over."</i></p>

Table 7 states the participants' views of psychological trauma. Most participants had a clear understanding of the term *psychological trauma*, while other participants had a contrasting opinion regarding psychological trauma. Most of the participants indicated that they experienced *behavioural change*, such as being on the look-out and, -always being aware of their surroundings and the fact that the strikers might attack them. Some participants indicated that they view psychological trauma as a *life-changing event*, since their lives change after the event, and some participants cannot forget the traumatic event. The participants further indicated that some or other *emotional response* indicates psychological trauma; participants reported emotions such as depression, sadness, sleepless nights stress etc.

One participant mentioned that he views psychological trauma as a sense of *loss in control* seeing that they feel that they have no control over the situation - no control over their feelings or lives.

Table 8

*View of a traumatic strike*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Response</b>
<b>Violence/Safety</b>	<p><i>"...when a strike gets violent and the employees are still willing to work during a strike."</i></p> <p><i>"...the employers stress regarding keeping employees safe."</i></p>
<b>Feel Threatened/in Danger/ Death</b>	<p><i>"...employees still willing to work during a strike are feeling threatened or feel that their lives are in danger."</i></p> <p><i>"...I view a strike as traumatic when there is pain, loss or death involved."</i></p>
<b>Harm/Vandalism/Intimidation</b>	<p><i>"...the intimidation. They want to physically hurt those employees willing to work, they break down doors."</i></p> <p><i>"...employees not taking part in the strike houses get burned down, or when their personal belongings are damaged."</i></p>

<b>Responsibility for keeping employees safe/Guarding</b>	<p>“...you have to watch over your employees and ensure that there is no attack on your employees during a strike.”</p> <p>“...employees feel unsafe and threatened.”</p>
<b>Financial Loss</b>	<p>“...it is also traumatic in a financial aspect, both the organisation and the employees are set back financially.”</p> <p>...if you think of the financial set back on their personal life, that is traumatic.”</p>

The themes in Table 8 emerged from asking participants what they view as a traumatic strike. The sub-themes that came across more than once were *violence and safety* where employees felt that they had a responsibility to keep their employees safe while they were still willing to work during the traumatic strike. Participants also felt they were *threatened, in danger and threatened with death*, since they experienced traumatic strikes involving pain, loss and death. Some participants experienced *harm, vandalism and intimidation* during which they were physically hurt, strikers broke down doors, houses got burnt down and personal belongings were damaged while a few participants experienced the *responsibility for keeping employees safe or guarding* them to ensure that there is no attack on employees still willing to work. One participant mentioned *financial loss* both in the organisation and on a personal level. This is a clear indication that traumatic strikes had a huge influence on the participants’ lives.

Table 9

*The experience during traumatic strikes*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Response</b>
<b>Violent/Harm</b>	<p>“...yes, the strike was violent, a lot of the employees got injured.”</p> <p>“...yes, my personal property was damaged, the organisation and employees got hurt.”</p>
<b>Stressful</b>	<p>“...I would say it was more stressful than traumatic.”</p> <p>“...yes, because I have had a lot of stress, I was booked off for a while with</p>

	<i>stress, no sleep and exhaustion. Strikes take a lot of your human capacity.”</i>
<b>Fear for Lives/Threatened</b>	<p><i>“...it can be traumatic because you always fear for you live. The thing I fear most is that the strikers will get to your house and hurt or kill your family.”</i></p> <p><i>“...I was threatened with murder, rape and that I must watch out for my family.”</i></p>
<b>Loss of Productivity</b>	<p><i>“...a lot of employees got injured during the strike and the organisation lost a lot of production.”</i></p> <p><i>“...I couldn't put out any work, there was no business and everything was dead quiet. No work, nothing.”</i></p>
<b>Behavioural Reaction</b>	<p><i>“...sometimes I don't think I know the person I become when there is a strike. I am very stressed and I don't sleep very much. I am anxious, I am a different person than normal.”</i></p> <p><i>“...a lot of stress, no sleep, exhaustion, I am aggressive sometimes, not very patient, depression and eating disorders.”</i></p>
<b>Emotional Reaction</b>	<p><i>“...to be honest, I am scared, nervous and insecure, and I don't know what to expect next, because I do not know what the employees on strike's agenda is.”</i></p> <p><i>“...I am irritated and more angry at home, my family is stressed and they also worry about what will happen next. They fear for my safety.”</i></p>
<b>Loss of Control</b>	<p><i>“...this was very stressful and extremely exhausting, thing that we cannot control.”</i></p> <p><i>“...it definitely influences my personal live, because even I as a man is scared because you never know what is going to happen or what those employees plan to do or what they are capable of.</i></p>
<b>Intimidation</b>	<p><i>“...this is a very scary time, because the employees on strike knows you, they know your car, your number plate and it is very stressful.”</i></p> <p><i>“...we were threatened with death and rape, our property gates were damaged, so I would say it has a very big impact on ones life.”</i></p>
<b>Self-guarding Family</b>	<p><i>“...I not only fear for my life, but I fear for my family's life as well. I send them away to stay with family out of town.”</i></p> <p><i>“...I would say in a small way, because you want to look after your female</i></p>

	<i>employees who still come to work, and my wife is one of them.”</i>
<b>Financial Loss</b>	<i>“...in a way it does, because at that stage I do not have any income, I cannot make extra expenses in that month.”</i>
<b>Guard workplace</b>	<i>“...the employees on strike made sure that they were at the gates from 6a.m., preventing the other employees that are not on strike to enter the premises. So we, management, had to be there before shift starts as well as after shift to make sure that security was there and that employees do not get injured.”</i>

This Table reflect participants’ answers to the request to elaborate on any experience during these traumatic strikes, namely what psychological trauma symptoms they as strike managers’ experience during a strike.

From the findings it is clear that the participants firstly indicated that traumatic strikes are violent and harmful, employees get injured, personal property gets damaged and the organisations as well as their employees get hurt. Strike managers also experienced traumatic strikes as *stressful, fearing for their lives, feeling threatened*. They experienced a large amount of stress during traumatic strikes, with getting limited sleep and feeling exhausted. These strike managers mostly feared for their own lives and those of their families’ during strikes. Additionally, threats regarding rape, death and harm to their families were experienced. Some participants experienced a *loss in productivity*, where employees got hurt and production could not carry on. *Behavioural reaction, emotional reaction and loss in control* were also among the experiences of strike managers.

They experienced a change in their emotions, where they felt anxious and described themselves as ‘other persons’ during strikes. Strike managers experienced insecurity, depression, eating disorder (one participant explained that she could not eat, because the strike had keep her too busy and that she did not have an appetite), aggressiveness and impatience during violent traumatic strikes. They felt a lack of control regarding the situation at hand. Participants also felt *intimidated*, employees on strike know the managers more personally and the threats intimidated them. This also led to the strike managers *safe guarding their families*, because participants feel the need to send their families away, or to keep them safe at work, for they are also employees at the organisation. Furthermore, one participant experienced *financial loss*, because he had no income and only one participant

experienced the need to *guard at the workplace, change shifts and working hours* to prevent them from getting hurt.

Strike managers who had to deal with this often, explained that their personality had changed and that they had become people who are unknown to themselves and their families. Traumatic strikes had an enormous influence on strike managers and their personality towards themselves, the employees and the organisation.

Table 10

*The effect of traumatic strikes on job performance*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Response</b>
<b>Inability to Concentrate</b>	<p><i>"...my thoughts are preoccupied with the strike that is happening and everything involved with the strike. I contently think of what is happening, what needs to be done next, what is going to happen etc. my experience is that my attention is not always at my duties."</i></p> <p><i>"...my mind is elsewhere and my work and responsibility falls behind."</i></p>
<b>Lack of Safety</b>	<p><i>"...for me it is very difficult, because I work in a environment where I mostly deal with male employees, so mostly I am intimidated and threatened,"</i></p> <p><i>"...it is difficult to perform all my duties when I know my life, and employees working for me life's, are in danger."</i></p>
<b>Loss of Productivity/Inability to Perform</b>	<p><i>"...of course yes. I cannot give out work, I receive no materials, so no work can be done and people do not receive their goods. My mind is elsewhere and my work and responsibility falls behind."</i></p> <p><i>"...you feel scared and unsafe, and even on weekends you cannot rest or spend time with your family, because you are tired or have to catch up on work that fell behind during the week."</i></p>
<b>Mistakes/Forgetful/Confused</b>	<p><i>"...I would say that if effects the way you think, put out work. I made mistakes, things that I normally would remember, bur my mind is so occupied with the strike, that I start to forget simple tasks. Everything is so confusing."</i></p> <p><i>"...for me it is separating the two that is difficult. I do my work, but have to</i></p>

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	<i>re-do it when I go through it again, because I constantly think of the strike and how it sets me and the organisation back.”</i>
<b>Job Overload</b>	<i>“...it most definitely does, because it is difficult to leave it at work. Because strikes are violent it is impossible to leave work at work, you constantly think about what you as manager can do to stop the strike, or you try and figure out what their next step is.”</i>
<b>Exhaustion</b>	<i>“...they fear for my safety, and I am tired and exhausted at the end of the day.”</i>
<b>Increased Confidence/Meaning</b>	<i>“...I say in a positive way as well, because at the end of the day, if I succeed in reasoning with the employees on strike.”</i>

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Table 10 reflects the participants’ explanation of the influence strikes had on their ability to perform their duties. The majority were influence in a negative way, because it disabled them to perform their duties due to having to deal with the strike, while only one participant had both a negative and a positive experience.

Not only did the strike managers have to perform their own duties, but also had the additional burden of dealing with the negotiation process, finding mutual agreements, ensuring that employees who were still willing to work were safe, keeping a safe environment for individuals on company property and then also keep production flowing. Participants also elaborated on the fact that they struggled to find balance between the strike and their duties, this caused work imbalance and also lead to strike managers working overtime, taking work home or catching up on their work during weekends. Participants could not perform their duties due to the *inability to concentrate*, their thoughts were preoccupied with the strike and everything involving that strike, their work and responsibilities fell behind, *lack of safety* was another effect on the participants due to the fact that they felt intimidated or threatened. It was difficult for them to perform their duties when their lives, as well as those of their employee’s lives were in danger.

Participants were also affected by *loss in productivity, inability to perform, mistakes, forgetfulness*, and *confusion and job overload*, because production was limited, they felt scared and unsafe, they made mistakes, and forgetfulness occurred due to the fact that the strike preoccupied them. The participants indicated that simple tasks couldn’t be completed. Separating the strike from their duties was difficult for them, and almost impossible, because

working duties as well as dealing with strikes were their responsibility. Only one participant was affected by *exhaustion*, and only one participant was affected in a positive way due to *increased confidence and meaning*. This participant felt that she could make the employees on strike understand the meaning and consequences.

All the participants experienced a huge influence on their personal lives while dealing with a strike. The researcher noticed that as the sub-themes emerged the experience was quite serious and traumatising for the participants to elaborate on.

The experience they had during strikes and the influence it had on their personal life are not only traumatising to the participant, but also to their families and friends. The majority of participants were nervous and uncomfortable when asked to elaborate on their personal experiences. The influence of strikes on strike managers and what they go through while handling the strike may be seen as a traumatic experience.

Table 11

*Managing traumatic experiences*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Response</b>
<b>EAP Program/Counselling/Therapy</b>	<p><i>"...employers and employees take part in our EAP program, which is an employee assistant program."</i></p> <p><i>"...it is difficult when you are the owner of the organisation, but I am always willing to help employees who have been affected by the strike to go to a doctor, counsellor or a psychologist when they feel like they need help."</i></p>
<b>Own Coping</b>	<p><i>"...I try to keep my employees happy and safe. And for myself, well, I talk to my wife."</i></p> <p><i>"...I just carry on after the strike and try to put it behind me."</i></p>

Table 11 reports participants' elaboration on what steps they as strike managers had taken to address their traumatic experiences during strikes. It is clear from the findings that the majority of the participants did not take any immediate steps to address their traumatic experiences.

This was mostly due to the fact that most of the participants were also the owners of the organisation and found it difficult to take time from work to address their experiences. When the participants did take steps to address their experiences most of them went to a counsellor, or spoke to their family (wife), consulted with the EAP program, and saw a psychologist or a doctor to address symptoms they showed.

#### **4. Discussion**

The overall objective of this article was to explore the traumatic experiences of South African strike managers during strikes and whether the strike negatively influenced their ability to perform their duties. From the findings it was clear that participants knew and understood the meaning of psychological trauma, although it seemed difficult for them to speak about their experiences. The majority of participants experienced violence, intimidation, loss of loyal employees, threats, abuse and effects on family and friends during strike actions. This clearly indicated to the researcher that not only the strike managers suffer from psychological trauma symptoms, but so also do their families and friends.

Concerning the *first specific objective* of this study, namely how psychological trauma was conceptualised in the literature, the researcher could indeed establish that psychological trauma, such as behavioural change, feeling threatened, anxiety, stress, fear, emotional reaction, loss of control, intimidation etc. are found due to strike actions in South Africa. The literature has reported psychological trauma symptoms due to strike actions and has explained the negative influences on strike handlers in South Africa and the ability to perform their duties. The literature also set out steps or processes such as interventions, consulting psychiatrists, councillors etc. in a bid to be able to handle psychological trauma experienced by strike handlers.

Concerning the *second specific objective* of this study, namely to determine what strike managers experience during strikes, it became clear that all the participants experienced violence and harm, and that participants had to deal with a large amount of stress, they feared for their lives, and they also felt threatened at home and at work. Participants felt a loss in productivity and also experienced behavioural as well as emotional reactions.

This led to them experiencing loss of control on a personal as well as professional level. These findings are supported in literature, namely where Briere and Scott (2014) define trauma as a ‘direct and personal experience of an event that involves actual or threatened death or serious injury, or other threats to one’s physical integrity. Witnessing an event that involves death, injury or a threat to the physical integrity of another person or learning about unexpected or violent death, serious harm or threat of death or injury experienced by a family member or other close associates’ (p. 1). The participants were also intimidated and were forced to self-guard their families and to guard their workplace. The participants also experienced financial losses.

Concerning the *third specific objective* of this study, namely to determine what psychological trauma symptoms strike managers experienced during strikes, the findings revealed that participants showed symptoms such as depression, sadness, sleepless nights, no control over their feelings or lives, exhaustion, insecurity, eating disorder, aggressiveness, impatience, intimidation, feeling threatened, forgetfulness, confusion, fear and feeling unsafe. This is in accordance with findings from Briere and Scott (2014) who explain that traumatic responses are ‘profound emptiness, loss of connection with spirituality, disruption in ability to hope, trust or care about themselves and others. It also parts with self-blame, guilt, shame, low self-esteem and overestimation of danger’ (p. 1).

Depressive disorder is also found in traumatic responses such as ‘extreme sadness, hopelessness, worthlessness, guilt, suicidal thoughts, loss of interest, decreased ability to concentrate, psychomotor agitation or retardation, anorexia/weight loss, fatigue, loss of energy and sleep disturbance’ (p. 1). Briere and Scott (2014) also look into complicated or traumatic grief which includes ‘intense intrusive thought, distressing yearning, feeling excessively alone, avoiding tasks, sleep disturbances and maladaptive loss of personal interest’ (p. 1). The last traumatic response Briere and Scott (2014) looks into is stress: ‘PTSD, persistent re-experiencing, persistent avoidance of thoughts/feelings/people/places, affect avoidance, persistent symptoms of increase arousal (sleep disturbance, irritability, difficulty concentrating and hyper vigilance)’ (p. 1). The researcher can relate to Briere and Scott’s (2014) symptoms found in the participants of this study. The participants also experienced these symptoms explained by Briere and Scott (2014).

Concerning the *fourth specific objective* of this study, namely to determine whether the experiences occurring during a strike influence the ability of strike managers to perform their duties, it was clear that participants were indeed negatively influenced by traumatic strikes. The participants were preoccupied with the strike and found it impossible to simultaneously deal with the traumatic strike and perform their duties to the best of their ability. It seemed difficult for the participants to balance the traumatic strikes experienced and performance of their duties.

The findings are supported by literature in that Sonnentag (2015) indicates that ‘with respect to job stressors (i.e., events and conditions in the work situation that evoke strain reactions), there is evidence that employees that face a high workload and time pressure report a poorer job-related well-being and higher levels of burnout. Moreover, so-called hindrance stressors (e.g. hassles, interruptions, situational constraints, organisational politics) are related to poor job-related well-being and burnout, with hindrance stressors often showing larger effect sizes than workload or time pressure. Probably, job conditions that make it difficult and effortful for employees to accomplish their task are more detrimental than the sheer amount of work’ (p. 538).

Concerning the *fifth specific objective* of this study, namely to establish what steps the strike managers took to address their negative experiences, the finding revealed that participants did not spend enough time addressing their negative experiences. Only a few participants consulted a counsellor, a doctor or a therapist, while others relied on their own coping mechanisms. The results showed that organisations also had to improve on these steps to assist strike managers or employees that were negatively influenced, to address their experiences. The participants indicated that it was not always possible to take time off from work due to the fact that most of the participants were the owner of the organisation. However, Bobinet, McCabe, Mackenzie, Fekete, Kusnick and Baime (2012) explain that ‘across the past decade, the clinical literature has reported psychosocial and health benefits from mind-body interventions.

Randomised controlled trials (RCTs) demonstrate the effectiveness of training in mindfulness meditation with a view to enhance coping skills, promote feelings of well-being, and affect favourable changes in physiology’ (p. 2).

Wolever et al. (2012) further elaborate: ‘as evidence of mind-body stress reduction interventions has emerged in the clinical literature, the impact of such programs is simultaneously emerging in the field of work side wellness. Wolever et al. (2012) report that four recent RCTs on workplace stress reduction programmes that applied mind-body techniques have demonstrated improvements in self-reported mood (Hartfield et al., 2010; McCraty, Atkinson, & Tomasino, 2003; Mino et al., 2006), well-being (Hartfield et al., 2010; McCraty et al., 2003), and psychological distress (Limm et al., 2011; McCraty et al., 2003)’ (p. 2).

The *sixth and last specific objective* of this study was to determine what recommendations can be made for strike managers to prevent psychological trauma being experienced during strikes. The conclusion can be drawn that organisations as well as strike managers can implement strike policies to prevent trauma or to follow a clear structure during strikes.

As indicated in the findings reported in Chapter 2, not one of the organisations implemented strike policies. By implementing strike policies, strike managers can prevent a large amount of stress and uncertainty within the organisation, and within the strike manager. Organisations and strike managers can also provide assistance within the organisation, such as a counsellor within the organisation to ensure that these strike managers or employees that experience traumatic strikes can follow up on their negative experiences and prevent traumatic symptoms from appearing. An intervention that organisations can use to assist with these negative experiences is a study intervention, mindfulness at work.

Black (as cited in Wolever et al., 2012) explains: ‘Mindfulness at work is a 12-week stress management program based upon principles and practice of mindfulness meditation. Although the introspective practice of mindfulness has been known for over 2 500 years, scientific interest in this inherent quality of human consciousness has gained traction in the past view decades. Since participants in mindfulness programmes learn to focus attention on feelings, thoughts and sensations the participating organisations in this study can be recommended to consider making use of such programmes. Being mindful thus allows participants to more deeply understand how their own thoughts, emotions, sensations and behavioural urges arise and impact health and qualify life’ (p. 3).

The organisation can also implement a helping programme which strike managers and employees influenced by a traumatic strike can follow in a bid to address their problem.

Another intervention organisations can consider includes the Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) model, which can help employees who are suffering from psychological trauma. This intervention is ‘a comprehensive, integrated, systematic and multicomponent crisis intervention program’, Mitchell and Everly (1986).

## **5. Conclusion**

Organisations should drastically improve on interventions aimed at assisting strike managers during strikes, because strikes do have an enormous influence on strike managers, their work life, their personal life and their social life. The organisation should initiate the first step in helping their strike managers or assisting them in the process where psychological trauma is involved. This can help prevent long-term implication such as ill health, work-life imbalance and relationship problems.

This article states that strike managers do experience psychological trauma during strikes and may also have long-term effects after the strike has taken place.

## **6. Recommendations**

It would be interesting to establish whether implementing steps (psychologist within the organisation, counsellor, assistance program) would assist strike managers in dealing with psychological trauma during and after a strike. Also to further explore and elaborate on psychological trauma strike managers experience during strikes. It would also be interesting to determine whether strike manager’s family also experience psychological trauma due to the fact the strike managers are influenced in a negative way when dealing with strikes.

Future research should emphasise on further counseling or psychologists within the organisation which can offer immediate guidance or help to the strike manager or any other employee who has experienced psychological trauma during or after a strike.

Psychological assisting programs can also offer great value to improve strike manager's psychological state and also to improve control of their psychological trauma experiences.

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## **Chapter 4: Conclusion, Limitations and Scope for future research**

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## 1. Conclusion

The general purpose of this study was to explore the traumatic experiences of South African strike managers during strikes. Throughout the study the researcher found that the common causes of strikes are employees who are not satisfied with their wages, their working conditions and also their working hours. Strikes that had taken place within the organisations are protected as well as unprotected, but an interesting fact that was found during the interviews was that protected strikes are more violent than those unprotected ones due to the fact that employees on strike feel they have more power because they are allowed to strike.

As stated in the findings, strikes do lead to violent acts such as vandalism, intimidation, threats, attacks on employers/employees, lack of safety and job overload. The timeframe within which strikes had taken place is also a concerning factor; the shortest duration of strikes was two weeks and the longest as up to two months. This has a concerning influence on the organisation, employers and employees that do not participate in the strike action. Organisations suffer great losses in production, loss in organisational income, financial setback, loss of employees, loss in employee loyalty and increase in employee overtime. These factors are all negative influences on the organisations. The longer strike action take place, the bigger the influences are on strike managers. The effects of strike action lasts longer and also have a bigger effects on the organisation itself.

Strike handlers in the organisation manage their strikes by means of a negotiation process between the employer and the union representing the employees (on strike) in the organisation. Another concerning finding in this study is the fact that none of the participants had implemented a strike policy, because the organisation does not have a strike policy. This gave rise to the question: Will strike policies prevent violent strike actions within the organisation?

Violent strikes where defined within the literature and it was found that strike action part with psychological trauma. Further to this, participants had a clear understanding of the term psychological trauma and that psychological trauma can be related to strike actions in South Africa. Their view of a traumatic strike was explained as occurring when strike managers

experience violence, when safety is lacking for strike managers and employees who are still willing to work through strike actions. Participants said that when they feel threatened, in danger and are experiencing death or death threats due to the actions of strikers, it can be classified or viewed as a traumatic strike. Participants further explained a traumatic strike as being characterised by harm, vandalism and strike handlers being held responsible for keeping employees safe or them feeling the need to guard the employees.

When all the above- mentioned experiences are taken into consideration, it is clear that strike managers in South Africa experience psychological trauma during strike actions. As the literature has shown and was referred to in the previous chapters, strikes are classified as violent acts and do have long-term psychological consequences for strike handlers in South Africa.

Possible solutions for strike handlers in South Africa suffering from psychological trauma are to incorporate interventions within the organisations, to implement strike policies or policies to set out steps for strike handlers to follow and to implement a more structured strike-handling programme for strike handlers in the organisation. This will assist strike managers in dealing with psychological trauma and also with the effects and experiences during and after the strike action has taken place.

## **2. Limitations**

The following limitations were noted during the study. The first limitation of the study relates to the fact that the interviews were conducted in only three provinces and as a result the findings cannot be generalised to the rest of Southern Africa. The second limitation was that not all the interviews could be conducted in the participant's first language. Despite the participants having given permission to be recorded during the interview it could be possible that anxiety due to being recorded could have influenced the way the participants answered the questions. The third limitation was that due to their traumatic experiences during strikes, the questions posed made participants uncomfortable and some did not wish to elaborate on follow-up questions.

The fourth limitation was that one or two participants did not want to elaborate on questions posed and answered in an uninterested manner. This made it difficult for the researcher to identify themes and sub-themes for that specific participant and question.

### **3. Scope for future research**

It would be interesting to determine whether strike policies would make a difference in the prevention of violent strikes or to traumatic experiences during strikes, since the strike manager would have a set plan he/she can work to accordingly. To establish whether implementing steps (psychologist within the organisation, counsellor, assistance program) would assist strike managers in dealing with psychological trauma during and after a strike. Also to further explore and elaborate on psychological trauma strike managers experience during strikes. It would also be interesting to determine whether strike manager's family also experience psychological trauma due to the fact the strike managers are influenced in a negative way when dealing with strikes.

The next recommendation will be to enlarge the population size to include a wider representation for future research. A sample size that included strike managers from other security industries as well may add to the value of the study and application to the workplace.

Future research should emphasise on further counseling or psychologists within the organisation which can offer immediate guidance or help to the strike manager or any other employee who has experienced psychological trauma during or after a strike. Psychological assisting programs can also offer great value to improve strike manager's psychological state and also to improve control of their psychological trauma experiences. It is important to inform strike handlers what psychological trauma is, what the symptoms and effects of psychological trauma is and to provide assistance for strike handlers to manage their psychological trauma. Organisational interventions should also be implemented to assist the organisation employees and employers in learning processes for organizational development. These structural activities will improve employees and employers social and personal task performances.