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Exploring the psychogeographyof serial murderers in South Africa

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DECLARATION

I **Debbie Collaros** (Student number: **9007394H**) am a student registered for the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** in the academic year **2018**.

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Signature:  Date: 10th of March 2019

DEDICATION

For my Loving, Eternal Anchor…

...and to the wonderful children He has given me: Jules & Erin

ABSTRACT

Recent, but limited local research supports the theory demonstrated abroad that serial offenders tend to cluster their crimes (Geographical Profiling). In response to the need for additional research, this qualitative study explored the psychogeography of fifteen imprisoned South African serial murderers to assess whether this sample of offenders perpetrated their crimes in geographically patterned ways. Using semi-structured interviews, the incarcerated serial murderers were requested to draw mental maps of the areas encompassing their crime scenes as well as to provide descriptions of their movements during their crime series. It was established that geographical patterns *did* emerge, which had a domocentric focus, and that these South African serial murderers predominantly seemed to represent a marauding, route-following model of environmental learning.

Although not yet formally acknowledged in our South African courts, geographical profiling has already made a significant contribution to the investigation of local serial murder. As more research is conducted and the psychogeography of serial murder is better understood, it is hoped that this would have the important implication of assisting police in focusing their patrolling efforts and investigators in their linkage of multiple crimes to a common perpetrator for court purposes.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to my loving heavenly Father, without whom there would be no scope for our efforts; no hope for our future.

Thank you to Gérard, the wickedly funny ex-colleague-turned-supervisor who guided me with patience, kindness and giftedness through this entire murderous journey.

Thank you to Guin, the Italian rockstar anthropologist who threw me a *bone* and welcomed this psychologist's research with gracious academic open-mindedness.

Thank you to the Division of Forensic Medicine and Pathology of the University of the Witwatersrand at the Johannesburg Mortuary for the tremendous opportunity to conduct such necessary and practical forensic research in a country with prolific serial murder.

Thank you to the IPS of the SAPS for granting me timeous access to confidential documents pertaining to the serial murderers as well as to their plotted GPS maps.

Thank you to the DCS for granting me permission to enter the Johannesburg, Leeuwkop, Boksburg, Modderbee, Kroonstad, Kutama-Sinthumele and Mangaung Maximum Security Correctional Centres, and to the Heads of the various Medium and Maximum facilities as well as their psychologists for collectively arranging the opportunity to interview fifteen of their incarcerated serial murderers.

Thank you to the editing femme fatales - my mom and Angy – for their ruthless execution of referencing, grammatical and typing errors.

Thank you to Jules and Erin, my loving little cubs who often sacrificed the presence and attention of this lioness, when she was occupied with investigating the geography of other predators.

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NOMENCLATURE

Readers should note that although female serial murderesses have been estimated to comprise approximately 10% to 15% of all serial murder offenders (Scott, 2008), the masculine pronoun has been used exclusively throughout the thesis. This is due to the fact that most serial murders are committed by men (Cohen & Felson, 2010). Most of the research on serial murderers has focused only on male offenders, including the sample in this thesis. Hence, for the purpose of easy reading, the masculine pronoun has been used.

GLOSSARY OF SOUTH AFRICAN JARGON/PHRASES

(in order of appearance)

joh	exclamation of surprise
veldt	bush/grassland
ja	yes
sjambok	whip
shebeen	informal bar
comrades	fellow members of an organisation/struggle
muti	traditional medicine made from plants (and sometimes human body parts
shack	primitive dwelling
Shoprite	a local franchise store for basic necessities
klaar	finished
mealie	corncob
dustbin	trashcan
ai	expression of a sigh
bakkie	pickup truck
niks nie	nothing
êk ken fokol	I know nothing

Please also note that sometimes the use of the gender pronoun (he/she) is mixed up in some of the interviewee's quotes as this is a common error when Black people speak English.

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