Women in Blue: Meaning and Identity Perspectives of Policewomen within the South African Police Services in the Cape Town Metropolitan Area

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Dedication

To me, another mountain conquered.

Acknowledgements

Yehova, ngxondorha yam, mboniselo yam, msindisi wam, Thixo wam, liwa lam endizimela ngalo, Ngweletshetshe yam, luphondo losindiso lwam, ngxonde yam! Ndibulela uMdali wezulu nomhlaba, uSonini na nini, Inkosi yamakhosi, uThixo ononceba, ngokundithatha andibeke apha. Undithandile wena Yesu. Indeed, it is through the Lord's grace, mercy, and love that I have completed this thesis. I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to my supervisor, Associate Professor Irvin Kinnes - your care, expertise, and dedication throughout this journey will never be forgotten. To my darling mother, Maseru Zondeka, yet again, I say thank you for allowing me to chase my dreams. You are my rock. To my family, I love you always. To my friends, thank you for cheering me on and believing in me when I did not believe in myself, your love is engraved in my heart forever. And lastly, to me, who dared to dream, you are everything.

Contents

Abstract

South Africa grapples with a policing crisis marked by rising gender-based violence, corruption, high violent crime rates, robbery, and murder. Effective solutions to improve policing require holistic police reform, addressing internal issues including gender inequality. This study examines the experiences of policewomen in the South African Police Service (SAPS), uncovering their challenges with their male counterparts in the workplace as well as the communities they serve in. Through open-ended interviews, the research reveals discrimination based on capabilities, workplace sexual harassment, and societal devaluation of policewomen as challenges policewomen experience. By applying an intersectional feminist lens, the study recognises the intricate identities of policewomen that are shaped by the intersection of gender and race in a male-dominated society. Policewomen in the SAPS face consistent and constant challenges, however, they continue to demonstrate resilience against mistreatment from colleagues, the public, and superiors. The study concluded that the experience of being a woman in the SAPS defies a simple narrative and lacks a clear formula. This unique experience demands constant efforts to overcome adversities and contribute to changing dynamics within policing. Furthermore, the study showed that policewomen play a crucial role in police reform, standing resilient amid challenges, exemplifying strength, and paving the way for a more inclusive and equitable policing environment.

Keywords: Policing crisis, Police reform, Gender inequality, Organisational dynamics

Chapter 1 – Introduction and Background

South Africa faces a policing problem. An increase in the levels of gender-based violence, police corruption, robbery, and murder characterise the crime crisis in South Africa (Bruce, 2022). According to crime statistics provided by the South African Police Services (SAPS), the third quarter of 2022/2023 saw an increase of 19,067 contact crimes compared to the third quarter of 2021/2022. The country's per capita murder rate for 2022/23 was 45 per 100,000, the highest it has been in 20 years (a 50% rise from 2012/13) (Lamb, 2023). Police Minister Bheki Cele released the second-quarter crime data for 2023/2024, reporting that in July, August, and September, South Africa registered 10,516 rapes, 1,514 attempted murders, and 14,401 attacks against female victims, additionally, 881 women were murdered (South African Government, 2023). In cases where a crime occurs, regardless of its nature and whether it needs the involvement of the police, questions surrounding the appropriateness of the police response occasionally arise (Govender & Pillay, 2021:41). These questions typically revolve around whether the police could have prevented the crime had they been 'better equipped,' responded with greater swiftness, employed more assertive tactics, and effectively managed the situation (Govender & Pillay, 2021:41). This is because the SAPS (and policing in South Africa) face major allegations, such as elevated crime levels, the use of violence by criminals, cases of police brutality, instances of corruption, allegations of sexual assault involving the police, and various other forms of misconduct within the police force (Govender & Pillay, 2021:40). These are pressing concerns that demand changes.

The issues existing in policing and crime have not gone unnoticed by the state, as the state crafted policies to remedy this fast-growing issue. These policies have included the development of the National Development Plan, the Khayelitsha Commission of Inquiry Report, the White Paper on Policing, the State of Democratic Policing Report, and the Panel of Experts Report on Policing Crowd Management. However, the implementation of the recommendations from these reports remains an issue. The reason policing is still a problem is that redistributing police resources is not a good enough remedy to repair a 'broken system' (Stuurman, 2022), nor is compiling dozens of reports with no clear objective for implementation assistance. Given this crisis, South Africa ought to ask, what does the future of policing in South Africa look like?

Police reform is necessary to improve the effectiveness of SAPS (Burger, 2021). Police reform aims to "transform the values, culture, policies, and practices of police organisations so that

police can perform their duties concerning democratic values, human rights, and the rule of law" (Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance, 2019:2). In South Africa, examining and fixing the structure of the SAPS is necessary. On a macro level, the suggestions that would take priority would be changing the approach of the SAPS as an organisation by upholding accountability, and ensuring an effective justice system (DCAF, 2019:3). While these suggestions are necessary and are no less important, investigating and examining gender within the SAPS is just as important as any other suggestion. If the future of policing in South Africa is to be transformed, recommendations from policewomen in the SAPS are an integral part of that change. For police reform to be effective and transform policing in South Africa, the gendered perspectives and opinions of policewomen must be considered. Research conducted in the United States and globally has shown the benefits of policewomen in the transformation process. Some of the benefits include policewomen are least likely to use force; they embrace 'community-oriented' policing strategies; a larger number of policewomen can enhance the police's ability to respond effectively in cases of violence and the inclusion of women can lead to positive policy changes benefiting all officers (Kimberly, 2000). These benefits are more reasons to conduct more research on women in policing and include those findings and perspectives in police reform and policymaking.

1.1 Research Aim, Questions, and Significance

The identities and perspectives of women in policing have not been examined enough, even though they are an integral part of the necessary change. Police culture is demanding and patriarchal and there are some unique experiences and viewpoints from policewomen that deserve to be researched and shared with a wider audience. Sharing the experiences and perspectives of women in policing with a wider audience is essential for promoting gender equality, inspiring future generations of policewomen, and informing policymaking by providing insights into recruitment, training, and workplace culture. It improves organisational culture by addressing issues of gender bias and discrimination, enhancing community relations through the development of responsive policing strategies, and advancing research to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of policing dynamics. By amplifying the voices of policewomen, we can drive positive change, foster inclusivity, and contribute to the creation of a more equitable and effective criminal justice system.

This study aims to answer the following primary research question:

- What does it mean to be a policewoman in the SAPS?

To answer the main research question effectively, there are three research sub-questions:

- What experiences do women police encounter in the SAPS?
- How do policewomen think of themselves and their identity in the SAPS?
- How have policewomen in the SAPS experienced transformation and reform with the SAPS?

Problem Statement and Aim

The primary concern stems from the substantial differences in policewomen's experiences as compared to their male counterparts. Gender, as an essential component of identity, moulds and influences how people view, navigate, and experience the world. While differences in experiences across genders are to be expected, in this context, gender plays an important role as it influences the work of police officers.

Aim

This study aims to reveal the firsthand encounters and viewpoints of female police officers within the South African Police Service (SAPS). This study seeks to directly listen to and understand the perspectives of policewomen in the SAPS, allowing them to express in their own words what it signifies to them to be both a woman and police officer and how they perceive and mediate their roles within the SAPS.

Significance

This research project holds immense importance, as it addresses a substantial void in the existing literature on policing by introducing a new perspective. Instead of examining women in conjunction with men, this study focuses solely on women. Its primary objective is to delve into policewomen's self-perceptions. Additionally, this study aims to bridge the existing gap in the already existing knowledge by conducting thorough and inclusive studies on the experiences of policewomen within the SAPS. By amplifying the voices of women in policing, this research has the potential to make meaningful contributions not only to the literature but also to broader initiatives, such as the Women Empowerment Interventions in SAPS[1] and Women Network Programs. [2] Furthermore, it also becomes possible to form evidence-based

[1] The Office on the Status of Women (OSW) monitors these structures to ensure equality and facilitate women empowerment in SAPS.

[2] The Women's Network within the South African Police Service (SAPS) is a dedicated initiative aiming to strengthen connections among female employees. Its core objectives include providing a robust support network, facilitating the career progression of women through leadership training programs, cultivating assertive women leaders capable of independent thinking, promoting career opportunities for women across all occupational categories and levels within SAPS, and aligning

recommendations and policies that will promote gender equality, and inclusivity, as well as a supportive work environment within the SAPS.

1.2 Outline of the chapters

This dissertation is divided into seven sections. Chapter 1 outlines the policing crisis and justifies the need for reform, thus providing a foundation for the following chapters. Chapter 2 is a brief chapter that investigates the historical context of police reform in South Africa, tracing its origins from the Apartheid era and examining key factors shaping the contemporary policing landscape. Chapter 3 is a literature review on policing, categorising the findings into three main sections: policing in the global North and South, analysis of police culture, and exploration of feminist literature on policing. This chapter critically synthesises the existing research, establishing a conceptual framework for the study. Chapter 4 focuses on the methodology, detailing the Cape Town Metropolitan Area as a case study, the research's theoretical framework, and the tools employed for data collection and analysis. This chapter aims to ensure the transparency and clarity of the research process.

Chapter 5 presents the empirical findings of this dissertation, offering insights into the specific dynamics of policing in the Cape Town Metropolitan Area and their implications for reform efforts. Chapter 6 engages in a comprehensive discussion, analysing and interpreting the findings in connection with the broader theoretical framework and existing literature. This discussion aims to facilitate a nuanced understanding of the complexities of police reform within the context of this study. Finally, Chapter 7 serves as the conclusion and recommendations section, summarising key findings, contributions, and insights. It proposes recommendations for future research, policy implications, and avenues for advancing police reform efforts.

its activities with government initiatives to enhance the overall quality of women's lives. This network seeks to create an inclusive and empowering environment where women can share experiences, receive mentorship from those in leadership roles, and envision themselves as equals to their male counterparts. By focusing on these objectives, the Women's Network aims to contribute to the development of a fully representative and empowered workforce within SAPS, ultimately improving service delivery and aligning with broader societal goals.

Chapter 2 – Police Reform in South Africa

The murder of George Floyd[3] on the 25th of May 2020 in Minneapolis, United States of America (USA), shook the entire world. Due to the prevalence of African Americans being murdered by police officers, George Floyd's murder ignited a movement centred on fighting for police reform and transformation in the USA (Tumin, 2023). This movement expanded significantly and evolved into an advocacy for the reduction of police funding (Bates, 2021). Social media users tagged it as #DefundThePolice which gained traction and was brought to the attention of people all over the globe. Due to the uproar over George Floyd's murder and the movement that formed thereafter, Americans saw the day of dawn as the George Floyd Justice in the Policing Act was passed by the United States Congress. The bill focuses on racial biases perpetuated by the police and reduces the use of force by citizens (Tumin, 2023). Drawing parallels with police reform in South Africa, the global outcry following Floyd's murder and the subsequent #DefundThePolice movement highlights the need for extensive reform not only in the United States but also in other countries dealing with police violence and corruption, such as South Africa. This chapter shifts the focus on police reform from the Western context to the African context, specifically the South African context. This will be done by discussing the history of the organisation of police in South Africa during Apartheid, and how it was reformed when South Africa became a democratic state.

2.1 A Look at the South African Police

South Africa has undergone many changes, one of those being the transformation of the police organisation from Apartheid South Africa to democratic South Africa. The purpose of the South African Police (SAP) under Apartheid differed from that of the South African Police Services (SAPS). Given that South Africa was racially divided, the SAP was used as a form of control to manage race relations rather than crime (Pruitt, 2010: 119). The SAP was an extension of the Apartheid state, upholding the same values and ideals while ensuring all individuals submit to this regime – willingly or unwillingly. In the face of internal opposition and a global climate where decolonisation had become the norm (Pruitt, 2010: 119), the South African government relied on the police to uphold its colonial and apartheid policies of racial segregation. Therefore, the responsibility of the SAP was to maintain order and neutralise any hostility that may arise (Pruitt, 2010: 117), which was achieved using force (or threatening force), the use of

[3] Floyd, who was black, passed away on May 25, 2020, when Chauvin, a white police officer applied pressure to his neck with his knee for 9½ minutes. This incident occurred on the street outside a convenience store where Floyd was suspected of attempting to use a counterfeit $20 bill.

teargas, sjamboks, and lethal force (Lamb, 2018:7 – 8). They did not attempt to resolve conflicts among Black people or combat crime in Black neighbourhoods (Chipkin, 2023: 7).

Since South Africa was racially and tribally divided into 'homelands,' homeland police 'officers' were appointed to execute police responsibilities in homelands (Rauch, 2000:1; Pruitt, 2010:117), the police officers in the homelands (and KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng and the Eastern Cape[4]) were known as *kitskontsabels*[5]*;* they underwent only six weeks of training and were thereafter deemed fit to police in townships in South Africa and the homelands (Pruitt, 2010: 117). They were established to offer cheap labour to the South African Police (SAP). As a result, they were officially categorised as 'temporary labour' (Brogden & Shearing, 1993:84). This classification allowed the apartheid regime to cut down on training expenses and withheld various privileges from these individuals, such as medical coverage, pensions, and paid vacations, which were granted to White SAP members only (Brogden & Shearing, 1993:84). While *kitskontsabels* had the financial benefits of being officers, they were never acknowledged as 'real' police officers nor as a part of the SAP (Pruitt, 2010:117). For instance, they did not wear the same uniform as the SAP; they did not police in white areas, and they could not police white people (Pruitt, 2010:117). However, they were not employed to manage the crime like the SAP. They were employed to save the SAP 'manpower' and to perpetuate uphold and Apartheid policies, as well as to retribalise Black people in the townships/homelands (Pruitt, 2010:117). With the arrival of democracy in 1994, much-needed reform began.

2.2 From SAP to SAPS: A Police Organisation for a Rainbow Nation?

By the early 1990s, the SAP had developed a reputation for brutality, corruption, and incompetence (Rauch, 2000: 1). Furthermore, it was characterised by militarisation, a hierarchical structure, and inadequate resources to address everyday criminal activities (Rauch, 2000: 1). In addition to this, street-level policing was marked by an aggressive approach, displaying bias against black citizens and a lack of regard for rights and due process. Additionally, severe security legislation either provided or allowed various forms of coercion and torture. The outdated policing techniques were, in part, a consequence of the international campaign to isolate the apartheid government (Rauch, 2001: 1). The newly appointed government was faced with the daunting challenge of remodelling the police system to a

[4] South Africa witnessed the establishment of ten homelands in total, namely Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Ciskei, Venda, Gazankulu, KaNgwane, KwaNdebele, KwaZulu, Lebowa, and QwaQwa.

[5] It translates into instant (police) constables.

standard that would be widely accepted by most of the population and proved to be efficient against crime.

The new government, lacking experience and exercising caution, focused on strengthening its political power and developing new policies aimed at transforming South Africa (Gastrow and Shaw, 2001:259). Upon assuming power in April 1994, they inherited ten separate police forces within each homeland, where the police in KwaZulu-Natal and Bophuthatswana had gained notoriety for their brutal treatment of anti-apartheid activists, due to their close association with Pretoria and the SAP (Gastrow and Shaw, 2001: 259). As part of initiating police reform, the new democratic government aimed to engage local communities in the policing of their communities. They did this by introducing Community Police Forums (CPF) in over 1200 national police stations (Gastrow and Shaw, 2001: 264). In addition, police officers were requested to take training courses on human rights to form part of the new democratic policing style. Many SAPS officers questioned the effectiveness of community police forums. Many of them saw it as a necessary evil, even though they believed its effectiveness might be minimal in the everyday prevention of crime (Gastrow and Shaw, 2001: 264). This increased tensions between the police and the community representatives. Even though there was complexity in the transformation from policing during Apartheid and policing in democracy, the SAP's 1991 Strategic plan and legal frameworks such as the SAPS Act were put in place to ensure this transformation within the organisation of the SAPS.

2.2.1 The SAP's 1991 Strategic Plan

The SAP embarked on an internal reform process in 1991, which was based on the response to the changing political climate that signalled the release of former President Nelson Mandela (Rauch 2000:3). The strategic plan had seven fundamental areas of focus, all of which supported the incoming democratic South African state. The focus areas were (Rauch, 2000:2):

1. Depoliticising the police
2. Increasing community accountability
3. Having an effective and visible police presence
4. Implementing better management practices
5. Restructuring police training for racial integration
6. Restructuring the police force

2.2.2 South African Police Service Act 68 of 1995

The South African Police Service Act 68 of 1995 was formulated to create provisions for setting up, arranging, overseeing, and monitoring the SAPS as well as overseeing all related matters (SAPS Act 1995:7). The paramount reforms included in the Act are (Rauch, 2000: 3):

- Restructuring the National Divisions
- Creating the National and Provincial Secretariats for Safety and Security
- Creation of Community Police Forums
- Forming a statutory Independent Complaints Directorate that would investigate complaints of the public should report police misconduct.

In addition to legal reforms, there was also a transformation of symbols to present the new order. For instance, the subtle but definitive name change of the organisation[6], an amalgamation of the SAP and police forces in the homelands, a change in the uniformity of the police, a colour change of the police vans, and a new insignia (Rauch, 2000:6).

The reasons for reform may differ across countries; however, they have similar underlying values and aims. The reform of a police system often occurs due to either incompetence or corruption and when that is exposed, necessary changes are made. A general definition of police reform is provided in the introduction; however, this study adopts a slightly different definition of police reform. This definition is derived from Styles' (1987 as cited in Pruitt, 2010:8) which states: "[police reform is the] changes that are made to the police to improve police work and functioning of organisations for all government types, democracies." While there is not much difference between the two definitions, the study adopts the second definition because the reform that occurred during the political and administrative regime in 1994 was needed for the new democratic South Africa, mending the gaps of racial division (amongst other things). The

[6] The inclusion of 'Service' in the new name represents a broader vision for law enforcement that goes beyond traditional policing, emphasising a service-oriented approach to meeting community needs. The move in terminology is frequently associated with a shift in emphasis toward a more community-oriented and service-driven policing strategy. The intention is to emphasise not only law enforcement and crime prevention but also a dedication to serving and safeguarding the people (Rauch, 2000:6).

reform that this study investigates (and advocates for) is the integration of gender in an already existing democratic state, which may often be overlooked. Therefore, the second definition is more suitable and aligns with the aim of this study.

The upcoming chapter, Chapter 4, consists of the literature review. This Chapter presents a comprehensive analysis of policing in both the global north and the global south. It engages in discussions on global police culture and its specific manifestations in South Africa. Additionally, the chapter delves into studies conducted on women in policing.

Chapter 3 – Literature Review

When one sparks a conversation about the police with South Africans, it stirs certain reactions and raises some ‘eyebrows. South Africans are heavily opinionated on the police and policing in the country. Thus, understanding the police and policing in South Africa is an important and urgent task. Scholars (Shearing, 1995; Shearing and Ericson, 1995; Kingshott and Prinsloo, 2004; Faull, 2017) have written extensively on police and police culture, while other authors (Steinberg, 2014; Faull, 2017; Shearing, 1992) have focused on the history of police and policing in South Africa and across borders. This chapter aims to review the research and arguments scholars have produced on police, examining the themes that arise and the overall work that has been conducted on policing. This chapter begins by addressing the gap in the literature, followed by introducing policing in the global south and the global north, evaluating the arguments on police culture and the effect of Afrikanerdom on policing, and then concludes by including the experiences of women in policing.

3.1 The Gap in the Literature

The literature does not fail to provide context(s) and definition(s) of policing, police culture, or an overview of women in policing. If anything, it is one of the richer bodies of work in the scholarship of police officers and their identity. The literature that is available on police is centred on policemen, as well as their narrative and identity within the police force (Shearing and Ericson, 1991; Kingshott and Prinsloo, 2004; Potgieter, 2012; Shearing, 1991). The literature that includes the experiences of women in the police is either written by men (Bezuidenhout, 2000; Warren & James, 2004), is outdated (Morrison, 20004; Bezuidenhout & Theron, 2000), or has adopted a quantitative methodology for their study (Veldman et al., 2017). A small amount of literature uses qualitative interviews to study women in police (Matsepe, 2020); while it may do so, it does not look at what policewomen think and believe of themselves but is rather centred on what their male counterparts think and believe about them (Bezuidenhout and Theron, 2000; Morrison 2005). In addition, studies that have been conducted on women in police operate on a macro level (Newham, 2006; Khosa, 2022), ignoring the gender disparity that occurs at the micro level – the police stations. The academic spotlight does not shine on women police officers alone; their experiences of being subjected to masculinity are written alongside men and their conjoined experiences (Silvestri, 2017; Potgieter, 2012). Therefore, there is a gap in the literature in that the existing studies do not efficiently focus on policewomen specifically.

3.2 The Literature

3.2.1 Revealing the Badge: Unmasking Police Identity and Operational Dynamics

What and who are the police? What do they do? What is policing? The police are faced with the challenge of forming and cementing their identity within the communities they serve, as well as making their responsibility and function exceptionally lucid and understood by the country at large. There are many questions surrounding the police and policing, these questions ask whether policing is about security, preventing or managing crime, and/or maintaining social order. Based on these questions, there are then multiple conflicting expectations of the police, coming from political officials, their 'superiors' as well as the public (Shearing & Marks, 2011: 211). Bittner (1970: 6) suggests that while the essence of police actions is rooted in the goal of maintaining law and order, certain aspects of police work hold significance and are separate from these primary objectives. In contemporary society, the responsibility of security and protection is shared amongst the police and the community, therefore one can argue that the police do not monopolise crime management and the maintenance of social cohesion. Shearing and Marks (2011: 212) argue that even neoliberal economic policy frameworks around the world, have urged communities to assume control over what was previously thought to be the role of the police. Not only have communities and individuals invested in privatising security, but they have also implemented neighbourhood watches and street patrols as well (Brainch, 2010; Kyed, 2010; Marks and Bonnin, 2009 cited in Shearing and Marks, 2011: 212). The perception of policing continues to be tarnished, frequently seen as the flame required to combat the blaze (Bittner, 1970: 8), this then further raises questions on the identity of the police and their function.

3.2.1 (a) Global Perspectives of Policing

Shearing (1995: 55) argues that the normative interpretation of policing includes the engagement of police officers who enact a prescribed sequence of actions. Additionally, these guidelines are inclusive of legal statutes, internal organisational directives, and a professional ethos often perceived to be at odds with the former two sets of directives (Shearing, 1995: 55). There is a growing similarity in the increasing overlap between formal, regulation-driven policing approaches and more individualised, instinctual styles of policing (Christensen 2017: 2).

Policing in the Global North

While community policing is global and practised in most countries, it is most prevalent in the global North, specifically in Europe (O'Neill et al, 2023: 1). The ambition to combat extremism and violence in Europe, Christensen (2017: 2) argues, has made it normal to expand enforcement operations into previously untapped areas of the welfare system, blurring the lines between security and other governmental functions. A deeper dive into different regions in the global North will note many similarities in Scandinavian countries as all of them possess centralised, state-run police forces overseen by a political government minister (Høigård, 2011: 268). Additionally, these nations are divided into police districts, each possessing a notable level of autonomy concerning budget management, personnel strategies, and resource allocation (Høigård, 2011: 268). Some countries possess multiple national policing agencies with distinct roles. For instance, France maintains a national police force responsible for urban areas and another for rural regions, alongside local municipal police (Cheatham & Maizland, 2022). Similarly, England and Wales have regional police forces that operate with a degree of independence while adhering to centralised government criteria, which include training and the handling of misconduct investigations (Cheatham & Maizland, 2022). There is much more that can be written about policing in the global North, but that is not the focus of this study.

Policing in the Global South

The emergence of policing in the global South is intricately linked to the establishment of political structures that were imposed by imperialism, as well as the legacy of revolt, bloodshed, and all other features of colonial rule (Watson et al, 2022: 4). In keeping with its colonial roots, policing organisations serve the primary aim of upholding law and order, which serves as justification for measures perceived to be in the interest of preserving order and addressing threats to the state (Watson et al, 2022: 4). In former colonies across the Global South, national police forces were introduced by the post-colonial governments as a colonial import to support the continuation of established systems of rule and the authority of colonial power figures (Watson et al, 2022: 6). Thus, there are existing parallels between colonial and modern policing practices. For instance, the continual presence of social hierarchy, exclusion, and the alienation of certain groups within Latin American societies highlights the influence of imperialism on the structure and role of police institutions as tools for government control (Watson et al, 2022: 4).

In Nigeria, policing history is characterised by capriciousness, cruelty, violence, damage, a lack of politeness, little transparency to the public, and widespread corruption (Alemika,1988: 161). History shows that colonial-era police forces were structured and trained to function similarly to occupation forces, displaying brutality, corruption, dishonesty, and a proclivity for subjecting colonised populations to violence and property damage (Tamuno, 1970; Ikime, 1997 in Alemika 1988: 165). As a result, the legacy of colonialism continues to harm perceptions of policing in Nigeria, which has ramifications for the work that police conduct. Christensen (2017: 2) argues that policing in the global South is frequently perceived as policing occurring in a context characterised by 'limited statehood'. As a result of such, a variety of actors – such as gangs, former combatants, and private security companies – participate in and assert control over policing within the urban areas where state police presence may be lacking (Christensen 2017: 2). This focus then tends to relegate the significance of state police to a secondary position, resulting in the global South being perceived as somewhat 'different'.

3.2.2 (b) Exploring the Pulse of Policing: Unravelling Modern-Day 'Canteen' Camaraderie

One's way of doing, thinking, and being, is embedded in communal action. Often, culture is formed within the communities they exist in, certain groups, and even in organisations. This rings true for the actions, identities, and beliefs of police officers in law enforcement, both in South Africa and globally. This assertion holds the truth about the conduct, affiliations, and convictions of law enforcement officers, both domestically within South Africa and on an international scale. Shearing (1995: 54) writes that in the perspective of the police, culture is viewed as a guide, akin to a collection of directions or regulations, dictating behaviour. Furthermore, it shapes individuals into agents who assume roles and perform as instructed, guiding their actions and transitions through different moments in time and space (Shearing, 1995: 54). Having said that, culture is defined as: "the set of habitual and traditional ways of thinking, feeling, and reacting that are characteristic of the ways a particular society meets its problems at a particular time" (Kingshott, 2003: 281). Moreover, organisational culture is defined as the: "basic, taken-for-granted assumptions and deep patterns of meaning shared by organisational participants and manifestations of these assumptions and patterns" (Jermier et al, 1991: 170). Culture, whether organisational or informal, reigns as one of the most vital components of the functioning of an organisation or of a collective - whether the culture is upright or prejudiced – is an equivalent signifier of said organisation. This overarching perception of how actions are generated is evident in the understanding of the actions of police officers (Shearing, 1995: 55).

To elaborate on the above argument, Kingshott and Prinsloo (2004: 2) posit that individuals within an organisation are the ones responsible for implementing and upholding organisational norms. They make an example of this aspect by asserting that if the norms of an organisation are misogynistic, culturally, or religiously biased, racist, or inclusive of any bigotry, the destructiveness and divisiveness of the organisation's culture will be exposed (Kingshott and Prinsloo, 2004: 2). Hence, it is imperative to understand that an organisation's culture extends beyond the formalised vision, mission, and goals. Moreover, in the realm of policing, there is an informal dimension of culture, referred to as 'canteen' culture. The informal culture within the police services or 'canteen' culture, is defined by Waddington (2008: 1) as: "the mix of informal prejudices, values and working practices commonly found among lower ranks of the police that influence the exercise of discretion, it also refers to the police's solidarity, which may tolerate corruption and resist reform". Important to note is that completely understanding police culture has presented itself as a challenge for scholars as police culture (and culture overall) is not monolithic and there are multiple complexities to the phenomena of police culture.

Conversations about the origins and development of police culture vary. Crank (2014) has highlighted that police culture is due to the personalities of the individual officers, which is authoritarian and comparable to violence, cynicism, and bigotry while Gottschalk (2012) has attributed police culture to the police organisation itself, tracing it from supervisors that are unpredictable as well as the uncertainty of the work itself. Alternatively, Phillips (2011: 54) argues that culture within the police force encompasses how officers justify their actions and their perspectives on their duties and colleagues with the organisation. Chan's (1996: 110) model of understanding police culture takes into consideration the inventive and interpretive elements inherent in the culture. This recognition accommodates the presence of diverse cultures and factors in the political backdrop and cognitive frameworks of police tasks. Consequently, the practical expressions of police culture emerge from the interplay between the socio-political environment of public service and the diverse facets of fundamental organizational understanding (Chan, 1996: 110). According to Turner (2022: 3), police culture encompasses diverse attributes like collective allegiance, a dichotomy between 'insiders and outsiders,' resistance to change, biased attitudes, a sense of scepticism towards the general public, and a conservative stance Furthermore, Turner (2022: 5) contends that (within the context of the United States), the police force is predominantly composed of white, heterosexual, working-class males, leading to a display of animosity towards individuals who

do not conform to this identity. Consequently, the presence of this animosity and division implies that police culture originates from a societal power struggle between factions possessing greater social and structural influence in contrast to those lacking it, rather than being shaped solely by an individual office's personality (Turner, 2022: 5).

Kingshott and Prinsloo (2004: 6) have argued that police culture can create a negative space, creating anti-social elements such as social prejudice, misogyny, bullying, religious bigotry, and discrimination. Thus, police culture, or their actions, is a: "figurative resource used to constitute the sensibilities out of which action allows as well as the world of opportunities within which this action will take place" (Shearing & Erickson, 1991: 494). Additionally, Shearing (1995: 56) argues that the rules of an organisation which is to control the actions of police, are meant to justify the actions of the police, and not to guide them. Therefore, the police, according to Schein (1985:3, cited in Shearing, 1995: 56), use their sensibility to think, feel, and perceive – which then influences the outcome of their actions. This sensibility is intricately linked to the individual police officer, encompassing their mindset, demeanour, and actions. In examining the 'cult of masculinity,' Fielding (1994: 47) describes the stereotypical values linked to this form of masculinity, proposing that it could be seen as a near-pure manifestation of the hegemonic masculinity which encompasses (i) forceful, physical engagement; (ii) a pronounced sense of rivalry and fixation on conflict-related imagery; (iii) an exaggeratedly heterosexual orientation often expressed through misogynistic and patriarchal attitudes towards women; and (iv) the establishment of rigid divides between 'inner circles and external circles', resulting in the exclusion of 'external circle' and the strongly expressing loyalty and closeness among insiders (Silvestri, 2017: 293). All these aspects are intertwined with culture, encompassing both the organisational and informal dimensions of culture. The 'key' characteristics of police culture are highlighted by Manning (1978: 249) as he provides a portrayal of police culture as predominantly masculine, highlighting its focus on qualities like virility, toughness, masculinity, and interests commonly associated with masculinity, such as achievements in sexual encounters, sports, outdoor activities, and similar pursuits. This concept of machismo then became a central theme in Reiner's (1992) depiction of the fundamental attributes of police culture. The impact of police culture, as examined by Kingshott and Prinsloo (2004) and Shearing and Erickson (1991), can be found in the delicate interplay between organisational regulations and individual sensibility, as stressed by Shearing (1995) and Schein (1985). Faull (2017) examines the continuing implications of the SAPS's past

concentration on suppressing anti-apartheid groups in South Africa, revealing persistent inequities within the police force despite post-apartheid integration efforts.

3.2.2 (c) Echoes of Policing: Unveiling Police Culture in the South African Landscape

South Africa and its people have undergone immense transformation from the 18th century until now. South Africa has progressed from colonialism to the Apartheid regime and now to a democratic South Africa. In response to this, organisations – private or public – have had the responsibility to undergo adaptations and reconfigurations, to align their structures and operations with the change in basic assumptions present in the contemporary South African landscape. As noted in Chapter 2, one of those organisations that too had to adapt and reconfigure, is the South African police organisation, the SAP. This is because, for 80 years, the SAP was focused on suppressing anti-apartheid and anti-colonial politics, rigorously enforcing laws based on racial divisions (Faull, 2017: 335) rather than the work of policing. Additionally, economic, racial, social and structural inequalities formed and flourished during the Apartheid period, which, due to the understanding of organisational culture explained in section 3.2.2 (a), affected the establishment of police culture in South Africa. Faull (2017: 33) argues that even though individuals from various racial backgrounds have been integrated into the SAPS, the existing disparities among the police still exist. Furthermore, the biased cultural notions were strengthened by the religious and political discussions of white governance in South Africa.

Marks (2008: 647) asserts that for decades, the understanding of police culture in South Africa has been infused with racist and sexist prejudice because the police in South Africa carry a historical legacy of white Afrikaner male dominance. One of the many ways this is evident is through storytelling and narratives, as written by Faull (2017) and Shearing (1995). Chan (1996: 114) deems narratives and storytelling as an integral part of police culture because the perpetuation of police culture does not (only) occur through the normative methods of socialisation and internalising rules, but rather through a compilation of narratives, stories and concise sayings that guide the police on how to perceive the world and behave in it. In addition, stories help train officers for police work by encouraging similar thinking as they build a set of previous examples and shape a way of looking at situations and existing within the stories and the gaps around them (Ericson et al. 1987 cited in Chan, 1996: 114). A study by Shearing in 1995, examining the sensibilities of the police, found that the perspectives and narratives of

South African police officers, both black and white, were more influenced by Afrikaner culture than by their unique professional experiences (Shearing, 1995: 57). The stories embedded in police culture did not isolate them from the broader Apartheid society, but rather connected and merged them with it (Shearing, 1995: 57). Furthermore, the narratives shared by police officers were not exclusive to them; instead, they connected these officers to the broader principles and goals of Afrikanerdom as they were Afrikaner narratives and not merely policing narratives (Shearing, 1995: 57).

Upon the conclusion of Shearing's (1995: 57) study, the identity of the police was established on the idea that they were 'God's children, doing God's work'. Thus, they were harsh because it was their duty, and they lied as part of their God-given task because, to them, they had to combat evil in all its forms by treating the 'devil' harshly. Faull (2017: 338) investigated the narrative(s) of the SAPS 22 years later, and according to his findings, the narrative(s) are set on the ideals of respectability and deviance, race and space, and perceptions of legitimate violence, which all echo the narratives of a colonial and Apartheid South Africa. Furthermore, there are secrets of misconduct deeply imbedded in the SAPS and its organisational culture; there was a record of 336 deaths by the South African police, 144 for torture, 106 for rape, 109 for corruption, and 3466 for assault in 2014/15 (Faull, 2017: 338). These reports, which are a few of many, reflect the elements of SAPS police culture: cynicism, a sense of mission, machismo, suspicion, racism, and secrets and solidarity among colleagues (Faull, 2017: 33).

3.2.3 In the Boy's Locker Room: Women in Policing

In many societies, traditional gender roles that assign specific responsibilities based on gender are evolving. The expectation that men are solely responsible for protection, provision, and decision-making, while women must unquestioningly submit, is increasingly being challenged. Societies in this modern world are working towards recognising and promoting equal partnerships, where both men and women contribute to various aspects of family life and decision-making. For centuries, the world was conservative, as the world understood and accepted the role of the protector as the responsibility of the man and not the woman. The acceptance of this way of functioning and being is prevalent in the structure of the family, ineluctably, it exists at work, school, outside, and anywhere one can think of, especially in policing (Bezuidenhout & Theron, 2000: 19), it is also prevalent in policing—social scientists (Garcia, 2003: 1) have characterised policing as a gendered institution. Acker (2002) describes a gendered institution as an organisation that is defined by the alignment of its policies, practices, and ideologies with gender differences.

Due to the belief that women were (and in some cases, still are) seen as incapable of protecting themselves, let alone their communities, they were never considered to be included in policing when it was established as a mode of protecting people or society at large (Van Heerden, 1986: 19 cited in Bezuidenhout & Theron, 2000: 19). As a result, during the Middle Ages, policing became a male-only profession (Cox & Fitzgerald 1992:18; Roberg & Kuykendall 1993:53-54 cited in Bezuidenhout & Theron, 2000: 19). Even with the modernisation of police, this perspective and belief have not changed much. Modern-day policing includes community policing (Skogan, 2006: 11); problem-oriented policing (Goldstein, 1990: 17); intelligence-led policing (Gill, 2008: 14); technology-enabled policing, (Rosenbaum, 2014: 21); and accountability and transparency (Eith, 2008: 9). Even with this modernisation of policing in countries such as Britain and the United States of America, policing is still seen solely as a man's job (Bezuidenhout & Theron, 2000: 19). Although women police officers have proven to be efficient (in modern policing), the police force continues to be an organisation where the belief persists that only men should be primary earners and that women should not have jobs that detract them from their families (McLaughlin 1996:77 cited in Bezuidenhout & Theron, 2000: 19).

3.2.3 (a) Resilient Guardians: A Journey Through Time with South African Women in Policing

Because South Africa was colonised by the British from the late 1890s to the early 1900s, it impacted the South African attitude toward the inclusion of women in the police (Bezuidenhout & Theron, 2000: 2) resulting in SAP becoming a male organisation (Newham et al, 2006: 16). Naturally, there were arguments and opposition about women in policing, influenced by the general understanding of women in the working world. The first woman to be appointed to a position of 'protection' was Mrs. Schelpien, in 1916, who was appointed as a 'special patrol' officer (Bezuidenhout & Theron, 2000: 22). In 1972, almost 60 years later, a group of 102 white women was appointed as police officers; followed by Asian women in 1980; coloured women in 1981 and black women in 1983 (Bezuidenhout & Theron, 2000: 22). The inclusion of women in the police force brought about numerous limitations, resulting in different encounters, in contrast to their male counterparts.

Policewomen in the SAP were not allowed to participate in active duty and were instead placed in the lower echelons of the organisation (Marks, 2008: 647), this included not being allowed to participate in active service on the country's borders or in situations of unrest; white women not being permitted to enter black residential areas while on duty; duties assigned to women were limited to administrative tasks in charge offices, assisting in minor road accidents, and

conducting searches of female prisoners and crime suspects and women were prohibited from engaging in fieldwork or working at radio stations for the flying squad (Homann 1987:1-6; Moolman 1989:32-33, 35; Vrouemag, 1993:20 cited in Bezuidenhout & Theron, 2000: 22). Additionally, if a policewoman was called to a crime scene, permission from a commissioned officer had to be obtained, and she had to be accompanied by a male colleague (Asian Women to Join Police 1982:7; Homann 1987:1-6; Moolman 1989:32-33, 35; Vrouemag, 1993:2 cited in Bezuidenhout & Theron, 2000: 22).

The depths of gender roles in policing ran deep, as women were forced to subscribe to the traditional ideas of femininity and behaviour; by being 'feminine' and wearing skirts (Marks, 2008: 647). Right up until the 1980s, unmarried women were even prohibited from joining the SAP, and those who were fortunate enough to join had to ask for permission from their senior male officers should they wish to get married (Marks, 2008: 647). The South African police culture included/s biased gender views that reflect/ed organisations and society's sexism.

3.2.3 (b) The Reign of Masculinity: A Contemporary View on Women in Policing

Policewomen's identities are positioned in the context of the institution of policing and police culture, which has normatively exhibited a divide between men and women (Rabe-Hemp, 2009: 115). Policewomen were first engaged in policing to fulfil stereotypically feminine responsibilities, such as guarding juveniles and women inmates and protecting young girls from 'societal evils' such as dance halls, liquor sales, and gambling, on the notion that women possess distinct, feminine skills (Rabe-Hemp, 2009: 115). In the contemporary, police organisations present themselves as bodies that are gender-neutral when the reality does not reflect such (Silvestri, 2017: 8). Silvestri (2017: 9) argues that the police organisation is not gender-neutral and is built on the premise of an 'ideal worker', which is male. This extends beyond the biological make-up of a man; it is their body, their relationship to life outside of work, and their sexuality that make up the ideal worker (Silvestri, 2017: 9). While Marks (2008: 644) argues that gender and race form the basis of the experiences of exclusion in the police force. For example, policewomen will either quit active duty due to discrimination or attempt to demonstrate their 'superior' competency, comparing themselves to their male counterparts (Marks, 2008: 644).

The masculinity and image of men are embedded in cultural beliefs and organisational processes, which contribute to the marginalising and oppression of women in organisations. Because police culture places a large emphasis on machismo, physical strength, and aggression,

it has become an unspoken model of 'policing' which preserves the space for men only, excluding femininity entirely (Silvestri, 2017: 9). Singh and Khan (2019: 4) argue that men have idealised this model of policing – violent, action orientated – uncertain and have: "they define themselves through these images that are closely associated with the 'masculine' side of contrasting pairs of gender-linked symbols and then use their work as a resource for doing activities related to masculinity". Thus, police officers believe 'real police work' is that which involves: "collusion in 'dirty knowledge' of illicit activity, celebrates physical prowess and involvement in fights, demands emotional control in the face of danger, and evades formal rules" (Singh & Khan, 2014: 4).

The effects of masculinity as the hegemony in the workplace have more of an effect on women than men. Veldman et al (2017: 2) argues that in masculine and macho cultured work environments, it is women's perceptions of gender-work identity conflict that are affected, and not that of men (Veldman et al, 2017: 2). Because policing places an immense emphasises on physicality as the epitome of crime fighting, policing is also characterised by such. Force and physicality are deemed natural for men, thereby differentiating masculinity from femininity, Heidensohn (1992: 73) provides us with a reminder that: "an elision which is frequently made is that coercion requires force which implies physique and hence policing by men". Patriarchy and masculinity as social constructs have created myths about women and women's capabilities. These myths exist all around the world, more so in careers and sectors that are deemed to be a 'man's job'. Bezuidenhout (2002: 113-14) lists six of these myths that exist in policing about women; (1) policewomen engage in sexual and romantic relationships with their male colleagues; (2) they may be hindered in their use of physical defensive techniques due to differences in strength and toughness; (3) their menstrual cycle can affect their capabilities; (4) policewomen may expect preferential treatment or favours from their male counterparts; (5) policewomen might rely more heavily on 'deadly force' such as firearms during confrontations, potentially due to their lack of physical strength for alternative methods like wrestling or fist fighting and (6) some policewomen may be more inclined to display emotional instability and may resort to tears more easily.

While it has been more than 20 years since Bezuidenhout (2002) wrote about these myths, they still linger and are apparent in policing as women have more to account for compared to their male counterparts. In a study conducted by Chu and Abdulla (2014) examining the self-efficacy beliefs and preferred gender roles of female police officers in Dubai, it showed that even though negative myths about women in policing exist and that policewomen are discriminated against,

they still believe they are equipped for the task. The study found that most policewomen in Dubai believed that police work is an appropriate occupation for women, with 47.1% strongly agreeing and 43.8% somewhat agreeing (Chu & Abdulla, 2014: 456 – 457). A total of 29.3% strongly agreed and 42.8% agreed that women are as capable as men to handle the duties of patrol work (Chu & Abdulla, 2014: 456 – 457). Lastly, 74.2% of the respondents strongly agreed that they are confident that they can handle police work (Chu & Abdulla, 2014: 456 – 457). These findings underscore the importance of tailoring gender integration strategies to specific cultural contexts and underscore the potential for a hybrid model to enhance the effectiveness of policing in societies within the global South.

3.2.3 (c) Navigating the Thin Blue Line: A Closer Look at the Challenges of Women in Policing

There is an evident link between police culture and masculinity that has been reported in the literature. Fielding (1994: 47) provides four characteristics of police culture that are masculinist attributes: 1) aggression; 2) competitiveness and a fixation on conflict; 3) exaggerated heterosexuality and 4) loyalty within subgroups formed within the police force. The issue of gender and power relations between men and women has been an issue policing organisation have been struggling to grapple with (Singh & Khan, 2019: 1). Due to the prevalent masculine police culture, women police officers find themselves having to adjust and survive in the masculinist culture that exists (Warren & James, 1996: 3). Warren and James (1996: 2) argue that women "are forced to adapt to male-dominated culture to survive in policing; they do this by conforming to behaviours along a continuum of de feminisation at one end to de-professionalisation at the other." Women in policing then find themselves in a predicament, as policewomen who strive to equal their performance to that of their male counterparts are accused of being unfeminine, lesbian, and aggressive, while the women police who conform to being feminine and prefer traditional roles within policing, confirm the beliefs of men that women are unable to carry out 'real' police work (Warren & James, 1996: 5).

Since police culture permeates police organisations, policewomen's grievances and even placements within police organisations are influenced by police culture. To expand more, police culture provides a form of rationalisation for deviance by the police as rule-breaking has become acceptable and necessary (Warren & James, 1996: 3). Police culture functions as a mechanism to socialise incoming police officers with the informal values and norms of the organisation, and it protects the wrongdoings of other police officers under the guise of 'loyalty' (Warren & James, 1996: 3). While policewomen may not be included in the forming of machismo culture police culture, they are unfortunately the unwilling subjects of such ideals

and norms. Nonetheless, women have been successfully integrated into the police force, but due to gender discrimination, women police officers are subjected to administrative work (Silvestri, 2017: 10), gendering their capabilities and their position in the organisation. By this gendered construction, Atkinson (2016: 14) argues women: "accept a patriarchal bargain; becoming passive, inactive, dependent and child-like, and thus marginalised to the periphery of police work". Given this, women police officers experience discrimination against their abilities (Singh and Khan, 2020: 6), they reported cases of gender biases where there were cases of sexual harassment; women officers not being treated differently and not as colleagues; male counterparts viewing women police officers as the weaker gendered, being excluded from particular training courses; no recognition of women officers and no transformation at the grassroots level of police organisations (Potgieter, 2012: 29). Some of the challenges women police officers face in their field include:

Sexual harassment

Many policewomen have been subjected to sexual harassment at work. Many policewomen have reported ongoing discrimination from colleagues, supervisors, and members of the public, albeit in less overt manners (Singh & Khan, 2020: 5). This discrimination manifests in derogatory comments, inappropriate behaviours, and a lack of regard for the policewomen's perspectives, opinions and experiences additionally, policewomen often experienced a sense of being outsiders through frequent pranks, jokes, and comments that focused on their sexuality (Singh & Khan, 2020: 5). In cases where the policewoman is not white or is not heterosexual, they experience an even more intense feeling of being an outsider (Miller, Forest, and Jurik 2003 cited in Singh & Khan, 2020: 5), speaking to the intersectionality of race, gender, and sexuality.

An example of this case would be lesbian policewomen being stereotyped as more competent due to the assumed masculinity; however, they still face harassment based on being a woman and the curiosity and hostility of heterosexual male officers. Through the sexualisation of the workplace, policemen assert their perceived superiority over women's pursuit of equality in the workplace (Singh & Khan, 2020: 5).

Gender bias

Gender disparity in roles has instilled prejudice in labour sectors and pre-determined abilities, skills, and outcomes based on gender. For instance, policewomen constantly must overcome the false belief that they are unable to carry out police work in the same manner as their male

counterparts (Morrison, 2005: 22). Additionally, within the police service's leadership positions, gender-based discrimination is more prevalent (Khosa 2022: 242), making the lack of women in senior positions is more obvious. Additionally, gender biases in policing exist alongside the politics of the body. Although the body cannot be unsexed or work in an ungendered context, 'the body' is frequently the primary focus in policing (Westmarland, 2017: 303). The presence of policewomen faces considerable resistance, as they challenge the traditional police personality and culture (Deans, 2017: 44). Research indicates that male officers perceive a threat to their status when working alongside female counterparts, as their roles are comparable (Deans, 2017: 45). Additionally, there is a prevailing concern among male officers regarding their well-being, particularly in physical confrontations, leading them to believe that having a female partner puts them at a disadvantage, which leads to policewomen being excluded from 'hard body' operations (Deans, 2017: 45).

Underrepresentation

According to Martin and Barnard (2013 cited in Khosa, 2019: 40), the underrepresentation of women in the SAPS is a recurring trend that leads to policewomen being oppressed by organisations. This oppression takes the form of verbal harassment, gender discrimination, and limited opportunities for career advancement. Policewomen face unique challenges in the workplace, such as those noted above including a lack of mentors or role models (Haas et al., 2009; Wilson, 2016 cited in Khosa, 2019: 40), as well as the societal pressure to balance family and career responsibilities, which is often subject to patriarchal and misogynistic double standards (Bowen, Edwards, Lingard & Cattell, 2013 cited in Khosa, 2019: 40).

In conclusion, understanding the police in South Africa is an imperative but complicated task. The police's history is influenced by Apartheid, making the organisation's culture multifaceted – requiring a nuanced understanding. The effects of police culture on policewomen place them in difficult and harmful positions and influence their work and how their male counterparts interact with them. The following chapter, Chapter 4, provides the method and methodology for data collection that uncovers the phenomenon and experiences of policewomen detailed in this chapter. Chapter 4 includes the positionality and reflexivity statement, theoretical framework, sampling plan, and the research process during the data collection period.

Chapter 4 - Methodology, Theoretical Framework, and the Research Process

4.1. Positionality and Reflexivity

4.1.1 On Positionality

As a black woman existing in a patriarchal society, I understand the pressures of having to prove myself, having to work harder than most even though the reward is not promised. I also understand having to appear strong and not show any weaknesses. I know what it is like to be deemed unqualified for an opportunity simply because I am a woman. As a young woman from the township of Gugulethu, I am very familiar with the experiences of being told I am unable to do something or be someone more than just a 'girl from the township'. Because positionality can affect the research process entirely, (Homes, 2020: 3) as a qualitative researcher and gender advocate, I am aware of how my own experiences have shaped the formulation of the research question and the chosen interview questions. My worldviews as a black woman, my positionality in the sociopolitical context of South Africa and my desire to offer feminist critiques of the world around me are what I carry with me, and they influence how I see the world and how it functions. This is argued by Homes (2020: 1) as he writes that the perspective of an individual or 'where the researcher is coming from' includes ontological assumptions (which are beliefs about the nature of social reality and what can be known about the world); epistemological assumptions (which are beliefs about the nature of knowledge) and assumptions about human nature and agency (which are beliefs about the way we interact with our environment and our relationship to it). Due to that, the self-awareness approach is the principle that researchers should openly acknowledge and reveal their own identities in their research, striving to understand their role in it and its impact on them (Homes, 2020: 2).

4.1.2 Being Reflexive

By employing a reflexive approach, Homes (2020: 2) argues that researchers should consistently recognise that their positionality is dynamic and contingent on the situation and context. As the primary researcher in this study, I am aware of the significance of reflexivity in shaping the research process and outcomes. My positionality as a black woman researching the job of policewomen impacts my comprehension of both the data and the existing literature. Drawing on my cultural heritage as a black Xhosa woman, I am sensitive to the complexities of the problems experienced by black women in policing. The intersectionality of my identity allows for a more nuanced understanding of policewomen's experiences, acknowledging the

layered impact of multiple social identities on their professional lives. Personally, my shared identity with policewomen at the intersection of race and gender fosters empathy, allowing me to connect more deeply with their viewpoints. I approached the research critically, thinking about power dynamics within policing and addressing racism and gender issues. While my positionality provides a vital perspective, I am aware of potential biases and deliberately engage in reflexivity while seeking other perspectives to provide a full and objective evaluation of the facts. In addition, my dedication to advocacy and empowerment drives me to investigate the strengths and resilience of black policewomen, to contribute to a more inclusive and fair understanding of their duties in the Cape Metropolitan Area

4.2 Theoretical Framework: Intersectionality Theory

Oppression does not exist as a simple or binary form of political interaction. Rather, it is best understood as including many, merging and interwoven systems, emerging from the antiracist feminist critiques that argue women's experiences and oppressions can be understood through analysing gender alone (Carastathis, 2014: 304). Intersectionality, as a critical theory, views knowledge (and knowledge production) as being situated, contextual, interconnected, and influenced by political and economic power dynamics. Intersectionality has been brought forward as a means of redress for exclusion. By purpose, intersectionality is an essential framework that provides the perspective and language to explore the relationships and interlinks between social categories and systems (Atewologun, 2018: 1). Hancock (2019: 282) describes intersectionality as a "justice-oriented analytic framework for examining sociopolitical problems that emerge from race, gender, class, sexual orientation, and other sociopolitical fissures as interlocking, process-driven categories of difference."

Intersectionality has been described as a tangible life experience, a goal, a tactic, a method for assessing inequality, and even a social movement (Al-Faham, 2019: 248). The primary focus in intersectionality is on the personal experiences of people at the intersectional axes, this emphasis on the experience of individuals is understood as "content specialisation" and an "intra-categorical approach" (Atewologum, 2018: 1). Thus, oppression is shaped by the simultaneous interaction of intersectional (micro) and interlocking (macro) processes (Collins, 2000). Jordan-Zachery (2006: 209) argued that intersectionality encourages social scientists, legal scholars, and researchers to look "beyond simply analysing differences between groups" and provides an opportunity to examine the differences *within* a group. This then: "allows us to begin to map a course of action for coalition building, political mobilisation, and agenda

setting," thereby transferring intersectionality from theory to practice (Jordan-Zachery, 2006: 209).

Sensitivity and awareness of the differences in experiences as well as issues of inequality and social justice in organisations and institutions offer the chance to maximise social change. By engaging in intersectional research, it can be a means of catharsis for participants, to share their unique experiences as well as be a starting point for transformation. Using an intersectional approach is undeniably advantageous when examining the experiences of women in the profession of policing. This perspective not only acknowledges the complexity of policewomen's identities but also recognises that their experiences are shaped by the intersection of being a woman and navigating a profession typically associated with men. Intersectionality promotes inclusivity by valuing the experiences of all women, regardless of their intersecting identities, revealing the nuanced issues they encounter and highlighting how institutional barriers may affect women differently. Moreover, it empowers women by giving voice to those with intersecting identities and allows them to advocate for change within the profession.

As a researcher, using an intersectional approach allowed me to develop a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of their experiences, enriching the depth of my research findings. The theory also empowers underrepresented voices within the SAPS, giving voice to those with intersecting identities and supporting marginalised groups, contributing to greater equity within policing. By considering the aspect of being a woman in a 'man's profession', I gained a more comprehensive understanding of the unique challenges policewomen face. By employing an intersectional perspective, I upheld ethical research principles, promoting inclusivity and equity in my study.

4.3 On Method: Qualitative Case Study of the Cape Town Metropolitan Area

To answer the research question, a qualitative study is more suitable for this thesis as qualitative research is concerned with various methods that are interpretative and naturalistic in their approach (Denzin & Lincon, 2014 cited in Njie & Asimiran, 2014: 35). What this means is that researchers who adopt this qualitative research approach: "study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena, in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincon, 2014 cited in Njie & Asimiran, 2014: 35). A case study complements qualitative research as it is a thorough, systematic assessment of a single person, group or

community in which the researcher investigates thorough data relating to multiple variables (Heale & Twycross, 2017: 7).

Qualitative research requires zeal and desire to go deep into a subject or process, which typically necessitates more time and further investigation through observation, interviews, and additional follow-up sessions (Njie & Asimiran, 2014: 35). Mason (2017: 14) summarises the aim of qualitative research by asserting that qualitative research can study various aspects of and in the social world which include: "the texture and weave of everyday life, the understandings, experiences, and imaginings of our research participants, the ways that social processes, institutions, discourses or relationships work and the significance of the meanings that they generate". Social dimensions occur in a multi-related system, with other variables to consider and other systems that influence it. To study social dimensions, a researcher can opt to use a case study (of one or more than one) to explore the pinpointed phenomenon.

Using a case study method for this research offers several advantages. The case study approach allows for a holistic undertaking (Njie & Asimiran, 2014: 37), delving into the specific context of the Cape Metropolitan area and exploring not only the experiences of policewomen but also the processes and practices (that constitute police of culture) within SAPS. Thus, this well-rounded approach creates a nuanced understanding of the complexities inherent in the issue. Furthermore, the in-depth exploration afforded by a case study is crucial for closely examining the unique dynamics, challenges, and opportunities within this specific geographical and organisational context. Focusing on the Cape Metropolitan area offers a close opportunity to analyse the processes and interactions within policing, uncovering the underlying factors that shape the experiences of women in the SAPS. The case study method is particularly effective in addressing questions related to 'how,' what,' and 'why,' (Crowe et al, 2011: 4) allowing for a thorough exploration of mechanisms, phenomena, and underlying reasons. Additionally, choosing the Cape Town Metropolitan area as the case study location is strategic, providing proximity and familiarity that can enhance access to relevant data, contextual understanding, and participant connection. This practical choice minimises logistical challenges and ensures that the findings are grounded in the reality of the community under investigation.

4.4 Sampling and Sampling Plan

Through purposeful sampling, the initial sampling plan for this study identified 5 different police stations in the Cape Metropolitan Area from the crime statistics provided by the SAPS for the third quarter of the fiscal year (October 2022 – December 2022). These police stations

were in the top 30 police stations nationwide in terms of high crime rates. The reason the selection of stations was based on the 'top 30 police stations list' is because I wanted to interview policewomen from police stations that are 'busy' and by that, there being a lot of work at the station and in the area, compared to a police station in a 'quiet' area. In total, I contacted 6 police stations in the Cape Metropolitan Area to be a part of this study, one of the police stations declined my request entirely, policewomen at another station did not want to be a part of the study, station commanders of two other stations were unavailable at the time of request as they were placed in other stations. Therefore, the administrators at those stations saw it fit for me not to interview their policewomen as I could not speak to the station commander. Due to the unpredictability of research and the sensitivity of the matters of SAPS, only two police stations agreed to participate in the study.

The study aimed to interview 10 minimum participants and 15 maximum participants due to the limitations of the word count. The ideal participants had to be active-duty police officers for at least two years and under, making them recent graduates of the Police Training Colleges. This was to ensure that I spoke to 'new' policewomen who may have still been adjusting to police culture and had not been accustomed to it for a long period. The police stations were listed however to protect the privacy of the participants, the police stations I conducted interviews were removed. Some stations that were part of the initial list chose to not take part in the study, requiring me to interview more than the initial number of participants (which was 2) at one station.

5.1 Who's speaking? Feminist Interviewing and Listening as a Method

Information is exchanged through a myriad of ways; the most common way being engaging in conversation with people. Through conversations, ideas, feelings, and views are exchanged through what is said, how it's said, and even through what is not said. Hence, semi-structured interviews will be used for data collection. The main objective when semi-structured interviews are used to collect data is to learn more about the subject of interest from participants who have relevant personal experiences, attitudes, opinions, and beliefs (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019: 3). Researchers can use semi-structured interviews to gather new, exploratory information about a particular subject, to triangulate other data sources, or validate their findings through the input of the participants (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019: 3). Instead of using structured interviews and going through a checklist of questions, the semi-structured interview will allow open-mindedness and enable additional questions to be raised based on the answers of the co-

researcher (Ruslin et al, 2022: 24). Furthermore, it provided insight into the world of the co-researchers that as the researcher, would not have been able to find alone.

What is feminist about this approach is the close attention paid to the formulation of the research questions as well as the interview questions. Feminist-informed research prioritises research questions that are relevant to understanding and transforming gendered systematic oppression. Furthermore, it acknowledges that there is a power hierarchy that suppresses the voices of women during the research (Beetham & Demetriades, 2007: 200). Hesse-Biber (2011: 8) writes [feminist] research is research that: "gets at an understanding of women's lives and those of other oppressed groups, promotes social justice and social change, and research that is mindful of the researcher-researched relationship". Feminist interviewing is firstly about seeing your participants as co-researchers as they too are involved in the co-creation of knowledge. Secondly, it is about gathering their experiences, opinions, and perspectives while allowing them the opportunity to do so freely and safely. Lastly, it is about using those stories to amplify their voices in a space where women's voices are commonly disregarded.

A large part of making this attention is listening. While it may seem like a 'no-brainer' and expected, interviewing goes beyond listening to the words said. Active listening is not only about using the ear, it is a process involves that taking in information through, words, speech, and signs but: "also actively processing it—allowing that information to affect you, baffle you, haunt you, make you uncomfortable, and take you on unexpected detours, toward peoples, knowledge, and experiences that have been disavowed, overlooked, and forgotten" (DeVault & Gross, 2011:182). The process of listening and understanding deeply affects the analysis of the data, hence the process of actively listening, listening to the words that are "muted". Furthermore, there is a chance to observe the non-verbal and social cues of the participants whether they come in the form of gestures, changes in voice, body language, intonation, and even silence. To note the non-verbal cues, I wrote down field notes while the interview was recorded using my phone. The participants were free to speak in IsiXhosa, English, and Afrikaans, however, most of them spoke in IsiXhosa. This meant that I could not use otter.ai for transcription purposes as it does not recognise Bantu languages.

5.2 Making Meaning: The Use of Thematic Analysis

In qualitative research, the interpretation and description of the data are in the researcher's control, therefore, thematic analysis was employed for data analysis. Thematic analysis can be described as the process of finding underlying themes in a data set (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017:

3353), it is a suitable approach to analysis when attempting to comprehend experiences, ideas, or actions within a data collection (Kiger & Varpio, 2020: 846). The purpose of thematic analysis is to find themes - that is, significant or intriguing patterns in the data - and then utilise those themes to discuss the research or make a point (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017: 3353). Furthermore, a good thematic analysis goes beyond simply summarising the data and interprets and clarifies it. It involves six steps, and the two essential ones relating to meaning making are developing codes and making sense of the themes after finding and naming them (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017: 3353). It is about making sense of what the theme means, whether there are subthemes and what they mean, and how the themes relate to one another (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017: 33511).

The thematic analysis of the data allows the reveal of the underlying layers of meaning present in the experiences of policewomen. This method of analysis makes it easier to identify not only overarching themes but also potential subthemes that may represent more specific features or dimensions within SAPS. Furthermore, investigating potential subthemes is essential for expressing the richness and complexities of the participants' perspectives. Within the SAPS, policewomen may face a variety of difficulties and opportunities, and thematic analysis allows for a thorough examination of these experiences. It allowed me to go beyond surface-level observations and gain a better grasp of the causes that form their opinions, frustrations, and expressions inside the organisation.

5.3 Ethical Considerations, Limitations, and Risks

When working with human participants some ethics need to be considered to ensure, minimise harm and maximise benefit, as well as ensure the protection of the participants. The main ethical consideration for conducting research was applying for ethical clearance from the UCT Law Faculty Research Ethics Committee.[7] In addition to that application, I submitted a research application to the SAPS to conduct interviews at the various stations.[8] Shifting to the interview process itself, respect, sensitivity, and empathy were incorporated throughout. That is because semi-structured interviews often reveal sensitive information, and being cognizant of the power dynamics between researcher and participant is always a necessity (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019: 4). With that being said, the participants were required to sign an informed consent form, that included details such as ensuring them that the information shared is confidential. To echo that, remaining anonymous was presented as an option, should they wish to remain anonymous.

[7] REC ethical clearance granted 07 September 2023
[8] SAPS ethical clearance granted 09 October 2023

This was because as a feminist researcher, there is mindfulness of women as agents in their own lives; their voices do not have to be 'blurred' unless they say so themselves. However, during the interview process, I recognised how important the anonymity of the participants was, resulting in all participants remaining anonymous and using an alias during the study.

This study has a few limitations. Firstly, data collection was time-consuming - not only conducting the interviews but also travelling from the Observatory to the different police stations. Secondly, transportation for the study was costly therefore I could only return to stations nearby. Other stations far from Observatory could not be considered for this study. Thirdly, police officers work four days and are off the next four days. Thus, it was difficult to complete the interviews in a specific period due to their working schedules. Fourthly, the outcome of the research is solely dependent on the accuracy and responses of the women. If any of the participants have fabricated their response, opted to withhold certain information, or decided to withdraw consent at any given time, it would have negatively affected the study. Lastly, the Cape Town Metropolitan Area is large and only a handful of police stations were used for the study.

This study posed a few risks. To safeguard the well-being and rights of the policewomen involved, ethical concerns such as privacy and confidentiality were addressed. Because revealing particular facts about cases or operations may jeopardise the safety of both participants and researchers, the nature of police activity creates security and safety hazards. Furthermore, the study could unintentionally promote gender preconceptions or biases, emphasising the significance of giving a nuanced and honest depiction of women's contributions to the police. Because of the sensitivity of police efforts to social and political circumstances, they were vulnerable to potential public or political criticism. Additionally, as the researcher, I had to consider the emotional and psychological consequences of investigating the unique issues encountered by policewomen. Access to participants and cooperation from police stations presented itself as a logistical challenge. The generalisability of findings to other contexts should be acknowledged, and compliance with legal and regulatory requirements, as well as robust data security measures, was essential. Finally, the reputation and trust of both researcher and those being studied were at stake, emphasising the importance of ethical rules, informed permission, and careful assessment of potential dangers throughout the research process.

Chapter 5 - Findings

In reflecting on the research process and the data collected, this chapter summarises and presents the findings thematically. The reason this study was conducted is that policewomen's experiences within the SAPS differ from those of their male counterparts, one of which is because of gender. The second reason this study was conducted is to increase the research investigating policewomen's gendered perspectives. By answering the research question: 'What does it mean to be a policewoman in the SAPS?', this study aimed to directly listen to and understand the perspective of women in the police service. Undertaking this study and completing the interviews offered an opportunity to understand the experiences of policewomen in a much clearer light than previously understood. This chapter is divided into sections of themes, each representing a significant pattern within the findings. The analysis of the data was viewed through the lens of intersectional feminism, which is in the following chapter, Chapter 6. The findings are grouped into five themes in total. The first 'finding' and theme was the unexpected and unsaid kind, of silence. Thus, Section 5.2 discusses and presents scholarly arguments on silence within the police force and links them with the findings of the study. The participants were asked 10 questions to help answer the main research question. The questions ranged from self-identity in the police, their experience with SAPS, and suggestions for reform.

5.1 The Participants

The participants of this study were all policewomen who had been working in SAPS for no more than two years and worked at different police stations. There was a total of 10 participants, six were black and four were coloured, while six spoke IsiXhosa, three spoke English, one spoke Sesotho and one spoke Afrikaans. Their ages spanned from 28 years old to 35, and all of them were constables. All have experience performing outside duties[9], while 2 of them moved permanently to work inside the station. Even though race is not a focal point for this study, during the interviews it was found that race played a significant part in how the policewomen were perceived by the public and colleagues. Another significant factor was language. The interview questions were initially written in English but translated to IsiXhosa for the Xhosa-speaking participants, some were still unable to immerse themselves in the questions entirely. This applied to translating their answers as well, as IsiXhosa cannot be 100% translated into English. The police stations the participants worked at were in different socio-economic

[9] "Outside duties" in policing encompass tasks beyond regular patrol and law enforcement, such as community engagement, specialised training, public education, traffic control, crime prevention initiatives, and court appearances.

locations, they were in the township and the suburban area of the Cape Metropolitan Area. As noted in Section 5.3, the participants will be referred to using aliases to protect their identities.

5.2 Theme 1 - Blue Code of Silence: When Policewomen Choose Not to Speak (Too)

There was a lot of it, the silence. The 'please come back tomorrow'; the raised eyebrows or the 'let's skip this question rather' and the 'you can't ask a police officer that'. There was a lot of withholding of information: 'a lot of things are confidential man' - I was told this a few times. After the 3rd attempt at data collection (and failing at it) I realised that the blue code of silence discussed by Skolnick (2002) and other scholars (Westmarland & Conway, 2020; Walker, 2023) runs deep within the SAPS. The Blue Code of Silence also called the Code of Silence, Wall of Silence, or Blue Wall of Silence, is the feeling of loyalty and brotherhood that may protect the police against threats to their safety, but also protects the interests of the police that are responsible for violating the law (Skolnick, 2003: 7). Former Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) agent, Thomas Nolan (2009: 251) writes that the Blue Code of Silence is an 'institutionalised culture of deception, misrepresentation, lies and tacit silences that exist in many laws enforcement organisations'. Nolan (2009: 251) further wrote that when police officers are perhaps collaborating with the media or are required to share any information, they hide specific details that might potentially attract public attention, to deceive those seeking information. Similarly, Skolnick (2009: 8) writes that the code is evident in the reluctance to provide information that could implicate or embarrass a fellow officer because a cop doesn't rat on a cop'.

Initially argued by scholars (Skolnick, 2009; Nolan, 2009; Westmarland & Conway, 2020) that the blue code of silence exists in the scope of brotherhood within the police, the findings indicate that the blue code of silence can be found well throughout the SAPS. The initial encounter with the silence was with a station commander from police station number 1[10] on the phone who completely dismissed this study. When I informed him, that I would like to conduct this study at his station he asked me several times if I had obtained the research clearance from SAPS because 'it doesn't work like that', even though I had informed him that I had the clearance. I encountered the same roadblock with the station commander from the second station as well. While I am aware of the research protocols for conducting research with SAPS, the station commanders were apprehensive about allowing me to conduct research even though I assured them I followed the correct channels. At Police Station Number 2, the

[10] Police stations are numbered not to reveal which police station is being referred to.

policewomen were unwilling to speak at all, even the administrator did not allow the policewomen to speak to me. The policewomen were afraid to utter a word, because according to them, 'andifuni into iphume nam uyaqonda, kuthwa wena usithatha phi isi bindi sothetha izinto zethu?'[11]

This sort of apprehensiveness from station commanders and police officers can be expected as they are on the field and are more involved with actual policing, an interesting finding of the data was that even administration and human resources were unwilling to share information or allow me to speak to the policewomen. They too felt it necessary to uphold and protect any outgoing information. Specifically at Police Station Number 3, the station administrator was worried because she did not want any 'bad' information about the station to be shared. She assured me that she 'had to be careful'. Throughout the data collection process, this became an apparent and consistent pattern, where even during the interviews policewomen would strategically pause before answering certain questions, provide a short answer, or skip the question. The findings have shown that policewomen participate in the blue code of silence as well, it is not only policemen who strategically withhold information.

5.3 Theme 2 - Why Women Police: The Role of Women in Policing within the Cape Metropolitan Area

Women in policing face distinct challenges as highlighted in Section 3.2.3. These challenges may be outright visible or sometimes hidden in structures and interactions in the workplace. Silvestri (2017: 9) noted that women in policing are not deemed as 'ideal workers', however, one of the recurring themes from the participants was the passion for policing and creating a safer South Africa. When they were asked why they decided to join the SAPS, they responded:

> *See the reason why I wanted to join right, initially when I was in school, I knew I wanted to do something in law so then I applied to study because it wasn't my first initial thought to come to the police … But my main reason was, I was passionate about law, and I wanted to join an environment, a working environment where, an environment has to do with law and stuff, so yeah that was the main reason …. I'm very passionate about law, more especially criminal law, I love criminal law - Carol.*

> *It is something I wanted to do from a young age. I did do other things like working at shops, but they didn't give me thrive that I wanted because I wanted to be here. When I came back from overseas, I applied to be a reservist and started working for free. So, I applied again, and I got in – Britney.*

[11] I don't want anything that comes out to be pinned on me, people are going to ask where I get the audacity to discuss inside business with others.

I really liked this job, I told myself that I would like to be a police officer. There was a man in my village who we looked up to, we looked to him for everything. Maybe if there was a robbery, we would call him, and he would give us the contact numbers of his colleagues or someone who was at work. I also wanted to protect the nation as well. I thought I was going to work in my village but then I was posted in Cape Town.

- Fezeka

5.3.1 A Passion for Policing

Marks (2008: 647) noted that during Apartheid policewomen in the SAP were not permitted to serve on active duty and were instead assigned to lower-level positions. The world has experienced a commendable progression in gender equality, and so have policing organisations. This change was notable in the responses of the participants when asked how they perceived themselves being in the intersections of being a police officer and a woman. The participants said the following about their identity and gender perception:

I see myself as a police official that is to bring about change in my country. I am so confident … irrespective of the increase in crime - Miami.

You do get a sense of pride because I am proud of what I'm doing, I wear my uniform with pride. So, you can't say what does it mean because I like to not tell what the people what I'm doing because you don't know, it's actually dangerous for us ne. That's why I cover myself when I'm driving. But I do wear my uniform with pride when I'm at work – Olivia.

I'm very proud to be a policewoman. Yes, sometimes it's hard being a woman in this environment but you know what, it's rewarding because I wanted to do this. I wanted to be a policewoman. Of course, now you see, there are challenges of course. You just have to do your job, but I can't lie, I love being a policewoman - Tokyo.

5.3.2 Superwomen: The Capabilities of Women in Policing

In addition to how the participants perceive themselves as women in policing, they shared that being a woman has some advantages for the environment they work in. The participants shared that their femininity, 'softer' approach (sometimes), and overall way of doing yield some positive interactions with the public:

You get to places whereby because we are more feminine, so when you are attending to a complaint and its maybe something of the nature or its personal or whatever, who is the people that are supposed to step in solve this problem? The ladies because now, you're not gonna speak to the

complainant with a police approach, if I can say it like that. You speak like woman to daughter, mother to daughter, like that. So you gonna speak to them in that manner because at the end of the day really us as police is not only about arresting people, or upholding the law, like we are everything, you have to, whether is social worker but I mean, for me it's like human nature because if someone is going through a problem you have to solve that problem or give a suggestion in order for them to get to a compromise or whatsoever. More especially in gender-based violence cases and stuff like that, so then ja. And then where's the men? Just standing, waiting for you until you are done resolving the issue or bring some sense or kind of relief to the family and the person or whatever - Carol.

All participants unequivocally expressed confidence in their capacities within the domain of policing:

[The department] needs to recognise women in policing, we are very strong. Don't look at us as just women - Fezeka.

It's the helping people man, I'm very good at socialising. A lot of people come in and say, 'No I want that lady to help me'. Even grannies who come here say: 'No may she help me please'. Sometimes I think, why do they ask me? And they'll say, 'No, she'll talk to me in a much better way. Please my child, I want you to help me' - Mariah

For me, I think I'm a hard worker. I think that I'm tough, I have a lot to bring to the table. I'm not afraid to take a response. That's one of the things most members are afraid to do. If you are put in a position to give answers to top management, because those people don't care about A, b, or c. they will come down on you like a ton of bricks and they will make you feel so small. Regardless of what you rank may be. If you are in charge of that thing or the overseer or whatever, you must answer. You can't have, 'I don't know'. I think that I can handle pressure, I can take on responsibility, and whatever task that I am given, I will make sure that it gets done. And I rather get it done than to ask someone else because I know how I want it to be or what it should and how it will look like. Here in SAPS, they like to push the work. So whatever needs to be done, I will get it done – Olivia.

Furthermore, a participant appended that her adoption of a gentler approach to addressing individuals has yielded positive outcomes in the execution of her duties:

What I've learned, some guys will say when you go into a house of a suspect, I must be 'haregat.'[12] *I disagree, you know how I do it ne? I go in the house, and I knock on the door. They will answer and I will say, ma'am, is this person here? That person will tell me that I'm*

[12] Stubborn, obstinate

looking for is lying over there just because I acted nicely. But another police official will come be haregat, throwing the people around, there are not going to answer you. People handle things differently. I believe in giving respect to people and getting that back - Britney.

5.4 Theme 3 - Women in Policing: How to Be in The Boys' Locker-room

Section 3.2.2 discusses police culture and the general portrayal of the behaviours in policing. The section highlights toughness, roughness, and social isolation as the components of police culture, even though it is not monolithic. The participants expressed the different ways in which they have had to 'embody' themselves to 'be' like a police officer and to survive in policing. They admitted that policing is quite a stressful job compared to others, however, an interesting finding was that the participants opted to 'be strong' and not seek help from SAPS services such as Employee Health and Wellness[13] when necessary. One participant went as far as saying 'In SAPS, you don't trust anyone'. When asked how they cope with the stress of the job, the participants answered:

No, I don't cry … you do find a way to calm yourself down … you come up with so many strategies. You talk to yourself man, because you become your own pillar. We do have services though like EHW, it's called employee health and wellness but however if you don't believe, you need to believe mos. I believe that I am my own councillor. I counsel myself, for example, even if there is something that I find challenging outside of the workplace, I will never consider seeing a psychologist – Miami.

There's EHW but really, I mean, who uses EHW? Theres not really people who uses EHW. Like, if you wanna use those people, it's just for really like, say if you were involved in a shooting, then there's EHW. It's your choice, do you wanna see EHW or do you wanna see you own? If it's through EHW then its free because the work supplies, it to you. That's the only situation where people use EHW, or if you are struggling financially at home, or maybe personal problems at home then you can contact EHW. But on a normal basis … you get people like me, even if I am having a financial crisis or domestic violence, I will sort it out. I will sort it out on myself. I will go and see an outside psychiatrist or whatsoever, but ja. That's how I cope with day-to-day stresses - Olivia.

Enduring within the policing industry has been a challenging endeavour for the participants as they emphasised the difficulty of adaptation. Nevertheless, they underscored the significance of resilience and strength as crucial attributes for survival in policing:

[13] Employee Health & Wellness Program is structured to improve employees' physical, emotional, and occupational well-being. It is a work-site-based program that assists in identifying and resolving performance and behavioural issues caused by personal and work-related concerns.

So, there's days you snappy. So, if a get a comment from a male that's says "why are you lazy" you best believe I'm gonna jump down your throat … And so, you really, as a woman, you have to have a thick skin, to be able to survive in this industry, whereby it's a male-dominated industry because if you are too sensitive, you are gonna crack - Carol.

They all know me like that, like outspoken. What I noticed is, it's not a façade. If you come here, you can't be [soft, weak] ... you must show from the get-go you not gonna be trampled over. You must stand your ground. If they see [you are weak], they gonna walk all over you. You're gonna work yourself to death. You're gonna crack.

- Thumeka

The participants further emphasised that they frequently experience marginalisation from their colleagues due to their emotional expressions. They underscored the observation that their professional competence is often unfairly assessed through the lens of emotional considerations. Fezeka noted:

Yes, I can say that [that people don't want to work with me]. Sometimes they'll say I'm a coward. The thing is I cry very quickly when I am angry, I cry often. This is how I express myself; it does not mean that I am a coward.

5.5 Theme 4 - Behind the Badge: Policewomen's Struggles in the Cape Metropolitan Area

During the interviews, the participants highlighted six specific experiences that they encountered on a day-to-day basis at their stations. They include:

The Effect of Culture/Tradition on Women in Policing

Two participants shared how members of the community who are men treat them when they are on duty. They explained that the ideals of ethnic culture and traditions make the men disrespect them because of their gender. They shared:

But outside, it's a totally different ball game. Because you get people, more especially for females. And you know males, more especially in this area[14] they are, you know. And 'I'm a ndoda and you a woman'. Cultural things. So, they take that cultural thing, mindset and apply it to you even as police because 'no you can't talk to me like that who are you? You are a woman, and I am a man'. I'm like, how do I now approach this, even when my male colleague is there, but I mean, I also have to now stand my ground because it's my job. Not because of culture whatsoever, not because I'm

[14] Predominantly black area

disrespecting the culture but purely because it's my job. So, I can't allow that man to talk down to me like that with no respect whatsoever because it's my job - Carol.

[nods yes]

For example, when we are going to do an arrest for domestic violence, a lot of times it us black people. Other races too but I'd say that black people have a much higher offence rate. When we go and we introduce ourselves, the man won't talk to me, he will talk to my male colleague. He will try to explain to my colleague why he is abusing his wife. He won't want to talk to me because he doesn't want to talk to a woman, he wants to talk to a man - Fezeka.

Unfair Treatment from Male Colleagues

Participants expressed that, at times, their male colleagues treat them unfairly because they are women:

But because I am a female, I will be treated like I am a female so the only challenge is that they always look down on us and tell us' You are not strong, you can't do this you can't do that'. 'You can't face such situations; you won't know what to do' They don't have trust in us – Miami.

They always treat us unfairly. Always. Because we are women, the way they even talk to me sometimes, it's like we are not even in the same position. They want to act like they are captain or that they know the job better, but we do the same job and we arrived here at the same time - Tokyo.

Seen as Inferior

Based on the above, the participants shared that they are often seen as inferior to their male colleagues and incapable of doing their work:

My experience, as a woman… Okay. As you know that this is a male-dominated industry and many males don't like to work with females, more especially if you are attending to a complaint, you will also see maybe on, where there is a police vehicle attending to a complaint, there is a male and a female. But other times there is mostly males because the males don't want to work with females, because 'we are not strong enough' if anything should, a problem arise we have to get physical, and all of that … Even though you know you have to deal with people, you have to work with people and whatsoever and help people whatsoever and solve problems and whatsoever, but you just got your days where you're like ugh, not today. It's like the men see only those days and then they like, 'You lazy'. Even now I still get it, 'you lazy, you don't work, no I don't want to work with you' whatever - Carol.

So, I work outside and inside, some people say, 'I don't want to work with you because you are lazy, when we need to climb over walls you are going to say that you don't want to'. A person will tell you

in your face that they don't trust you. They'll tell you that in a shooting, you won't be able to protect that because 'women are scared' - Fezeka.

There are a lot of people like that [who don't want to work with women]. Men tell themselves that they don't know this job, but when you are going to work you have to be ready for anything sort of treatment - Thumeka.

I feel like you don't have value [as a policewoman] or that you are unable. Because even females will look down on you because even, we as female can do that. Some men just say it straight out that 'I don't want to work with a female' so you can just imagine - Rita.

When asked if they believe policewomen and policemen are equally recognised in SAPS, Candy responded:

No, for the fact that when we go to fitness training, men get 40 minutes and us 30, why? When we are all applying for the same position. For example, we are all here doing push-ups. We will get told to do push-ups on our knees, but men do the normal push-ups, why? When all of us are the police? And we are in the same rank? Why? They look down on us. It's like when a woman is the station commander. You will hear people complain about 'oh it's a woman' because we had a woman station commander before this one. The men did not listen to her, they did not give her the respect she deserved as station commandeer. They said that 'we can't tell what to do by a woman'. Especially the black men.

No Support

Many of the participants expressed that they did not receive any support from SAPS as policewomen, while some said that there might be some support available, but they are not aware of any. Only one participant mentioned the Women's Network noted in Section 1.1:

Hmm, I don't know if there's any support. Maybe there is. We don't know a lot of things unless we see them on the internet, to be honest - Rita.

You know, as shift people we miss a lot of things, we don't get a lot of this like that. Maybe it's the people who work in the offices that get things like that. We have that four days on and four days off, so maybe on that four days off you're also busy with something else. The four days in, work has piled up. We miss things like that as people who work shifts. We don't get things – Thumeka.

Sexual advances

Sexual advances were highly reported during the interview but not much information was shared beyond the admission of the act. Regarding the question 'Have you experienced any sexual harassment at work', a policewoman told me after the interviews that 'you can't ask a

policewoman that, you will find a lot of that here'. I was made aware of the sensitivity of that topic area. In navigating the sensitive subject of sexual harassment within the context of my study on women in SAPS, I approached the interviews with a deep awareness of the difficulty participants might face in discussing such personal experiences. As a black Xhosa woman, my positionality played a significant role in shaping the dynamics of these conversations. I recognised that my shared cultural and gender identity with some participants might have fostered a sense of trust among participants, encouraging them to share their stories. However, this closeness also prompted a heightened awareness of the emotional weight carried by these narratives. There were instances where the delicacy of the topic led participants to be reluctant, and I respected those boundaries, ensuring the interviews remained within the ethical framework and participants' comfort zones. Navigating these complexities, I maintained a balance between empathy and professionalism, fostering an environment where participants felt heard and respected while upholding the integrity of the research process.

A few participants responded with their experiences of sexual harassment and said:

I remember when I first got here, there was this other man, I think maybe he wanted me, I don't know. He said he wanted to work with me, and I get that a lot. He wanted me to be his partner indefinitely. I said no because I saw it was not about work anymore. He would say he likes me, and you know, I have my person. And then after that, I was not comfortable working inside – Fezeka.

That thing of someone coming to hit you on your bum? Yes, it has happened, but I warned that person. Maybe you are bending over, especially the non-black people. They love doing that. A person will come and just hit you on the bum. And I tell them to stop what they are doing because they might do it to the wrong person - Candy.

Yes, I have, but I deal with things as they come. I mean, I'm telling you, too many times. But I deal with it, I never report it. There was only one incident that went too far, and then I reported it to my captain, and I just asked him to just remove me from the situation. But don't tell the person. Just say I'm not feeling well, just remove me. Don't take it far, open a docket, and all those things. No. It's too emotionally draining. So, for me, yes, I have but I remove myself from the situation – Olivia.

Lack of Acknowledgment and Progress for Women

One last experience the participants shared is that there is a lack of acknowledgement and progress for women in policing. They noted that policewomen's careers remain stagnant when asked whether they have observed any changes or reforms within SAPS aimed at improving the experiences and opportunities for policewomen, they answered:

No there isn't any. Things are still the same you know. Because there are very few station commanders who are female – Candy.

No. Have you seen a woman winning best female of the year? Never. But there's always a male. When there was a female station commander, I did get a certificate for recognition, and then since then, I honestly haven't gotten anything. And even when I was pregnant, it was easy for me to go to her and write me a letter so that I don't wear uniform. And you know, a woman always comes to you during a shift and asks, 'What is the problem, how can I assist' and even take you to EHW. But ever since she left… - Rita.

5.6 Theme 5 - Within the Ranks: The Working Environment of Women Within the SAPS

The participants specified three characteristics of their working environment during the interviews. They are:

Public Display of Disrespect, Racism, and Sexism

Some participants spoke about the complexities of being a woman and being black in policing. Due to this, they experience racism and sexism from the public:

Being a woman in the police, you get disrespected. I thought that it would be easy for women to trust me, to talk to me. Or maybe because I'm black, I thought they would feel safer with me. But they don't, most people say they don't feel safe when I am helping them - Rita.

Being a police officer, you can't say it's bad, but you can say it's bad. It's always busy, it's not the same as the township. People come from the township and say they are not getting the help they need, and we have to help them. It doesn't matter how the community treats you, you just have to help them – Candy.

You know some people when they see women, they see us nothing. You can see sometimes that they are not comfortable that a woman will attend to their case. They trust that a man will do a better job than a woman - Mariah.

High Levels of Stress and Trauma

Section 5.4 briefly mentions the stress levels of working in policing. The participants shared their experiences navigating stress and trauma at work:

I remember there was this thing, we were chasing a car and then it overturned. The person in the car died while the firefighters were en route. He was talking, answering our questions and then he died. That just made me not want to work outside ever again, it traumatised me - Rita

I don't [use EHW]. Our work is too stressful, you must make happy the public and the work must go on. There are days where I just don't want to do anything, it's a lot. I can't take it... Then it depends on you. I personally if I am stressed with work, I just leave everything. It's either I sit on the table and play with my phone, or just go into [location is redacted] and walk. I know that tomorrow I will be fine – Mariah.

But EHW was also there, but they don't help you that, they not that, effective. It feels to me they don't really care [EHW]. And they will look at you differently when you speak your business. But when you go somewhere else, people won't judge you for dealing with a lot of stress. People at work don't know what you're dealing with at home, and then you come here and put a lot of stress on you. It's different. But some people do cope, it all depends on you and what you go through. You got maybe a husband, and the husband treat you like shit. And it happens, even though we are police officials we are also humans. We have life besides this. How will you deal with that? You got stress at home, you come to work, you have stress at work. There's people bullying you. You know some officers do you their ranks ne, it happens. And then financially you are also there, travelling, so sometimes it gets too much – Britney.

Challenges in Adapting to the Job and Achieving Work-Life Balance

Finding it hard to balance being a policewoman and their personal lives was a recurring pattern. The participants specified their responsibilities outside of policing such as being mothers and wives made it particularly difficult to navigate. A few participants shared:

In the beginning, it was not that good because I didn't have that confidence to talk. I got the confidence when I came into the police and then started to experience and know how to deal with people. Like you gain experience when you're in the police, like how to deal with certain things. Like, people coming after you, how to handle it as opposed to report it. For me, I don't know about other people, I just deal - Olivia.

[The minister needs] to give us more family responsibility! 5 days is not enough for 2 or 3 kids! I emailed him but he didn't get back to me. How must a person now work with 5? The sick days is fine, but the family responsibility? 5 days? No ha. a, its daylight robbery. That is what I will tell him. Even though there's a mom and a day, they are small, and they want their mom – Tokyo.

5.7 Theme 6 - Women in Blue Speak Out: Proposals for Reform and Recognition in Policing

As participants shared their perspectives, a common thread formed, highlighting the need for substantial system improvements. Their perspectives emphasised the importance of acknowledgment, not only as a token gesture but as a critical component in creating a

supportive workplace. Furthermore, the demand for reprogramming existing norms and behaviours was highly received, demonstrating a widespread need for reform.

Changing Uniform

The women expressed that they feel uncomfortable with how their bodies show in the pants they were, as they are designed for men:

Dressing. The uniform they have given us is annoying, I would like it if it looks like the one they have in the army. Just something that would cover us you know, so that our bums aren't showing. I just want them to try something else. Its uncomfortable - Thumeka

Safety

The participants expressed that they would like the SAPS to take their safety into consideration:

They used to give us transport, but they took it away. Our communities are scared of us because they think we are carrying guns. When we are walking, they are looking at us, we just don't feel safe – Thumeka.

Workshops

To transform the culture in the workplace and how women are perceived in policing, workshops were suggested:

Workshops would be a steer in the right direction, workshops not only for women but for males about women or the working relationship between the two genders. And also, to have frequent workshops on these topics. It no use, especially in saps, you do something now, come the next two months, [tomorrow] it's just gone with the wind and something else comes into place. This is why most police officers say SAPS is actually a circus, because there's new rules every day. This rule can be put into place today, if you come into work next week, that same thing that you thought is still there in place, there's something else. Theres always new instructions. That's why they say, they say in the police, you have to comply and complain later. And even if you're complaining, it's like you talking on deaf ears. So, ja. This is just a go-with-the-flow type of thing - Carol.

Recognition

Participants expressed a strong desire for true acknowledgement, not only for their successes but also for the particular problems they face in the profession. Individual stories highlight the critical role that acknowledgement plays in validating individual achievements, promoting a sense of belonging, and sparking positive cultural shifts within the organisation:

> *I just want us to be seen you know, as workers, as protectors of the nation. It's exhausting sometimes having to prove yourself all the time because it's like, I'm here, aren't I? but honestly SAPS needs to recognise us as equal contributors in this space. We are not here for decoration – Tokyo.*

In conclusion, the findings of this study add significantly to the current body of literature on women in policing by providing nuanced insights into the lives of Cape Metropolitan Area policewomen. The discovered themes shed light on the women's varied issues, underlining the importance of structural reforms, true recognition, and reprogramming of cultural norms within the SAPS. The participants' stories provide a compelling foundation for future research and advocacy targeted at creating a fairer and more supportive environment for women in policing. The following chapter, Chapter 6, delves into the findings of the chapter, analysing them through the lens of intersectional feminism.

Chapter 6 - Analysis and Discussion

The results of this study presented in Chapter 5 provide insight into the perspectives of policewomen in the SAPS. Six themes emerged after the data collection process and the thematic analysis conducted on the data. They are *Blue Code of Silence: When Policewomen Choose Not to Speak (Too)*; *Why Women Police: The Works of Policewomen in the Cape Metropolitan Area*; *Women in Policing: How to Be In The Boys' Locker-room*; *Behind the Badge: Policewomen's Struggles in the Cape Metropolitan Area; Within the Ranks: The Working Environment of Women Within the SAPS* and lastly, *Women in Blue Speak Out: Proposals for Reform and Recognition in Policing.* Each of these themes represents distinct thoughts and experiences of policewomen, as per the aim of this study. Therefore, this chapter aims to discuss the themes laid out in Chapter 5 by comparing them with the literature and interpreting the results. Furthermore, this chapter will conclude by answering each of the research sub-questions posed in Chapter 1.

6.1 Blue Code of Silence: When Policewomen Choose Not to Speak (Too)

The level of silence and refusal to participate in this study from policewomen was not expected, hence there is no reference to the blue code of silence in the literature. As presented in Section 5.2, the findings have shown that policewomen participate in the blue code of silence, challenging the traditional narrative that argues it is prevalent in policemen. Furthermore, the results indicate that policewomen participate in the camaraderie that is 'brotherhood' and are active participants in the 'us versus them' ideology that is embedded in police culture (Silvestri, 2017: 293). However, in this case, the public is the 'them' while the 'us' is the entire SAPS as an organisation. A revelation is that even though policewomen are active participants in this silence, it negatively harms them and silences their experiences with the organisation. Regarding the administrator's and human resources' unwillingness to share information or grant access to policewomen, it reflected potential institutional pressure to maintain the police station's 'favourable' reputation and safeguard it from negative publicity. The administrator's statement about being cautious and not wanting any 'bad' information demonstrates a perceived need for caution. Additionally, the new policewomen may feel compelled to safeguard the reputation of their station and colleagues as well, even if it means hiding important information. The strategic pausing, giving brief responses, or skipping questions during interviews may show a lack of trust towards me as the researcher, they may be concerned about my motives, how the data would be used, or whether it would become public knowledge within the station.

The blue code of silence allows sexual harassment, bullying in the workplace, and violence among the police (Walker, 2023). Sexual advances were reported as one of the negative experiences the policewomen faced in their stations in Section 5.5, and as reported, the participants opted to handle these cases on their own without reporting the incident to superiors. Therefore, what the data suggests is that even though policewomen uphold the blue code of silence, they uphold it for different reasons compared to their male counterparts – it is not for bullying or exerting power over their colleagues, but rather to protect themselves from being (further) shunned, bullied and shamed for speaking out and using their voices. Olivia's response, encapsulated in her reluctance to report incidents of sexual harassment to her superior, exemplifies this nuanced adherence to silence: '*Don't take it far, open a docket, and all those things. No. It's too emotionally draining. So, for me, yes, I have but I remove myself from the situation*.' This response serves as an indicator of why policewomen maintain silence even when faced with grave misconduct, pointing to the emotional toll and self-preservation instincts that underlie why policewomen participate in the Blue Code of Silence. This response can be also attributed to Warren and James' (1996:3) argument that police culture provides a form of rationalisation for deviance by the police as rule-breaking has become acceptable and necessary. One of the suggestions of the data is that police culture may have socialised the incoming police officers with the informal values and norms of the organisation, thus, protecting the wrongdoings of other police officers under the guise of loyalty (Warren & James, 1996: 3).

6.2 Why Women Police: The Works of Policewomen in the Cape Metropolitan Area

Section 3.2.3 shows that social scientists such as Garcia (2003:1) have deemed policing to be gendered, while Acker (2002) emphasised that policing is characterised by how its policies, practices, and ideologies align with distinctions between genders. Twenty years after the publication of those articles, these arguments contrast with the findings. While my findings do not argue against policing being a gendered institute, it shows that even in the reality of gendered differences, policewomen are passionate about policing, they perceive themselves as capable beings in policing and they are driven by their desire to create a safer South Africa. When the participants were asked about their reasons for joining the SAPS, they expressed their initial interest in law and criminal justice, emphasising a strong and enduring commitment to policing.

Although policewomen were prohibited from serving on active duty during Apartheid (Marks, 2008: 647), and were limited to engaging in stereotypical 'feminine' roles, the participants

report a positive change in gender equality throughout the SAPS. Their self-perception as police officers dedicated to enacting positive change in South Africa reflects the growth the SAPS has shown as a policing organisation in the country. Participants like Miami and Tokyo emphasised their confidence and commitment to their positions by expressing pride in being policewomen. On the other hand, Olivia acknowledged the risks involved in being identified as a police officer which gave the identity of being a policewoman in the SAPS a more complex dimension. This response aligns with Sing and Kham's (2020:6) argument that women police officers experience discrimination against their abilities as the participants shared similar experiences. Regarding gender perception, the participants affirm that they are strong, capable members of the police force. In particular, Fezeka challenges stereotypes and demands that the strength of women in policing be acknowledged, this is reflected in her entire interview as she consistently emphasised how passionate she is about her job as well as her quality work in the community she serves. All the participants showed satisfaction in their roles as policewomen; they acknowledged the difficulties but placed special emphasis on the personal fulfilment that comes with following their chosen professional path. This demonstrates a paradigm shift in which women in policing are actively redefining their identities inside the field rather than being constrained only by historical ideals of policing. The findings of this study align with the Chu and Abdulla (2014) study in Dubai that was examining the self-efficacy beliefs and preferred gender roles of policewomen. Policewomen in the SAPS, similarly to policewomen in Dubai, still believe they are equipped for policing even though myths about women in policing exist and that policewomen are discriminated against.

In addition, the concept of 'Superwomen' comes to light as participants discuss the advantages of being a woman in policing. Rabe-Hemp (2009: 115) wrote about how policing culture institutes the notion that women possess only distinct, feminine skills. However, in the case of the participants, their femininity—which is seen as a 'softer' approach—is viewed as a benefit in some situations with the public. For example, Carol highlights the importance of women in addressing delicate issues such as gender-based violence with compassion and understanding, which contrasts with the normative 'tough and rough' policing approach. In another case, Mariah also shared the same opinion, recounting stories of people asking for help from her as a policewoman because they think they can relate to them. Additionally, Britney's conscious choice of not being aggressive as she was taught (and is continuously told by her colleagues) but rather gentler in her approach further shows that policewomen's 'gentler' approaches to policing are needed in policing as they yield positive results. Furthermore, the research

indicates that a more compassionate and safe policing atmosphere is produced by valuing diversity, challenging conventional beliefs, and highlighting the essential contributions of women.

Olivia's efforts in her work demonstrate a twofold commitment to excellence and a strong work ethic. This commitment to quality not only indicates professionalism but also instils a sense of personal pride and ownership policing. Additionally, Olivia presents herself as a determined and courageous leader who is eager to take on challenges and overcome hurdles. Overall, Olivia's story, together with the collective perspectives of all participants, portrays a picture of dedicated and resilient professionals committed to upholding high standards, actively negotiating the complexity of policing, and fighting gender preconceptions in the field. They jointly fight the idea that women are timid or unable to deal with pressure and responsibilities because they demonstrate the desire to take on difficult duties and responsibilities, dispelling any preconceived assumptions about gender-based constraints in their roles.

6.3 Women in Policing: How to Be in The Boys' Locker-room

In Section 3.2.2(b) Fielding (1994: 47) outlined the stereotypical values associated with the form of masculinity that exists in police culture, suggesting that it can be viewed as a nearly pure representation of hegemonic masculinity. This includes (i) vigorous physical engagement, (ii) a distinct sense of competition and a preoccupation with conflict-related imagery, (iii) an overly heterosexual orientation often manifested through misogynistic and patriarchal attitudes towards women, and (iv) the establishment of rigid boundaries between 'inner circles and external circles,' leading to the exclusion of the 'external circle' and the promotion of loyalty and closeness among insiders (Silvestri, 2017: 293). The participants openly discussed the challenges they have faced navigating police culture and masculinity, highlighting the necessity of projecting a strong, resilient persona to succeed in the environment of policing. The reason policewomen in SAPS project a strong persona may be to mirror the machoism in the workplace to shield themselves from harmful experiences. For instance, while participants acknowledged that their line of work involves intrinsic stress, one interesting finding is that they prefer to rather internalise their issues and avoid seeking support from SAPS programs, such as Employee Health and Wellness (EHW).

One of the participants, Miami, stood out for her take on self-reliance in the SAPS as an organisation, which emphasised the idea that people should become their own advocates. The idea of depending on oneself instead of making use of the resources that are offered indicates

the generalised feeling of doubt or mistrust toward the SAPS. The comment, '*In SAPS, you don't trust anyone'* conveys this sentiment and raises the possibility of a larger problem with mistrust within the organisational structure of the SAPS. This was noted by Kingshott and Prinsloo (2004: 6) as they argued that police culture can create a negative space, creating anti-social elements such as social prejudice, misogyny, bullying, religious bigotry, lack of trust, and discrimination. The responses on coping strategies reveal a resistance to using EHW services. For example, Olivia's doubts about the value of EHW, aside from dire circumstances such as a shooting or great financial hardships, highlight the belief that these services are not commonly used for regular stressors related to the job. Olivia and other participants, on the other hand, favour a more private and customised approach to mental health and well-being not linked to the SAPS by choosing to handle personal issues on their own or seek help from outside experts.

Participants underlined the need for resilience and strength, emphasising the difficult nature of survival in the policing business. Both Carol and Thumeka emphasised how important it is to have 'thick skin' in a field that is dominated by men and where being sensitive is seen as a weakness. Thumeka's claim that to prevent getting trampled, one must establish a strong presence immediately indicates the deeply embedded culture of machoism, violence, and aggression in policing. Because police culture places a large emphasis on machismo, physical strength, and aggression, it has become an unspoken model of 'policing' that preserves the space for men only, excluding femininity entirely (Silvestri, 2017: 9). One compelling finding is that the participants confessed to feeling excluded by their male counterparts because of how they communicated their emotions. This aligns with what Heidensohn (1992: 73) contented, which was that force and physicality are deemed natural for men, thereby differentiating masculinity from femininity. Fezeka's admission that she was called a coward because she cries easily when she is upset brings to light the prejudices and gendered expectations that still exist in policing. Although Thumeka's (and all policewomen's) resiliency is admirable, it raises questions regarding the emotional cost of holding in authentic reactions and adhering to strict standards that are set by police culture.

6.4 Behind the Badge: Policewomen's Struggles in the Cape Metropolitan Area

The data revealed various challenges faced by policewomen in the Cape Metropolitan Area, and these findings are consistent with Singh and Khan's argument (2020: 6). These challenges encompass the impact of culture and tradition on policing, unfair treatment from male colleagues, the perception of policewomen as inferior, lack of support from superiors, incidents

of sexual violation, and a lack of recognition or progress for policewomen within SAPS. All these issues align with Singh and Khan's (2020: 6) assertion that women police officers encounter discrimination regarding their abilities. The findings also align with Potgieter's (2012: 9) reported instances of gender biases including sexual harassment, differential treatment of women officers, a perception of women as weaker colleagues by their male counterparts, exclusion from specific training courses, and a lack of recognition and transformative initiatives at the grassroots level within police organisations.

The Effect of Culture/Tradition on Women in Policing

The participants revealed the influence of cultural norms on their interactions with the community. Men in the community often treat policewomen disrespectfully because of traditional ideas about gender roles. Policewomen, Carol and Fezeka, related stories of situations in which male community members avoided speaking with them directly during arrests or interventions because of cultural norms, instead choosing to interact with their male colleagues. Angehrn et al.'s (2021: 11) findings on their study showed that policewomen, given their positionality, must manage societal expectations of the traditional gender norms, roles and stereotypes all while being police officers which requires emotional labour their male counterparts do not have to labour. Similarly, the data revealed that cultural norms and traditional gender roles play a part in the contempt that men (in the community and colleagues) show towards policewomen, highlighting the larger societal ideologies and challenges that have an impact on policewomen's careers. This mirrors the severe difficulties policewomen in SAPS have in finding and maintaining their identities in SAPS due to all the external societal pressures and assumptions.

Unfair Treatment from Male Colleagues

During the interviews, policewomen voiced their displeasure with their male coworkers' unequal treatment. The story of unequal treatment by male coworkers exposes gender stereotypes that are strongly embedded in the police service. Policewomen struggle with the perception that they are weaker or less capable, which has an impact on their relationships with other professionals. Within policing, Angehrn et al (2021: 16) argued that policewomen may experience emotional labour due to the kind of tasks they are stereotypically assigned, such as providing support to victims, and the ongoing effort to navigate gender-related expectations and stereotypes. In addition to policewomen having to manage their emotions in this type of intense career, they are often themselves engaging in further emotional labour with their

colleagues, either formally or informally, because it confirms to the contemporary gender norms of women being 'caregivers' (Angehrn et al, 2021: 16). While the participants of this study did not go into detail about the type of tasks they are assigned and whether they are perceived as caregivers, Tokyo brought attention to the problem of gender stereotypes that make the community, and her colleagues look down on her and being perceived as untrustworthy. The data showed that the belief that women are 'weaker 'or less capable than males permeate the workplace, harming the professional relationships of policewomen and fostering an environment of inequality. Because of this disparity in the workplace, policewomen are forced to overcome prejudices that limit their potential and continuously prove themselves.

Seen as Inferior

Participants shared stories of encounters with being perceived as less capable than their male coworkers, which challenged cooperative efforts in the workplace. A hostile environment is created when women are perceived as not being strong enough or capable of handling particular conditions. The participants' stories of being despised and called lazy serve as a reflection of the structural obstacles that prevent women from advancing in a field that is dominated by men. These findings reflect what is in literature as Deans (2017:45) found that male officers, amongst other things, fear that policewomen are not strong enough to survive physical confrontations, often excluding policewomen from 'hard body' operations (Deans, 2017: 45). Therefore, these prejudices affect policewomen as well as contribute to an overall culture of inequality within the SAPS.

No Support

Many participants expressed a lack of support for policewomen within the SAPS. The need for more awareness regarding available support services, as mentioned by Rita and Thumeka, underscores a communication gap within the organisation. This lack of support may contribute to feelings of isolation and hinder the overall well-being of policewomen. It can be speculated that the reason why there is lack of support / the support is not known by policewomen is because of the type of culture that exists in policing. Kingshott and Prinsloo (2004: 6) noted that police culture can create a negative and antisocial environment. Institutional culture that is not inclusive, transparent and supportive has the potential to breed negative outcomes. The Women Network Programmes, briefly mentioned in Section 1.1, appears to need to be more

utilised or known among the participants, suggesting a need for improved communication, awareness and organisational culture.

Sexual advances

There was admission of sexual harassment in the workplace, however, participants provided minimal data Olivia's hesitation to openly share instances of sexual harassment reflects the prevalence of such situations and the discomfort associated with the subject. Furthermore, her hesitancy may reflect a pervasive culture of silence or fear around the issue of sexual harassment, underlining the need for a more comprehensive and open environment in which people may come forward about their experiences. Phillips (2011: 54) argued that culture within the police force encompasses how officers justify their actions and their perspectives on their duties and colleagues with the organisation. Thus, the hesitancy could have been due to fears about potential repercussions, a lack of trust in the reporting processes, or a larger organisational culture that does not adequately address harassment issues. It also highlights the importance of a more comprehensive approach to addressing and preventing sexual harassment inside the SAPS.

Lack of Acknowledgment and Progress for Women

Participants expressed discontent with the lack of recognition and advancement for women in policing. According to Martin and Barnard (2013 cited in Khosa, 2019: 40), the underrepresentation of women in the SAPS is a recurring trend that leads to policewomen being oppressed by organisations. This is present in the data as Candy and Rita stressed the lack of recognition and opportunity for promotion. The perceived stagnation of women's careers within the SAPS, combined with the lack of female station commanders, underscores deeper systemic challenges that impede gender equality and professional advancement. Participants' reports of a lack of recognition and possibilities for promotion point to a systematic issue that may contribute to the stalling of women's careers within the SAPS.

This theme presents a portrait of the gender-specific problems experienced by Cape Metropolitan Area policewomen. These issues transcend beyond professional responsibilities to include cultural, institutional, and interpersonal factors such as patriarchy and misogyny. The findings show that organisational transformation, cultural sensitivity training, and the building of strong support mechanisms are required. Addressing these concerns is critical not just for the well-being and advancement of policewomen, but also for developing a more inclusive, equal, and successful police force.

6.5 Within the Ranks: The Working Environment of Women Within the SAPS

The participants clearly describe three unique aspects of their working environment inside the South African Police Service (SAPS). These components shed light on the difficulties that policewomen experience in the line of duty.

Public Display of Disrespect, Racism, and Sexism

Mark (2008: 647) asserted that for decades, the understanding of police culture in South Africa has been infused with racist and sexist prejudice because the police in South Africa carry a historical legacy of white Afrikaner male dominance. According to the data, the intersection of gender and race provides difficult challenges for policewomen as they deal with public disapproval, racism, and sexism. The participants illustrate the complexities of gaining community trust, where preconceived assumptions about the competence of policewomen based on gender and race lead to a lack of cooperation from the public. This intersectionality complicates how they work by needing a complex approach to community interactions that considers both gender and racial dynamics.

High Levels of Stress and Trauma

The demanding and high-stakes nature of police employment exposes policewomen to tremendous stress and trauma, as detailed in Section 5.4. The emotional toll is apparent, including incidents such as fatal car chases that leave lasting impression on the psyche of policewomen. However, the data showed that many policewomen are unwilling to use existing support services, such as Employee Health and Wellness (EHW). Given this, it raises concerns about the effectiveness of SAPS's current mental health support system. Many policewomen shared that they prefer to find their own coping mechanism and systems of relief. The reliance of policewomen on personal coping techniques underlines the importance of enhanced mental health resources and a more supportive organisational structure.

Challenges in Adapting to the Job and Achieving Work-Life

In the 1990s, McLaughlin (1996: 77 cited in 1996:77 cited in Bezuidenhout & Theron, 2000: 19), wrote although women police officers have proven to be efficient (in modern policing), the police force continued to be an organisation where the belief persists that only men should be primary earners and that women should not have jobs that detract them from their families. The recurring subject of integrating police work duties with personal commitments underlines the initial difficulties policewomen encounter in adjusting to their roles as policewomen as well

as fulfilling the archaic societal responsibilities of caring for their families. The learning curve in dealing with a variety of circumstances is evident and the restricted family responsibility lease days appear as a key impediment to maintaining a suitable work-life balance. The difficulty of policewomen to fulfil their professional and personal responsibilities highlights the need for more flexible family responsibility regulations that acknowledge the various roles they play outside of the workplace. Additionally, it speaks to the demands that exist in society on women. The data has shown that the varied obstacles that policewomen encounter in the SAPS workplace have far-reaching consequences.

6.6 Women in Blue Speak Out: Proposals for Reform and Recognition in Policing

The viewpoints and experiences of policewomen in SAPS that were shared during the interviews highlight the critical need for systemic changes. The participants' thoughts shed light on crucial areas that require attention within SAPS, ranging from worries regarding uniform designs to safety issues and proactive actions such as workshops. The underlying topic of recognition runs as a common thread, showing a collective desire for an open and powerful workplace where the efforts of policewomen are not only honoured but also highly celebrated.

Changing Uniform

An aspect highlighted by the participants was the discomfort they experience with the current uniform design, particularly the pants designed for men. The fact that policewomen do not have pants that are designed for the body type of women can be attributed to the depths of gender roles in policing that run deep, as women were forced to subscribe to the traditional ideas of femininity and behaviour; by being 'feminine' and wearing skirts (Marks, 2008: 647). This suggests that this ideal exists in the underlying structure of the SAPS. The desire for a uniform redesign that provides better coverage and eliminates discomfort emphasises the importance of addressing practical concerns related to attire, ensuring that policewomen feel comfortable, respected, and like they belong.

Safety

Safety surfaced as a major worry for policewomen, especially considering community perceptions and the lack of transportation assistance. The dread and scrutiny that policewomen endure in their communities highlight the need for SAPS to consider and prioritise the safety of its policewomen, both in terms of public perception and logistical support.

Workshops for Cultural Transformation

Workshops were suggested as a proactive measure to transform the workplace culture and reshape perceptions of women in policing. The call for workshops, not only for women but also for males, demonstrates a commitment to fostering understanding and collaboration between genders. The emphasis on the need for frequent and consistent workshops highlights the participants' recognition of the fluid and evolving nature of organisational dynamics within SAPS.

Recognition of Policewomen

The comments of the participants reflected a great yearning for genuine equal acknowledgement. This recognition goes beyond recognising and tackling the specific issues that policewomen confront in their careers. The demand for equal recognition as contributions to the organisation highlights the need for a cultural shift within SAPS in which policewomen are appreciated not only for their accomplishments but also for their resilience and passion for service. Here, the participants emphasised the essence of equality in recognition.

6.7 In Summary: Answering the Research Question(s)

6.7.1 What experiences do women police encounter in the SAPS?

The experiences policewomen encounter varies and can be categorised into two. The first one is their experiences with the public. What the data has shown is that policewomen have difficult experiences with the communities they serve in. Culture and tradition negatively impact how the men in communities engage with policewomen, as they refuse to be assisted by women. Policewomen experience multiple versions of this interaction as the participants have shared that some members of the public (both men and women) do not trust that as women, they are competent. The second experience is the disrespect they experience at work from their colleagues. The participants shared that their male counterparts are often condescending, doubtful of their capabilities, and subject policewomen to the aggressive and macho police culture that exists in policing.

6.7.2 How do policewomen think of themselves and their identity in the SAPS?

The policewomen perceive themselves in an overwhelmingly positive light, harbouring a deep passion for both serving their country and engaging in the responsibilities of their work. Despite encountering adverse experiences, they do not consider themselves incapable of achieving success in the field of policing. Policewomen in the SAPS see themselves as resilient

professionals navigating a complex identity defined by gender and race intersectionality. They underscore the importance of being recognised not only for their accomplishments but also for the specific challenges they encounter. The battle for recognition as equal contributors is highlighted, indicating a desire in a male-dominated environment to be acknowledged for their ability and dedication. Concerns regarding the uniform, especially its discomfort and inappropriate design for women, highlight practical factors that influence their identity. Safety concerns, impacted by community attitudes and the loss of support, lead to a complex identity dynamic. Policewomen advocate for cultural reform through workshops, demonstrating a proactive approach to modifying organisational views and encouraging gender awareness.

6.7.3 How have policewomen in the SAPS experienced transformation and reform with the SAPS?

The experiences of SAPS policewomen in terms of reform and reform appear to be marked by continuous problems and a perceived lack of significant progress. Despite the passing of time, participants express a sense of continuity in gender-based concerns such as unequal recognition, poorer treatment by male coworkers, and professional advancement constraints. The requirement for seminars and cultural transformation demonstrates an awareness of current gaps and a desire for proactive measures. However, the apparent transience of implemented improvements, as well as the fluid character of organisational dynamics inside the SAPS, add to policewomen's discontent and distrust. The call for fundamental norm reprogramming highlights the need for more significant and long-term transformation efforts to address deeply underlying challenges and establish an environment that recognises and supports policewomen.

Overall, to answer the main research question, '*What does it mean to be a policewoman in the SAPS?*' requires some nuance. Therefore, being a policewoman in the SAPS means fighting daily to assert oneself and demonstrating resilience in the face of adversities such as mistreatment from colleagues, the public, and superiors. It means taking pride in being a woman in a predominantly male space, leading by example for other women entering this environment. A policewoman must constantly be mindful of her actions, the information shared, and how she is perceived, necessitating the projection of strength to avoid offense or workplace bullying. Overall, the experience of being a woman in the SAPS defies a straightforward narrative, lacking a clear formula. It involves grappling with numerous challenges at the intersection of multiple identities, requiring adaptability—sometimes being soft, sometimes tough, sometimes caring deeply, and at other times, adopting an indifferent stance. The complexity of this role is met with hope and pride among the participants, who find

fulfilment and pride in their work. In essence, being a woman in the SAPS means embracing one's identity with pride and navigating the intricate nuances of policing.

Conclusively, this research reveals a rich and multifaceted portrayal of policewomen's experiences in the South African Police Service (SAPS) in the Cape Metropolitan Area. It defies stereotypes by demonstrating policewomen's active participation in the Blue Code of Silence, underlining the harmful impact on their well-being, particularly in cases of sexual harassment. Despite historical obstacles, the study demonstrates a paradigm shift in which policewomen actively redefine their identities in policing, providing distinctive qualities. The study highlights widespread issues, ranging from cultural and gender biases to a lack of acknowledgment and assistance inside the SAPS. The working environment of policewomen is highlighted, emphasising the interconnectedness of gender and race, high-stress levels, and challenges with work-life balance. The following chapter, Chapter 7, concludes the study by summarising this dissertation as well as offering recommendations for further research.

Chapter 7 - Conclusion and Recommendations

While this study exclusively focused on police stations in the Cape Metropolitan area, it effectively demonstrated how policewomen experience working in a male-dominated industry. The research delved into their perceptions of themselves as women in this environment and examined how they are perceived by both colleagues and the communities they serve. The study's findings highlighted numerous challenges faced by policewomen and shed light on their overall workplace experiences. By using intersectional theory, the study comprehensively considered the diverse challenges and positional ties that policewomen encounter, encompassing aspects of race, culture, and gender. By allowing policewomen to articulate their perspectives, the study provided valuable insights into the functioning of the SAPS as an organisation. However, exploring the perspectives of policewomen in policing does not end here. Moving forward, adopting an alternative methodology for research could yield more substantial results compared to employing different interviewing methods. Ethnography, for instance, has the potential to unveil information that participants may have hesitated to disclose. If researchers, particularly those with a role as reservists, spend a significant amount of time with police officers at work and in the field, a richer dataset and deeper analysis of their experiences may emerge. Ethnography offers the opportunity to uncover hidden aspects within the SAPS. Focus groups would also yield more results as policewomen might be more comfortable sharing their experiences with other policewomen. In conclusion, the recommendations provided by the interviewed policewomen are crucial considerations for future improvements within the SAPS. Implementing these suggestions not only enhances the services of the organisation but also contributes to fostering gender equality within the police force.

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