Women, Leadership and Policing: Negotiating and Navigating Gendered Experiences

by

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MA, Simon Fraser University, 2004
BA, Simon Fraser University, 1997

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the lived experiences of 21 women police officers in southern British Columbia and their gendered experiences from recruitment through promotion to positions of leadership. The research is grounded in feminist theory and employed a qualitative approach which included individual interviews. The questions that guided my study were: How are women changing policing? And how is policing changing women?

Findings show that despite advances, this group of women in policing in BC continues to need to navigate what remains a hyper masculinized environment mired in hierarchies of power and authority. My participants experienced sexism and harassment in a number of ways, although some suggested it was better than before. Many experienced having to prove their value and worth on a continual basis and transforming themselves to fit into the normative policing culture. Although many are in leadership positions, promotion and acceptance remain difficult. Women who choose to have children are considered to be less committed to their career because the ladder upward has no rungs for a more committed homelife. However, my participants also spoke with pride in doing things differently and the importance of what they were bringing to policing such as being more collaborative and communicative than their male colleagues. Many had made it to positions of seniority despite the obstacles along their path.

In the face of these continuing barriers, I conclude this thesis with several recommendations that I believe, as an educator working in the criminal justice sector, could help to change the culture of policing to address structural practices of gender discrimination.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Chapter One

Introduction

The focus of my study is on policing in British Columbia and particularly, on women and policing. I have worked and taught in the Canadian criminal justice system for many years and this system was neither created *by* women nor was it created *for* women. Our current Canadian system is in fact modeled on the London Metropolitan Police and English Common Law, created by men for the purpose of protecting private property which included women and children, and maintaining 'social order' that serves for the most part, white privileged male interests. Women began to enter policing in the early 1900s however only to perform a small set of jobs such as patrolling dance halls and working with women in the sex trade (Reilly-Schmidt, 2016). Marcoux et al. (2016) found that despite efforts by policing agencies to prioritize attracting women and other diversity groups, justice services across Canada still do not reflect the communities they serve. Although women's participation in policing has increased, it has stalled at a national average of 23% and few are being promoted to senior leadership positions, many of the reasons I will highlight through this study.

There is relatively little feminist research on current policing (e.g., Rabe-Hemp & Miller, 2018; Workman-Stark, 2017; Reilly-Schmidt, 2015; Corsianos, 2009). Studies that do exist however, suggest that despite the inclusion of women, policing narratives and practices continue to be mired in hegemonic masculinities making it one of the most highly masculinized occupations (Workman-Stark, 2107; Barberet, 2014; Corsianos, 2009). In other words, policing has been an institution of masculine oppression and control that mirrors the broader social,

political and economic oppressions faced by women as well as Black and Indigenous and people of colour (BIPOC) and the gender-nonconforming (Comack, 2012; Rabe-Hemp, 2009; Garcia, 2003). Amongst other challenges, systems of oppression create and maintain in-group/out-group boundaries and questioning these boundaries is often dismissed by those in power (e.g., Rabe-Hemp, 2009). Policing agencies in Canada have begun to face criticism because they do not reflect the diversity of the communities they serve and we need to know more from those on the inside – the women in the service specifically – about why that might be (Marcoux et al., 2016; Barberet, 2014; Schulz, 2004).

One thing that literature shows is that the environment of policing is maintained through bureaucratic, hierarchal structures of authority, power, and 'truth' that "reproduce the status quo by neutralizing the effects of diversity, reinforcing inequalities, and fostering an environment that is less positive for (and sometimes hostile to) women." (Huff & Todak, 2022, p. 2). Over the decades, it would seem that women in policing have had to navigate this structure and mould themselves to fit. As evidenced by the low numbers of women in administrative and leadership roles, existing cultural and structural blockages keep them from attaining promotion into such roles (e.g., Morabito & Shelley, 2018; Rabe-Hemp, 2008; Silvestri, 2000). If this were not evidence enough, the charges being brought by women against police services across the country should be ample indication that something is very, very wrong (Lindsay, 2023; Merlo, 2013; Hall, 2007; Benson-Podolchuk, 2007).

I, along with feminist scholars Huff & Todak (2022), Murray (2021), Brown & Silvestri (2020), and Rabe-Hemp & Miller (2018), believe however, that it is critical that we place greater attention on this hyper masculinized and gendered environment, and the impact it has on women in policing, the institution of policing, and the broader communities who interact with police.

While all these dynamics require further research, my study is focused on women's leadership in policing, how women experience the gendered institution of policing, and the factors that enable and constrain women's leadership in policing. As my study shows, it is complicated.

I researched how a group of 21 women police officers, some young and some in leadership positions, understood the masculinities at play within the police service, and how they navigated these both within and beyond policing structures, specifically their personal lives. In addition, my study asked: Are women simply finding their way in the system or are they in fact making change? It is not enough to navigate the power structures; what is needed is to render them visible and offer new models of policing that can help to effect real internal, and perhaps even external, change although that is beyond the scope of this thesis. My study questions are important because the literature is all but silent. How women are transforming (and being transformed by) the practice of policing is under-studied and therefore, we lack knowledge about this important segment of the justice system which is so much a part of our news media daily. There are also few studies on women's leadership in the police service firstly because few women make it to 'the top' and secondly, because leadership is often reduced to being a position, rather than a process or practice of working for change no matter where you stand in an organisation. My study aimed to address these gaps by taking a feminist approach to explore the lived experiences of women working in policing, how they were navigating the hegemonic masculine norms in policing, and how they understand and enacted their experiences of leadership as a process of change.

How did I get here? The study in context

As this is a feminist study, it is important to begin with who I am and how I came to this topic, my relationship and place in this world of criminal justice broadly and policing more specifically.

I have spent more than 25 years working, studying and teaching in the area of criminal justice in British Columbia, Canada. I have worked with victims of crime as well as those incarcerated or under sentence. For more than a decade I have been teaching in the Criminal Justice Program at Camosun College; working with students to develop their critical lens as they approach careers in the field. My long-time experience in criminal justice has allowed me to see and experience dynamics of the justice landscape in Canada, more specifically British Columbia, that both intrigue and concern me. I am intrigued by the potential opportunities for improvement which occur both at the micro-level and the macro-level. I always tell my students that working in any area of the justice system requires optimism. Optimism is required because one needs to not only understand how and why people get caught up in the system, but also how they can make different 'choices' – although not everyone has the same access or has made these 'choices' themselves as adult education reminds us - to no-longer offend and therefore get caught in the system. This is the micro level approach, and at this individual level we can believe in the ability of individuals to make better choices for themselves to eschew the justice system in favour of living a pro-social lifestyle. At the macro level, we need to see where the opportunities for improvement lie, expose the oppressions, gaps and problems inherent in the system itself – which has an impact on who is seen to offend and how they are treated (e.g. Indigenous or Black or female) - and work towards systemic improvements which involves seeing inbuilt structural inequalities of discrimination, sexism, racism, ableism and the like. Like other organizations and

bureaucracies, the field of criminal justice is a complex multi-faceted system imbued with longstanding and evolving power structures, negotiations of power, and resistances. The many areas of Canadian criminal justice, including the areas of law, community and institutional corrections, and the courts require further study; however, for my research I will be focusing on the area of policing, specifically women in policing.

It has been only 50 years since women were permitted to train and work as sworn police officers in Canada. Navigating the hyper masculinized world of policing is something that only a small number of women have done. As noted, women make up only 23% (Statistics Canada, 2022) of all police officers across Canada. The slow and reluctant inclusion of women to police services stems from patriarchal systems of power and the pervasive dominance of hegemonic masculinities which is the foundational narrative of policing (Bikos, 2016; Cordner & Cordner, 2011; Corsianos, 2009). In 2023, women police officers continue to navigate this highly masculinized policing environment, as my study shows. My interest too, as noted above, is in exploring how women police officers enact leadership within the power structures of policing. Arriving at this topic as the focus of my research and dissertation has not been a linear pathway. Rather it has been an evolving praxis marked by both my learning to situate my privilege and use anti-oppressive practices to resist dominant ideologies including hegemonic masculinities. As a white, cisgender, heterosexual, temporarily able-bodied, immigrant woman with access to post-secondary education, I recognize that my experience of the world is through these lenses. Like many other women working in the field of criminal justice, I have experienced what Fricker (2007) calls epistemic and testimonial injustices. Epistemic injustice is a result of groups of people, such as women, being wronged in their capacities as 'knowers' and they are excluded from the production of knowledge as well as knowing things that would be in their interests to

know. Testimonial injustice is when what an individual (or group) says is belittled, ignored or dismissed. Fricker (2007, p. 27) notes,

> testimonial injustices that are connected, via a common prejudice, with other types of injustice, might appropriately be termed systemic. Systemic testimonial injustices, then are produced not by prejudice simpliciter, but specifically by those prejudices that track the subject through different dimensions of social activity – economic, educational, professional, sexual, legal, political, religious, and so on.

She goes on to say, "if, for instance, the practical context in which the injustices occur is that of a project, professional or otherwise, which is crucial to the person's life being worth living, then the accumulation of the incidental injustices may ruin their life." (p. 29). While this exclusion of words and voices is constant and debilitating enough, I have also experienced sexual harassment, its own insidious form of 'injustice'.

At age 24, in my last year of my undergraduate work at Simon Fraser University (SFU) I took several classes with a particular male professor who seemed to be impressed with my writing. He suggested my last paper for his class be published, with some additional work. I was overjoyed thinking of being published as an undergraduate – surely this would make getting accepted to graduate school much easier. After an iterative process of meeting two or three times per month for six months I was feeling anxious and wanted to move forward with the submission. It was at that point that the professor, a man in his sixties, sexually propositioned me in a very meticulous and calculated way. He had clearly been thinking it through for some time, and my sense was, although I have no proof which is one of the problems women face in bringing this behaviour to light, that this was not his first time grooming and propositioning a student.

My world fell apart. It became clear that I had been played. I was not the bright shining academic superstar that he told me I was – he just wanted me to be his lover. I was devastated. As with most victims, I felt embarrassed and ashamed; I tried to figure out if I had said or done something during our work together to lead him on as a common response is for women to blame themselves when they feel devalued (Vickery & Everbach, 2018). However, I soon realized this was not my fault and I felt cheated and angry. I met with the university Ombudsman and told him of my experience thinking that he would see the utter inappropriateness of what had just gone on, the fact that this was blatant sexual harassment and that he would intercede. His only response was to tell me that both me and my professor were consenting adults and hence not his concern. I decided to apply to graduate school anyway, knowing that if I had slept with this professor, he probably would have ensured my acceptance, although his support would not be a guarantee. However, his conditions I would not accept.

Once I was done being angry (it took several months) I went to the professor's office and told him I was applying to graduate school and was requesting a letter of reference from him. I told him that, despite normal protocol, I would need to be able to read the letter before it was sent along. I did not wish to give him the opportunity to destroy my chances of acceptance with a poor reference in the event he was angry that I would not engage in a sexual relationship with him. A week later, I picked up my letter. It was accurate as to my work as a student and academic standing. I applied to graduate schools and received several letters of acceptance. It was 1998 and I was going to graduate school.

This experience highlighted for me the difficulties women have navigating highly masculinized power structures and the fortitude required to manage through. I feel grateful that the outcome was positive for me as I was able to get accepted into graduate school based on my

academic achievements, however, it is easy to understand how an experience like this could also destroy a person's sense of self and significantly alter their career or academic trajectory to the negative. This experience is one of several that lead me to realize that women are constantly navigating and resisting power structures of institutions created by men for men.

A Feminist Approach

While my experience above is not from the realm of policing, it up buoyed my consciousness, my determination to make change, and to take on the responsibility to act and create a more gender just world by engaging in a feminist praxis; praxis being what Freire (1972) called "reflection and action directed at the structures to be transformed" (p. 52). Contributing to the transformation of the deeply rooted masculine structures of policing was a key rational behind this research because it seems unbelievable that in 2023, we continue to have institutions such as policing that are not already gender balanced. Having said this, Vintges (2017) does remind us that, "-the millennia old status hierarchy between men/male and women/female persists…and patriarchal patterns of gender oppression remain more resilient than any of us suspected" (p. 165). Just how resilient they are in policing is central to this study.

My study is grounded in feminist theory, something that I see not as a singular entity, but rather as having diverse manifestations and understandings. As hooks (2015, p. 18), reminds us there is a lack of "consensus of opinion about what feminism is or accepted definition(s) that could serve as points of unification" yet despite this, feminist theory and research are both critical in the end goal of improving the lives of women by addressing and eliminating sexist and other forms of oppression (Letherby, 2003, p.4). There will always be challenges in feminism as feminists must contend with a complex patriarchal world. The importance of focusing on women's experiences through a feminist lens is best stated by Smith (2005) who, sees the world

as “embedded in patriarchy which involves the power to objectify persons and to displace other forms of knowledge, notably knowledge from experience” (p. 120). Knowers are powerful because they name, shape and mould the world; non-knowers, those who have been belittled, ignored or displaced, participate unequally in the shaping of meaning, organisational, cultural, and society (Clover, 2022). This is of course, as I noted above, the case with women in the police service. How are they functioning as ‘knowers’ and what are the implications for the future of the police service as a result?

As I have noted, critical to my study is how feminists such as Ahmed (2012) and Sangster (2021) position feminism as way of being and knowing that recognizes and works towards both the equality and equity of women. Feminism is the belief that all genders need to be seen as equal, but what feminists advocate for is not simple equality but rather a profound transformation of the patriarchal order of things. Although yet to be fully developed, hooks (2000) argues for the development of theory and praxis she calls ‘feminist masculinity’ in order to recognize that men are also oppressed and harmed by the system of patriarchy. As hooks (2000) notes, “Patriarchal masculinity teaches men that their sense of self and identity, their reason for being resides in their capacity to dominate others” (p. 70).

I chose a feminist approach because it locates women at the centre of inquiry and is concerned with what women, in all their diversity, want and need to survive and flourish in worlds seldom of their own making. I also chose a feminist approach to this study because it enabled me to question deeply and to challenge with the aim of altering “women’s subordination” (Sangster, 2021, p. 4). Specifically, taking a feminist approach in this research enables me to see how women articulate and navigate through the patriarchal system of policing,

factors that enable and constrain their leadership, and how they understand their impact on policing in terms of changing policing, or if policing has simply changed them.

A note on 'women'

While I use the term 'women' in this study, I do not see them as monolithic. Women are different in terms of age, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and so forth, and these differences have an impact on their work and their lives. Women also have different backgrounds, reasons for engaging in police work, and understandings of the gendered aspects of this work. As noted above, relatively few women work in policing in BC and what I found when I began to embark on this study is that those who do, are predominately white. In other words, there are therefore very few BIPOC and LGBTQ2+ identities, and this lack of diversity too needs further scholarly attention (Workman-Stark, 2017). My study was concerned with the lived experiences of women who are at this moment working in policing in BC and although a few of my participants self-identified as differing in ethnicities, sexual orientations, and (dis)abilities (see Chapter Three for full details), I found that all the participants, no matter their differences or even their leadership ranks in the service, experienced very similar struggles within the highly masculinized environment of policing. This may not always be the case, but from my study of women police officers at this time, my thesis shows that gender is the key factor when it comes to policing in this province.

Research Question and Objectives

The primary questions that guided this study were: How are women changing policing? And how is policing changing women? The objective was to explore how women police officers experienced the masculinized bureaucratic and institutional structures of power, how they worked with, conformed to, negotiated, challenged and/or overcame these. I was interested in

understanding why women police officers stay within this environment, how it might change them as well as how they attempt to disrupt the patriarchal rules of order of their chosen policing profession.

Sub questions that guided this study were:

1. How did participants understand (articulate) the masculine power structures of policing? How do they 'see' this?
2. How did they negotiate and navigate current policing structures of power in everyday experiences?
3. What do their acts of compliance and resistance look like?
4. How did the participants understand leadership in this context?
5. How did they enact leadership?
6. What are their biggest challenges and obstacles?
7. What factors enabled or constrained women's leadership?

Structure of this thesis

Chapter Two of this study provides a review of the studies that provided the background for my research. This chapter focuses on the research conducted in this area primarily in Canada, but also from the United Kingdom, United States, Australia, New Zealand, and several other countries.

In Chapter Three, I outline the feminist methodology and methods I used in doing this study to understand the lived experiences of women's leadership in policing. Chapter Four contains my findings from my study and in Chapter Five I discuss the implications of my findings for gender justice and women's participation in policing careers. The final chapter reviews the research, highlights areas of significance and provides some concluding thoughts.

Significance of the study

As a critical feminist criminologist and adult educator, I know there is still much work to be done but this study for me is a start and it makes some important preliminary contributions. Firstly, it adds to the literature on women in policing, knowledge that is lacking but critical to both understanding the current state of policing and to understand what needs to be done to change things in the future. Building on this, this study moves beyond examining the historical and current participation of women in policing to highlight how women navigate this highly masculinized environment, how they negotiate and resist within the bureaucracy of policing. We need to understand these women not simply as adapting to and victims of a system, but also as forces within for change, despite how difficult that role is to play. Thirdly, I bring attention in this study to leadership, not simply as rank, although that part is important, because so few women reach the higher ranks, but also leadership as a process of maintaining or challenging the status quo. My participants both challenge and obey, disrupt and comply. The world for women is complex as hooks (2015) reminds us. My feminist research provides 'empirical' qualitative evidence of a group of women's lived leadership experiences in the police service in British Columbia with the goal of using these findings towards positive changes in both policy and practice of recruitment and hiring as well as promotion of women police officers and what this would bring or change to make policing more representative and effective.

The effectiveness of policing has faced increasing challenges in light of police brutality and violence which spurred the Defund Police Movement. At this time, the credibility of policing is in question whilst simultaneously they are the frontline of public safety. Women are still only a small proportion of policing personnel and it remains unknown how police effectiveness could improve if women were equally represented in policing agencies. I will

therefore find ways to make this study useful to as many women in policing as possible but also to leaders, administrators and policy makers. Finally, this research adds to the literature of feminist research by including a relatively understudied area of policing and to epistemic and gender (in)justice discourses.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter situates my research within the broader context of academic literature on women in policing, and more specifically, women's leadership in policing. As noted in the introduction to this thesis, policing continues to be a highly masculinized occupation in Canada and elsewhere (Murray, 2021; Workman-Stark, 2107; Corsianos, 2009; Van der Lippe et al, 2004). Until recently, as this chapter illustrates, there was little scholarly attention paid to the problematic gendered environment of policing and the impact this has on women in policing, and their careers. With the evolution of the women's movements over the past 60 years however, more women began to enter the police service, and the gendered aspect of policing began to be explored. Interrogating highly masculinized occupations such as policing is critical and long overdue because women make up more than half of our population and all public agencies and organizations should reflect the face of their communities. To effect long-term change by improving the environment of policing, it is necessary to understand the ways in which women perform and negotiate the hierarchies of power assumptions within the police service.

I begin this chapter with an overview of how feminist researchers and theoreticians position masculine norms as entrenched in policing. I place a particular focus on 'epistemic injustice', as it has been used to undermine women's knowledge for centuries. From there, I turn to feminist studies of policing and the issues of valued traits, built in practices for self-preservation, and the slippery slope of 'merit'. Following this, I turn to studies that explore issues of work/life balance, parenting, as well as recruiting practices and training. I conclude with a discussion of the literature on women and leadership.

Institutionalized masculine norms

To understand the hierarchies of power within the police service and how they contribute to police practice and identity, it is necessary to begin by situating this study in how feminists have identified and describe the impact of masculine norms as embedded in all our institutions, cultural traditions and interpersonal relationships.

Although the United Nations (2019, p. 1) positions global gender inequality simply as "unfinished business", the 2021 Generation Equality Forum (2021) report describes this form of discrimination as the most enduring and "defining inequality of our time" (n/p). Worldwide, "the powers that be are still predominately male" (Vintges, 2017, p. 165) and they are still maintained through rigid (and policed) gendered notions of masculine and feminine. In many workplaces, the ideal worker is constructed as male, and particularly a white male (Williams & Dempsey, 2014). Those who fall outside this normative construct are seen as the feminine (Scott-Dixon, 2006). West and Zimmerman (1987) remind us that, "doing gender means creating differences between girls and boys and women and men, differences that are not natural, essential, or biological" (p. 137). In other words, masculinities and femininities are not neutral but rather, socially constructed in order to maintain a power base for men of superiority and privilege (Criado Perez, 2019; Ahmed, 2017; Kimmel & Holler, 2011; Scott-Dixon, 2006). Research on gender bias in the workplace has found that women are subject to higher standards than men as they must prove they are more competent in order to be perceived as being equally competent and they must do so on an ongoing basis. This is known as the 'prove it again' bias (Williams & Dempsey, 2014).

One of the masculine norms that shapes our world is what counts as knowledge and who is knowledgeable. For the most part, what men know counts and what women know does not

(Fricker, 2013). Fricker (2007) calls this 'epistemic injustice', the systemic wrongdoing of individuals and groups of women as 'knowers'. Epistemic injustice has for centuries enabled men to be seen and to practise as 'knowers', producing the knowledge that shapes social structures and organisations, such as policing. These same gendered delineations have relegated women as a group to the category of 'non-knower' meaning that at best, they participate unequally in the creation of knowledge, the producing of resources and the shaping and making of institutional practices (Fricker, 2007). Linked to epistemic injustice is testimonial injustice. Those who are positioned as knowledgeable are heard, their voices and ideas are listened to and what they say is taken seriously. Conversely, testimonial injustice is the discounting of what people say; their words are not taken. As an example of this in policing is a 20-month long study by the Globe and Mail investigative report of more than 870 policing agencies showed that one in five sexual assault 'claims' are taken as baseless, exposing "deep flaws at every step of the process" (Doolittle, 2017, n/p). Building on this, Brown et al. (2018) found that even senior women in policing continue to experience discriminatory treatment and feel that they struggle to have their authority accepted and their voices heard. Their study had 169 women respondents to a survey about the extent to which policing culture had changed. In the words of one participant who was Head of Department and had 21 years of service,

> We tinker at the edges but our culture values the notion of (we the) 'expert' and won't accept any challenge from outside the service…we often don't even accept a challenge from those non-officer experts who are employed within their professional capability if their advice doesn't match what the senior officers think or want.

These gendered norms and their corresponding injustices have an impact on women's sense of agency and the power they feel they have to make change in institutions or society.

Differences based on gender, and most particularly normative/izing of masculine and feminine, are enforced through multiple agents and practices of socialization including the nuclear family, schools, religious institutions, and the mass media to name but a few which transmit both consciously and unconsciously the gendered behaviours that are acceptable and reinforce those that are not (Ahmed, 2017; Vintges, 2017). Over the decades, women who have not behaved like 'women', particularly in masculinized structures such as policing, as I come to later, as well as others such as LGBTQ2+ individuals who have not conformed, are ostracized, abused, publicly ridiculed, and even jailed, to name but a few body, thought and behaviour controls exercised.

Masculinity in male-dominated workplaces

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) has recently settled a class action lawsuit in excess of $100 million due to sexual harassment, sexual misconduct and sexual assault of female officers by their male colleagues and superiors over the last several decades (e.g. Tunney, 2018). The Canadian military is in the same position. A study by Taber (2018) showed that women (and men) who do not perform the expected and accepted gender norms in the military are often marginalized. In the Fire Service, another masculinized workplace, less than 5% of their workforce in Canada are women and there too have been claims of sexual harassment and assault (https://p-sec.org/en/, 2021). The entirety of disaster response, another highly masculine sphere is equally in trouble. Enarson and Pease (2016) draw attention to how "male experience in disaster studies is too often confounded with human experience; for example, generalizing from male patters of homelessness or strategies for economic recovery based on (some) men's work lives" (p. 219).

According to numerous studies, masculinity and male-centric perspectives and practices are in fact the default setting of policing around the world (e.g., Cordner & Cordner, 2011; Haar, 1997/2005; Prokos & Padavic, 2002; Silvestri, 2000). Hegemonic masculinity is deeply embedded in police culture which "glorifies violence and enhances the 'masculine' characteristics of the job while undermining many duties socially constructed as 'feminine', ultimately mischaracterizing and devaluing women's contributions to police work" (O'Connor Shelley et al. 2011, p. 353). Bikos (2016) and Rabe-Hemp (2009), draw our attention to a suite of traits that actively inform and maintain this type of police culture. Feminist scholars such as Fielding (1994) and Murray (2021) refer to this as the 'cult of masculinity' an 'old boys club', predicated upon particular norms of behaviour, language, and discourse that place some at the centre and others on the periphery.

Physical crime fighter

According to Workman-Stark (2017, p. 40), the old boys club of policing is founded on several idealized traits. The first trait is physicality and strength used to fight crime. One way this trait is tied to police work is in part due to the requirement for a level of physicality and use of weapons (Herbert, 2001). Starting in the police academy, recruits are trained to use physical tactics to subdue others, as well as training on the use of various weapons including a handgun.

Police work historically and currently is also positioned as 'crime-fighting' and thus is defined as being aggressive and equated with significant physicality (read masculinity) (Chan et al, 2010). In their study of mid-career police officers in Australia, Chan et al. (2010, p. 441) found, "a substantial proportion of mid-career male officers continued to see policing as a man's job and chose to emphasize the physical demand of potentially violent frontline policing as the norm that women should be measured against." They go on to note that, "a similar proportion of

female officers supported this position, seeing that women have a 'place' in policing but not in the frontline or in violent situations." The authors suggested this may be due to a false dichotomy of difference versus equality, "where the assumed importance of physicality of police work had justified male protectiveness and female acceptance of differential treatment, where the supposedly superior 'people skills' of female officers had excused the segregation of duties, and where sexist jokes were to be tolerated in order to be treated as equal" (p. 441).

Hard-working and dedicated

The second idealized trait is hard-working (Davies & Thomas, 2003). Embedded in the notion of 'hard-working' is the hours dedicated to the job which means both working 12 hour shifts as well as working extra hours outside of the scheduled shift to show their commitment and credibility on their career path to promotion (Rawski & Workman-Stark, 2018). One of the ways in which dedication is shown is not to allow 'home life' to interfere. I will return to this.

In-group/out-group

While not actually a trait, another culture of policing, as noted earlier, is the in-group and out-group distinctions and practices (e.g., Silvestri, 2018; Corsianos, 2009; Fielding, 1994; Messerschmidt, 1993). Put more succinctly, what Fejes and Haake (2012) found is that the discourse of policing identity is one of daring and danger, and hence masculinity. They argue that "gender is being done *through* occupational choices" and "the daring discourse is gendering police work (differently) by labelling daring work tasks as male and caring work tasks as female" (p. 293).

Avoiding vulnerability and emotions

In 1995, Connell argued that "a familiar theme in patriarchal ideology is that men are rational while women are emotional," (p. 164). She goes on to say that "hegemonic masculinity

establishes its hegemony partly by its claim to embody the power of reason, and thus represent the interest of the whole society" (p. 164). Decades of other studies have shown that men are seen as 'better' than women because women are emotional, vulnerable, and simply not aggressive or competitive enough (e.g., Connell, 1995; Brown & Silvestri, 2020). For example, a study by Brown and Silvestri in 2020 of the Victoria Police Service in Australia uncovered,

> attributes of logic, invulnerability, managing one's emotions, being objective and able to settle disputes through strength [as] commonly held and widely shared constructions about masculinity and included a need for men to be aggressive and competitive, strong, and decisive as well as being sexually confident and assertive (p. 468).

Self-preservation and its implications

Other studies take up what I call self-preservation and implications. The construction and maintenance of gender as a 'self-preserving' category, Vintges (2017) reminds us, has proven "to be far more resilient than any of us ever suspected" (p. 165). Research also shows that in the struggle to preserve masculinized environments, members of the dominant group will go to different lengths. One means is to display hostility or to act violently towards any person displaying feminine or non-gender conforming identities such as lesbian or queer identity traits (e.g., Miller et al. 2003). A study by Franklin (2007) showed how male police officers ostracized, defeminized and de-professionalized their female colleagues. This is best illustrated in the experiences of Karen Adams (2018) and Bonnie Reilly-Schmidt (2015), two women in the first all-female RCMP troop who each published a book that uncovered their experiences as female officers. Both women discuss their experiences of being berated, and told they were too weak hence unfit to be police officers because of their gender. By highlighting the ways in which they did not measure up to male officers in training, their membership into the dominant

group was denied. Building on this, Souhami (2014) in her police ethnographic work, too noted how women were subject to exclusionary language by colleagues despite the presence of management (who did not object or intervene). In describing her experience doing ethnographic research she notes the police "service was pervaded by an undercurrent of racism, sexism and homophobia. BAME , LGBTQ+ and women officers reported a climate of intangible yet pervasive discrimination in which they felt, as one black PC put it, 'under attack'." (Souhami, 2020, p. 211). The framework of 'self-preservation' has also allocated women to the category of lacking commitment to their careers due to family obligations and care work which disproportionality falls to women.

Another implication of the 'self-preserving' construct of masculinity in policing is the performativity of gender as described by Butler (1993). Butler argues against essentialism and states that gender is an act, a performance in that gender and gender roles are learned by boys/girls and men/women in order to fit into society including work roles (Butler, 1990). This performance extends to the ways in which men and women walk, talk, dress, behave, interact with others, etc. In highly masculinized environments women must 'perform' gender in such a way as to fit in, and fitting in requires performing as men do.

Finally, the self-preservation of gender norms is often accomplished, or enhanced by the use of 'humour' or inappropriate and sexualized messages disguised as 'just a joke'. Research by Tinkler (2008) found that women who experience sexual jokes or remarks will often resist defining them as harassment. This may be due to several factors such as the frequency with which women endure sexual jokes at work, because they may consider the joke to be inappropriate, they do not know how to stop it, and they may feel troubled by the experience (Uggen & Blackstone, 2004; Marshall, 2003). Women may also be keenly aware that if they do

not go along with the 'joke' they may face negative repercussions such as not being accepted as part of the group, being seen as a trouble-maker, or even fear losing their job. These could all be considered good reasons to go along with the 'joke'.

Prove it and the 'slippery slope of merit'

Studies on women in masculinized professions such as policing highlight another disturbing trend. Many women, throughout their careers feel compelled to continually prove themselves to gain the respect of their male colleagues by adapting to the masculinized system if they want to advance their careers. This was the case in a study by Bikos (2016), a PhD candidate in sociology at then Western University who interviewed 15 women working in policing in Ontario. Her research found that women who align themselves with male officers experienced more career success, including promotion. Bikos (2016, p. 14) states, "It is important to note that although these women felt they were treated better than some, most did not feel they were as valued as their male co-workers." Bikos also found that female officers who got promoted were frequently suspected of having "slept their way to the top" or been promoted because "administration needed to put a woman" into a particular position rather than a promotion based on merit (p.15). While this idea of women using their bodies to get to the top is nothing new, 'merit' too needs to be deconstructed as a nebulous idea given the traits outlined above (aggression, strength, etc.) and what is viewed as 'meritorious' to get ahead in policing. It is a lose-lose situation for women because they are embedded in a biased 'merit' system. As a woman in policing, if you act like men, you are condemned, and if you do not, you are disruptive and are not promoted into leadership positions. Similarly, Kennedy's study of sexism in the male dominated British legal system found that women lawyers are rarely appointed to the elevated position of QC (Queen's Counsel) citing a lack of merit. She notes, "it is a question of

who defines excellence" and continues stating, "the risk is that the supposedly neutral criterion of merit becomes a vehicle by which the norms of the dominant group are entrenched" (Kennedy, 2018, p. 48).

Building on the above, Meyerson (2001) found that, when faced with negative beliefs about their identity, members of the group will make one of two choices. Either they will "internalize the damaging beliefs or repress part of themselves to assimilate into the dominant culture" (p. 40). This suggests that women working in male dominated careers such as policing, must therefore contend with choosing between accepting negative beliefs about their capacity as police officers, or, taking on the constructed masculine image in policing to fit the mould and hope to be recognized as equal. To date, they are seldom seen as 'equal' as studies by Zempi (2020) and Rabe-Hemp (2009) have shown. Women in policing internalize the oppression and repress part of their identity to be considered credible in their work or take up an identity which may go against their best interests, well-being and the interests of society.

Hiring policies and practices

Another focus in the literature on women and policing is on hiring policies and practices. Reiman (2007) and Schulz (2004) argue that over the years an important principle in the police service has been to reflect the face of the community they serve, including more diversity of race, ethnicity and gender. Yet studies of police department hiring show that they fall dreadfully short in many areas and particularly in terms of women officers (Morabito & Shelley, 2015). Statistics gathered by the Canadian government in 2021 evidenced the low numbers of women in Canadian policing: at the constable level approximately 23% were women, and it was even lower in the senior officer group, at 18% (Statistics Canada, 2022). While there have been no recent updates to these statistics, I know from working in this area for decades now, these numbers have

changed very little, however one recent initiative by the National Institute of Justice called the "30X30" initiative aims to increase the number of women police officers to 30% in the United States by 2030 (https://30x30initiative.org/about-30x30/). This initiative has been picked up in Canada and several policing agencies in British Columbia have signed on to carry this aim forward. Although this feels like a step in the right direction, and it aligns well with the strategic plans of policing agencies, it appears there is no accountability structure nor is there funding to support the policing agencies who have taken up this cause. Without dedicated funding and accountability it is arguable this this initiative may be a front facing attempt to convince the public that 'something is being done' while little or no change is in fact taking place.

One obstacle to gender balancing in the police service is the actual hiring criteria that are used, which of course links back to the 'traits' above and beyond. For example, in the early years of the RCMP only young men were hired and they were required to be unmarried at the time of joining and to remain single for a period of time following their hiring. The purpose was to ensure that the young male RCMP officers would focus on their careers without the distraction of family life (Reilly-Schmidt, 2015). This assumes, of course, that women are the primary care-givers based on their reproductive roles (and that all women want children) and men only peripherally engage in 'family life' so it does not distract them from their 'important' productive public work, as it would women. Another restriction, according to Reilly-Schmidt (2015,) is height, "by 1974, the minimum height requirement for applicants to Canadian municipal departments was set at five feet ten. It was a standard that few women, or for that matter men, could meet" (p. 146).

Studies show, however, that some hiring criteria have changed over the years. For example, the height restrictions were challenged and eventually changed. But an understanding

of the hiring rules of the past is important because the essence of these criterion remains ingrained in the structural 'consciousness' of the police service to such a degree that current practices continue to privilege the hiring of males, and particularly white males. This is especially concerning in 2023 for two reasons. The first is that systemic racism has been witnessed both historically and in more recent cases such as the deaths of Rodney Levi, Chantal Moore, and Colten Boushie, as well as movements such as BLM (Black Lives Matter) and national calls to defund police (e.g., Cecco, 2020). The second, however, is around escalating gender and sexualized violence and the lack of prosecutions. As alluded to earlier in this chapter, a recent example in Canadian media has been exposure of deeply problematic yet common police response to allegations made by women victims of sexual assault as 'unfounded' (e.g., Doolittle et al., 2017). When police classify a case as 'unfounded', it is determined that the crime did not occur, or it was not attempted in the first place. This classification is indicative of the police interpreting the victim's report as lying, and the victim is simply not believed (McQueen, et al., 2021).

In various parts of the world, including Canada, policing agencies have adopted diversity and inclusivity objectives into their recruiting and hiring practices to attract women and BIPOC applicants. Some agencies have set out a quota system to add diversity. However current research findings from countries such as Germany and the Netherlands indicate that women and visible or ethnic minority persons in policing continue to face inequalities and discrimination, especially when they are hired under a quota system (Wieslander, 2018; Boogaard, & Roggeband, 2010).

Parenting and work/life balance

Other studies that provide a background for my study focus on the various barriers faced by women in policing, notably parenting and work/life balance. These challenges escalate throughout women's careers to retention and promotion. Research by Criado Perez (2019, p. 30) suggests that "women [still] do 75% of the worlds unpaid care work" which includes parenting. Even today, women are expected to do the unpaid care and domestic work in the home, while also competing in the highly masculinized public sphere of paid work (Watson, 2020).

Research by Cooper and Ingram (2004) suggests that women police officers struggle to manage family responsibilities in addition to the demands of traditional police work. In my research, many of the participants discussed the difficulties they experienced in balancing family and work and many women found they had to either work part-time or consider leaving their career. This emerged in my study and will be discussed in Chapters Four and Five.

Connell (2005) found that public sector organizations position themselves as gender neutral; however, in practice they are deeply gendered (Acker, 1990, Newman, 1995). As an example, Connell (2005, p. 374) points to 'family friendly' policies allowing for some flexibility of work hours, maternity leave, and part-time work and found that "in almost every case where a respondent made use of these provisions, or described a fellow-worker doing so, that person was a woman." Similarly in my study, several participants spoke about job sharing and part-time work and noted that the only people who used this option were women. It has only been in recent years that policing has allowed for some officers to work part-time by engaging in job sharing and provided maternity or paternity leaves. Still, as per Connell's research, most of the officers who take advantage of these 'family friendly' policies are women. In addition, women police officers who are mothers may feel discouraged by the difficulties of balancing their responsibilities at work and at home which may contribute to a higher attrition rate among

women officers (Cordner & Cordner, 2011). Something with which most men do not need to grapple. While some supports are put in place, it may not be enough to ensure a diverse policing community in the long run. Women who opt out of the promotional process or leave policing is referred to as a 'leaky pipeline'. "This phenomenon refers to women officers leaving their jobs during different parts of their careers based on issues and policies that make few alternative options available or more advantageous" (Swan, 2016, p. 2). This is a significant institutional barrier to women's advancement in policing (Gachter et al., 2011; Schulze, 2011; Rabe-Hemp, 2008, 2009; Archbold & Schulz, 2008).

What I have been pointing out so far through these studies are structural inequalities that persist despite social changes. And Kirk and Okazawa-Rey (2018) argue that, maintaining systems of structural inequality allows the status quo to persist. These authors suggest that this occurs by ensuring that the "values, characteristics, and features of the dominant group" are upheld as the supposedly neutral standard against which all others should be evaluated (p. 13). Such structural inequalities, when questioned or disrupted have been upheld as 'police culture'. Steinborsdottir and Petursdottir (2017) have found that when gender hierarchy, such as in policing, is threatened, there is an increased likelihood of gender-based harassment.

Recruitment and Training

The methods used by policing agencies to recruit and train new police officers varies somewhat across the country, and from one police agency to another, however both of these processes are instrumental in determining who will become interested in applying to policing, and how 'successfully' they move through the training process. Recruitment is considered of critical importance in Canada as the number of police officers continues to decline due to retention-related issues, and high rates of retirements (Carrier, et al., 2021). The norms and

values in the dominant culture of policing are thought to evolve and be perpetuated in two primary ways: recruiting and hiring like-minded people who share similar values, and secondly, on the job learning (Crank & Caldero, 2010). It has been suggested by Rigaux and Cunningham (2021) that there is both a need to reshape recruitment, and, to ensure the gatekeepers work to encourage diversity and inclusion rather than discourage women and other minority groups.

On the job learning begins when recruits enter their training and continues when they are placed in a unit. Time spent in training varies greatly from one country to another; however, most recruits in Canada spend approximately six to nine months in training before being placed in their department. The learning that takes place in training and on the job has long stressed the importance of physicality and aggression. Contrary to this, when policing tasks on shift are analysed, it has been found that approximately 80% of police work involves activities and duties typically associated to social work (Corsianos, 2009; Garcia, 2003). This disconnect is significant because it highlights that there is a vast difference between the constructed image and narrative of policing as positioned against the realities of the day-to-day work. Some recent cases which exemplify this disconnect are those where police have been asked to do a check welfare and have assaulted or killed the person in need such as that of Chantal Moore, and Regis Korchinski-Paquet (Cooke, 2020). The importance of recruiting the right people and training them appropriately for the work they will do continues to fail with life and death consequences.

Evidence-based policing: Aiming for improvement

Policing is an expensive endeavour costing Canadians more year over year. In 2013, public policing in Canada cost 13.6 billion dollars, a 2.5% increase over the previous year. (Hutchins, 2014). By 2018/2019, the annual cost of public policing was 15.7 billion dollars (Conor et al., 2020). These increasing costs have caused governments across Canada to convene

summits on the economics of policing (Public Safety Canada, 2013). In an effort to find areas of improved effectiveness and efficiencies, these summits have focused on evidence-based policing to improve value for service. Huey and Ricciardelli (2016) note that, "what either 'effective' or 'efficient' might possibly mean in the Canadian context remains unknown because, simply put, there are no evaluative benchmarks in place" (p. 120). These researchers go on to state that both policing agencies and policy makers lack usable research on policing matters to inform changes and develop solutions to issues of community safety. Policing suffers from a double bind; there is a recognition that policing must become more effective and efficient, yet there is a resistance to critical examination and research which would provide the strategies and opportunities for improvement. One such area where improvement is possible but resistance continues is recruitment, promotion and support of women in policing. Existing research suggests that policing agencies and the public benefit from having women employed as police officers and in leadership roles. Research by Archbold and Schulz have shown that women officers perform their duties as well as their male colleagues (2012). In addition, women officers have been found to use less force than male officers and are less likely to be involved in corruption (Kringen, 2014). Despite the desire to reform policing, still little is being done to bringing diversity to policing.

The use of evidence-based research has become the norm in areas of public administration and management in an effort to eschew subjective decision making which tends to rely on status quo assumptions, customs and norms (McKenna, 2018). It may seem self-evident that public institutions should make policy decisions that are based on valid and reliable data and research, however, much as in any other area of decision-making, the outcome will rely on the quality of the research and studies included as part of the evidence. The decisions made will

only be as robust as the information used to make them. As McKenna (2018) notes, a key research trend is for collaboration between academic research and policing. The building of such intellectual infrastructure is likely to generate exceptional public policy and best practices for policing institutions, but only if those in positions of power choose to engage in this collaborative work.

Feminist studies of policing

Although there are few, studies by feminists show a very different picture of and for women in policing and indicate a number of positive outcomes of women's participation in policing. Maintaining the high valuation of masculinity of the police service means devaluing characteristics that would be considered 'feminine' and engaging in other kinds of exclusionary practices. Women are often positioned as physically weaker and/or smaller in stature and therefore assumed to be less able to do the same job as men (e.g., Miller & Segal, 2019). The impact of this is that, although some women may be smaller than some men, they not only passed the same physical qualification tests as men, but, as Miller and Segal (2019) found, the presence of women officers both increased reporting of domestic violence offences and sexual assault offences, and reduced incidences.

What this suggests, as feminist leadership theorist Ferguson (1984) reminds us, is socially constructed feminine traits such as compassion, generosity, and sensitivity, which are seen to be weaknesses, are discredited "to serve the interests of the powerful" (p. 94). Like other feminists such as Ahmed (2017) and Vintges (2017), Ferguson is clear that, "women will not be liberated by becoming 'like men' but rather by abolishing the entire system that allocates human potential according to gender" (p.94). This vision requires us to approach gender justice as a

whole and policing in particular from a feminist, rather than simply a revisionist (add women and stir) perspective.

Women and leadership in policing

As noted in the introduction to this thesis, women's leadership in policing has largely been ignored until very recently and the research in this area is scant at this time. Much has been written on issues such as police reform and the evolution of policing including Vitale's (2018) *The End of Policing* which explores these issues however rarely mentions gender or women's presence in policing. This is a significant missed opportunity to examine women's impact on policing. There is a great deal of literature on leadership including leadership in policing, and again very little is focused on women. My aim is not to review this broad array of research. Rather my aim is to review the literature on women's leadership in policing and feminist leadership literature as it applies to women in policing.

There are two ways that women's leadership in policing is taken up in the literature. The first is through the traditional hierarchical leadership of position and rank. This is most closely aligned with transactional leadership, described as "the practice of an exchange of benefits: compliance with a leader's direction is rewarded with financial or personal gain" (Clover & McGregor, 2016, p. 21). Transactional leadership requires that someone in a supervisory role provides guidance, direction, and directives to subordinates. Given the para-military hierarchical structure of policing, this type of leadership style is common both in the sphere of policing and in the police leadership literature. The second type is leadership that exits in more informal ways, often at the lower ranks. This is often referred to as transformational leadership; a post-heroic form of leadership based upon values of "participation, consultation and inclusion" (Silvestri, 2007, p. 39). Transformational leadership does not require one person to be in a senior position

to another in order to enact leadership. This type of leadership engenders positive communication and collaboration of team members working toward a common goal.

Research by Silvestri (2018) suggests one of the methods used to reform police leadership in the United Kingdom and increase the number of women in senior positions is through the introduction of what they call Direct Entry. Direct Entry allows people with requisite skills and education to enter policing at a higher rank. This stands in contrast to the traditional trajectory of having to start as a constable and work up through the promotional ranks to reach senior levels. Silvestri has described Direct Entry as 'a disruptive tool' as the traditional conceptualization of the 'heroic male' police officer, characterized by strength, stamina, and endurance (of career) is challenged. It may be too soon to evaluate the impacts of Direct Entry in the countries that have adopted this practice, however, it is not difficult to imagine that those who enter policing in this manner may well be subject to the same hostility described by Kanter's (1993) tokenism framework, an experience of heightened visibility, isolation, and role encapsulation. This can become compounded by what Meyerson (2001) refers to as proving loyalty; the attempt by people who stand out as different to distance themselves from others in the same group. Meyerson gives the example of women in male dominated organizations who "distance themselves from other women – by refusing to take up women's causes, by avoiding women's programs and groups and by rejecting overtures to mentor other women." (p. 151). By aligning themselves with males to be like 'one of the guys', the risk of being 'othered' may be reduced; however, this is a major obstacle to the larger goal of realizing equality in the workplace.

Leadership cannot be thought of as belonging to only those who occupy positions of higher authority as it would be both short-sighted and naive to believe that it is exclusively these

people who understand that which is happening in an organization, and that which is needed for the well-being of the group. Everyone, regardless of rank or position can enact leadership. This type of leadership might look like coming up with a new approach to a problem, or, suggesting an alternate understanding of an issue which leads to a novel solution. In addition, this kind of leadership can be enacted by mentoring or supporting a colleague. In policing, women engage in a great deal of this type of informal leadership. This type of leadership is often enacted by women and is least likely to be recognized as leadership by senior administrators.

Researchers Schwartz and DeKeseredy (1997) have explained the misogynist and anti-woman attitudes of males in policing by proposing their 'male peer support' model which suggests that male-only populations influence attitudes and behaviours that promote and perpetuate woman abuse. The result of the hyper-masculine environment of policing can be seen as being linked to sexual assault and harassment, the likes of which has resulted in the recent class action lawsuits against the RCMP. Returning to the idea of culture, which I spoke to above, research by Franklin (2007) outlines how police subculture "specifically acts to promote sexism and misogyny directed against female police officers" (p. 2). Such an environment would be hostile towards women and women's leadership.

With respect to more informal, or 'under the radar' leadership, Meyerson (2001) makes the case for "everyday leaders", people who "do not flash brightly on the organizational radar" but rather provide humble forms of leadership by inspiring and nurturing others. As stated by Meyerson, this type of leadership "is a critical and drastically underacknowledged sort of leadership in organizations and society" (p. 166). Shifting how organizations and society at large perceive leadership, especially in hierarchical, male dominated organizations are necessary first steps to effect change. By moving away from the notion that leadership is connected to position

and title, this allows women and others to engage and contribute within their organizations in a more meaningful way.

What I have outlined in this chapter are the findings of a number of key studies in the area of policing, everything from masculine norms and cultures to hiring practices and training, which form an important backdrop to my study. Responding to Batliwala's (2013) belief that we need more feminist studies on leadership, I turn to my own.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction

The primary goal of my research was to understand how women police officers are changing policing, or whether policing is changing them. I was interested in how this group of women police officers disrupted the patriarchal order of the policing profession as well as how this sphere has changed them. Why do these women stay within this environment? What is the impact on them? How do they experience the highly masculine organization and the embedded cultural traits and practices outlined in Chapter Two?

In this chapter, I outline the feminist methodology and methods I used to respond to these questions. I begin with a discussion of feminist research and my reasons for using a feminist approach. Following this, I outline my methods including the steps I took to recruit participants, who they were, and the process I followed to collect and analyse the data.

Feminist research

The methodology that best fitted my study was feminist research for a variety of reasons. The first is that it calls for a focus on women's voices and experiences which have been so excluded and marginalized from the majority of past studies of society, and in my case policing (Brown & Silvestri, 2020; Prokos & Padavic, 2002; Oakley, 2000). According to Sprague (2005), one of the reasons for excluding women from studies has been the divide between public and private spheres, with the former understood as a far superior location of knowledge production, meaning-making and worth. As women began to enter 'the public' sphere in higher numbers – we must, however, always remember that poor women in lower economic situations actually 'worked' in the public sphere in order to support their families - feminist researchers

began to focus more on the deeply gendered nature of this sphere and its impact on women's careers and identity, a central component of my own study. As stated by Criado Perez (2019) in her discussion on gender bias, "worth is a matter of opinion, and opinion is informed by culture. And if that culture is as male biased as ours is, it can't help but be biased against women. By default." (p. 17). It was my understanding when I embarked upon this study, and it was confirmed by other studies (see Chapter Two), that policing was and remains a deeply masculine gendered culture and that women bring unique and valuable contributions to the occupation of policing however unrecognized or unwelcome these may be. I was curious to fill this longstanding gap in knowledge as noted in Chapter Two. How were my participants, in the highly masculine occupation of policing being shaped by that culture, and did they recognize it as such and how were they navigating and responding to this and/or trying to reshape policing? The questions were not simple, and neither were the answers.

Patriarchy, as feminists argue, runs deep and is highly resistant and resilient to any changes that are not in its favour (Sangster, 2021; Ahmed, 2017; Batliwala, 2013; Acker, 2006). In their analysis of gender issues and work, Kimmel and Holler (2011; p. 217) write, "women continue to face gender discrimination: They are paid less, promoted less, and assigned to specific jobs despite their qualifications and motivations, and they are sometimes made to feel unwelcome, like intruders in an all-male preserve". According to Sprague (2005), research topics in the field of sociology have traditionally stemmed from the interests of scholars rather than from the everyday struggles of those working for social change. Therefore, issues of interest for white privileged men have trumped those at the bottom of the social hierarchy, typically women and other minority groups. Feminist research on the other hand has "generally assaulted the hierarchical, exploitative relations of conventional research, urging feminist

researchers to seek instead an egalitarian research process characterized by authenticity, reciprocity, and intersubjectivity between the researcher and her subjects" (Stacey, 1991, p. 112). Stacey's explanation of feminist research resonates with my own values and underlying rationale for engaging in the research process. While there is research in and about policing, there is little research from a critical feminist lens. Feminism as a practice, seeks to engage in the exposure of and remedy to gender inequality, and is focused on women's experiences (Leavy & Harris, 2019; Logan, 2008). Like other feminist scholars, my proposed research aims to improve the lives of women both inside and outside of policing.

A second reason why a feminist approach was applicable to my study was because there is no singularity of methods which left the door open to a diversity of ways to explore experiences of the women who participated in my study (Hesse-Biber, 2012; Lykke, 2011; Reinharz, 1992). Feminists use a variety of traditional and non-traditional methods. I chose face to face interviews and focus groups, but as it happened, the Covid-19 shutdown interfered and changed what I had planned which I discuss later in this chapter. Feminist research needs to be flexible in a complicated world.

A third element of feminist research that made it applicable to my study was its focus on improving women's lives (Criado Perez, 2019; hooks, 2000). One way to do this is to share the findings of my study with the participants and beyond, even if some of the findings prove 'difficult' as mine did. I speak further to this in Chapter Five. Feminist studies can be 'difficult' because they uncover not only patriarchy and its control over women's lives but equally, how women are 'complicit' in the maintenance of the patriarchy, both consciously and unconsciously. Interrogating the patriarchy and women's lives in male-dominated areas, such as policing, means uncovering how both the patriarchy and women themselves uphold structures and systems that

are not in women's best interests overall but give them 'status' or power within an institution such as policing. In other words, critiquing the status quo and disrupting norms of hegemonic masculinities can be difficult and women often face backlash when they disrupt these norms (Merlo, 2013; Benson-Podolchuk, 2007; Hall, 2007; Webb, 1993). One of my participants, Brenda, described an experience where she was physically assaulted and injured by a male colleague while other colleagues watched. After the incident, she told me that her male colleagues said, "Oh, you can't sue or complain, you'd better not do anything". The dilemma for her was that if she did sue or go to the media she would "no longer have a career, so I made the decision to stay silent and get on with my life and my career". We can condemn her for this 'choice' but returning to a comment I made earlier, what kind of 'a choice' is this to have to make? As feminist researchers know, 'choice' is a nebulous term, similar to 'merit', as I highlighted in Chapter Two. Listening to women in order to make change and improve their lives also means acknowledging and accepting why they 'choose' to stay silent in the face of sexual harassment and abuse as well as encouraging and supporting them when they do come forward. I will return to this in the coming chapters.

Another hallmark of feminist research that made it important for me was its emphasis on engagement with reflexivity, the understanding that there is a dynamic between the researcher and the researched that involves unequal power relations, hence the necessity to pay particular attention to this. Hesse-Biber (2012) describes feminist praxis stating, "Feminist researchers are particularly keen on getting at issues of power and authority in the research process…feminist research practitioners pay attention to reflexivity, a process whereby researchers recognize, examine, and understand how their social background, location, and assumptions affect their research practice." (p. 17). I started each interview with a short pre-amble in order to situate my

social location and background in order to put participants at ease in terms of who I was and my purpose in doing this research.

A final element of feminist research that has become increasingly important is the issues of 'intersectionality' (Crenshaw, 2014). This means interrogating not only gender, but also other aspects of women that make their study more complex such as race, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, ability, gender identity, colorism, and so forth. In my study, race, class and sexual orientation were discussed by several participants as factors in their career experiences, although as I noted in Chapter One, 'gender' was the primary challenge and the element of substantive similarity for all my participants, as I illustrate in Chapter Four.

Setting the stage: Participants, and a strange beginning

After submitting my ethics application in January 2020, I felt relieved to have made it that far, and anxious about the impending response from the ethics committee. Would they approve my proposed methods of using focus groups and arts-based methods of participants sharing images of women in leadership to explore the lived experiences of women in policing? Would I be required to make any tweaks or changes? January 2020 was the beginning stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, and it was not long before all post-secondary institutions in British Columbia and elsewhere were shuttered, forcing all teaching and learning to online platforms and similarly, all research had to be conducted by distance. The ethics committee returned my proposal requiring changes to adhere to the new social distancing norms. I re-submitted my proposal in March 2020 with a modified method of using individual interviews conducted either virtually or by telephone. This proposal was approved by the Human Research Ethics Board in April 2020 (see Appendix A). Despite the pandemic, this was an exciting time as I was now poised to begin my research.

To identify participants, I began by creating a set of criteria. These criteria included self-identified women with experience in policing in southern British Columbia. These women could have decades of experience or be recent hires. I hoped to get participants from both RCMP and municipal policing agencies which is what happened. A final criterion was to have participants who had experience at various levels of leadership including both lower and senior ranks.

I began with a practice called 'convenience sampling' (Miner et al., 2012). Convenience sampling is a type of nonprobability sampling where the researcher's knowledge of the population is used to select participants in a non-random manner from places where they are easily accessible. According to feminists Miner et al. (2012), the main objective of convenience sampling is to produce a target group of participants that can be assumed to be representative of the population under study. Due to my former work in the justice system and my teaching, I have many connections in the justice field, and I had identified and connected with several women who I felt would be able to participate in this study. Flowing from this I used 'snowball sampling'. This method, created by Coleman and Goodman in the late 1950s was designed for hard-to-reach populations and is now commonly used throughout social science research (see Heckathorn, 2011). For the snowball sampling, non-random recruitment strategy I asked the women I knew to suggest others who were willing to participate and to distribute my invitation. Using both convenience and snowball methods to identify participants allowed me to use my professional networks to identify several potential participants and then to access others who were beyond my sphere.

In May of 2020, I reached out to my first acquaintance, Tara Bevington, who was heading up the Vancouver Island Women in Policing Association. Tara has worked in policing for most of her career and is an advocate for women's equality in policing. Throughout our

discussions, I learned that the association has approximately 100 members and included women in policing across southern Vancouver Island and included both municipal and RCMP members. I sent my invitation to participate to Tara, who in turn sent it to the members of the group. In addition, I contacted several other former colleagues, associates and friends who passed on my invitation to participate to women in policing across southern British Columbia, including the Lower Mainland. Late in May 2020, I started to hear from interested participants via email. What was fascinating was that the first three individuals to email me to inquire about participating in my research study were male police officers. I emailed each of them and explained, as per my invitation to participate, that I was researching *women's* lived experiences of working in policing. While I appreciated their interest in my research, this hubris is not unusual as men will speak with authority and confidence on any topic, even if they have no experience, understanding, or competence in the area (e.g. Oluo, 2020; Solnit, 2014).

Despite the strange start, many women began contacting me with an interest in participating. On June 5, 2020 I began interviewing the group of women who would form the foundation of my study by sharing their lived experiences of their careers and leadership practice in policing. In total, I interviewed 21 women with a range of policing careers from one to over 30 years of experience, however the average was 18 years of service. Seven of the participants worked in municipal policing agencies, 13 in the RCMP, and one in Military Policing. Nine of the participants were constable level, and twelve were in senior or supervisory roles. All of the participants had experience working in southern British Columbia, including Vancouver Island. Each participant was assigned a pseudonym in order to protect their identity. Additionally, words describing their police agency or activity were changed in order to protect participants' identity. For example, if a participant used the word "depot" or "detachment", this would be

changed to “training” or “department” such that a reader will not know if the participant was an RCMP member or a municipal police officer. In terms of demographics, one participant self-identified as lesbian (white) and two participants self-identified as persons of colour. The rest were all white, which as I noted earlier in this thesis, is true of all the justice agencies across Canada. Two participants identified as coming from either working class or economically precarious backgrounds. The intersectional identities of the group of participants in my study added to the richness of the data, but again, gender was the central force. I begin Chapter Four with a more in-depth profile of three of the participants and use their own words throughout the chapter to give richness and ownership to their experiences.

Feminist interviews; Questions asked

Feminist interviewing practices put women’s experiences at the centre of inquiry. Gilligan (2003) in her book entitled, *In a Different Voice*, reminds us of the importance of considering the way in which people talk about their lives, the language they use and connections they make. Hence in research, not only is dialogue important, but ‘discourse’ is critical. Feminist scholar and ethnographer Dorothy Smith (1990), elaborates on the importance of discourse and the ways in which the dominating ‘relations of ruling’ are embedded in organizations, bureaucracies and discourse resulting in the perpetuation of masculine supremacy and subordination of women. According to Graham (1984) “[t]he use of semi-structured interviews has become the principal means by which feminists have sought to achieve the active involvement of their respondents in the construction of data about their lives.” (p. 112).

Returning to power and feminist research outlined above, Finch (1993), reminds us that, “interviewees need to know how to protect themselves from people like me.” (p. 173). This statement is a recognition that not only is the power balance unequal but there is also a real

possibility of harm to participants in research. As a researcher, I used the ethics process of my institution to ensure that no harm would come to any participant as a result of their participation in this research. As a feminist researcher investigating how women are changing policing and how policing is changing women, my aim is to contribute to the existing research and literature which in turn will, ideally, improve women's lives.

Other important considerations for me in conducting the interviews included being mindful of how I defined the issues of interest, how I constructed the interview, how I presented myself to the participants, as well as how I received their responses and judge their relevance. These factors shape the nature of the data being elicited (Jorgenson, 1991). Doing this research using interviews required that I recognize the power of my position as a researcher and strike a balance whereby I could elicit information while sharing something of myself in a meaningful and genuine way. Recognizing my position of power included understanding and providing an openness regarding my social location as a white, cisgender, heterosexual, temporarily able bodied, female academic from an immigrant family. The importance of recognizing our own social location has been discussed by scholars such as DiAngelo (2018). She reminds us that oppression of every kind, but specifically racial oppression, is able to persist and go unchallenged when white people fail to name it and are unwilling to examine its structural history, and current forms.

One researcher who has woven these strands together is Noddings (2005), who recognized "that it is *feeling* that motivates us to act" and that "knowledge is important but it is best acquired in relation." (p. 114). Her concept of the ethics of care has been based on the experience of women and recognizes that dialogue is fundamental in building relationships where care and trust are present. Although much of her work is based in school environments,

her ethics of care has been applied and recognized in numerous fields including philosophy, psychology, political science, business, and nursing (Noddings, 2012). To apply an ethics of care to the gendered environment of policing would mean beginning with a consideration of the motivations of women who apply and work in policing.

A third caution discussed by Watts (2006) is the risk of using feminist research practice with women who do not identify with feminist aims, and/or potentially do not identify as feminists. This caution has given me pause for thought as I am a feminist using feminist methodology and my research interest is in women's experiences in policing. However, I did not assume that because my interviewees were participating in my research that they identify with feminism as concept, theory or practice. To illustrate this point, in the fall of 2017, I was asked to moderate a panel discussion of women discussing their understandings and experiences of working in various areas of justice. The panel had representation from law, provincial corrections, federal corrections, and policing. These were highly experienced women, all of whom had many years of experience in their workplaces. Three of the four women had approximately 20 years of experience in their respective fields. Through the panel discussion, it seemed that these women did not identify as feminists per se, and each of them recognized that while gender inequality *has been* problematic in their respective areas of work, the current state is one in which such problems are no longer an issue. Similarly, a few of the participants in my study also spoke about gender inequality in policing as being a thing of the past. I was surprised by their responses; however, there are several possible explanations for this as discussed in Chapter Five.

Semi-structured interviews

I used feminist, semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured interview, also called semi-standardized interview, is one that has a set of questions that the researcher asks, however the wording and order of the questions can vary, and the interviewer can answer questions or ask for clarifications as well as probing further as necessary (Berg & Lune, 2012). I chose this type of interview for my study because it allowed me to ask questions about the topics I wanted to address and allowed for some flexibility in the process of the conversations with participants. Semi-structured interviews are an effective way to collect experiences and stories as told by the interviewee in their own words, and, because of its dialogical nature, the conversational engagement in the semi-structured interview was conducive to generating rapport between me and the interviewees. Building a positive rapport engenders trust and allows the researcher to engage in a genuine and honest way by sharing something of herself in the process. In using feminist interviews, it is necessary to build trust, which allows for authenticity; this builds interviewees' confidence in my abilities as a researcher, and an openness in sharing their lived experiences. To build trust with the participants of my study, I began each interview with a brief introduction of myself, my own journey working in the justice system and why I am interested in the topic of women's leadership in policing.

Using semi-structured interviews as method has both advantages and limitations according to Marshall and Rossman (2016). The advantage was that this practice allowed me to ask questions I had planned in advance but also, to follow their stories, creating new questions and asking for clarifications in directions I had not necessarily imagined in my questions, as I listened to their stories in their own voices about their own understandings of their lived experiences in the police service (e.g. Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The limitations were related to Covid 19 as I noted above. Although I had planned to conduct face-to-face interviews, social

distancing requirements stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic meant I had to conduct the interviews via telephone or zoom. I gave each participant the option of speaking with me either via zoom or telephone and all participants chose to speak with me via telephone. I did not inquire as to the reason for their choices, however some participants offered a reason for their choice. For example, one participant stated that she knew she would be out on a walk during that time and wanted to speak with me as she walked. In another case the participant stated that she wanted to be in her vehicle during our conversation and scheduled it for when she was driving home from work. Telephone interviews were advantageous as the participants were located in many geographically distant areas throughout southern British Columbia and using telephone interviews meant I did not need to spend time and resources traveling to meet them at their locations. A significant disadvantage of using telephone interviews was the lack of eye contact, face-to-face nonverbal cues and body language that can be used to pace an interview and decide if delving further or a follow up question is needed (Berg & Lune, 2012).

Despite the change of plans, these limitations of lacking eye-contact, body language and face-to-face nonverbal cues, I did feel what Jorgenson (1991) calls a sense of reciprocity and perspective-taking between myself and the participants. This concept is closely related to the practice of reflexivity, an explicit self-awareness of how the researcher can influence the collection and analysis of data (Finlay, 2002). In conducting the interviews, I shared a little about myself at the beginning and gave participants positive prompts such as, "Can you tell me more about that?" By the end of each interview my sense of each participant was that their experience had been heard, valued and respected. This is what I hope and believe each participant felt also.

I recorded all the interviews, and also took my own notes using pen and paper to jot down the highlights of what each participant discussed. This kind of note taking served two purposes for me. One, I felt more engaged with the content of what the person was describing while taking notes, and two, because I had little experience using the recording device, I wanted to ensure that if an interview failed to record properly, I would still have a record of what was discussed. As it was, one of the interviews did not record properly hence transcription was not possible. For this participant's responses, I had to rely on my notes from our interview. With this one exception, all the interviews were transcribed by me at a later date. Each participant was contacted and offered the opportunity to review their transcript. None of the participants requested a copy of their transcript.

The interview questions posed to participants were semi-structured and presented in the order below. At times it was more logical to vary the order of some of the later questions depending on where the participant went with a given answer, but all interviews started with the first three questions in order:

1. Can you tell me a bit about your background, what made you want to work in policing?
2. Can you tell me about your career and how you got to your current position?
3. In your experience, is policing different for men and women? If so, how so? What is it that is different?
4. In what ways do you see yourself as a leader?
5. Is doing leadership different for men and women in policing? How? Why?
6. How do you see the power structures of policing? In other words, have you experienced having to navigate or resist power structures?

7. As a woman in policing, how does this affect your work?
8. Do you feel you have had to mould or transform yourself in your work?
9. As a woman in policing, from where do you draw strength, where do you find support?
10. If you could make a change to policing to make it better for women, what change(s) might you make?

It was interesting in the interview process for me how often a participant wanted to return to a question after having moved on, or in other cases, spending a fair amount of time on a particular question. What I began to realize is that most of the participants had not had much opportunity to discuss their careers with careful consideration of the differences between men and women in policing. It was clear that all the participants had experienced gendered differences in their day-to-day work. Listening to them unpack some of their experiences felt a bit like being in a secret club; it was an honour to hear their stories and be entrusted with their experiences.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is understood as making 'sense' of the data. Creswell and Creswell (2018) describe qualitative data analysis as, "segmenting and taking apart the data (like peeling back the layers of an onion) as well as putting it back to together" (p. 191). After completing the interviews, I listened to the recordings and transcribed each of the interviews. I had each of the recordings in an audio file on my laptop and listened to each one wearing headphones while simultaneously having a word document open on my desktop computer and using the dictate function to speak aloud each interview. This dictate function also transcribed the interview into the word document for that individual. This method was onerous and had advantages and

disadvantages. One of the advantages of using this method was that I was able to listen again to the voices and words of the participants which was helpful as I again felt immersed in their stories and experiences, even though I had not been able to be with them in person to watch their facial expressions, which is an important part of feminist research. But in listening again to each interview, it became apparent to me that each participant had been engaged in deep introspection, a self and structural reflection as noted by the sighs, hesitations, and re-visiting questions that I had previously asked. Another advantage was that I was able to pause the interview regularly in order to correct words that the dictate function did not pick up properly. As an example, the phrase "police force" often was picked up in the dictate as "peace forest". Listening and hearing matter! It was also interesting to notice that the dictate function did not pick up words and phrases with profanity or any variation on the word "sex", such as "sexual assault" or "dick swinging". In place of any profanity, the software inserted stars icon (***) which was bizarre to me, but due to its strong profanity filter. With each of these instances, I had to pause the audio and type in the correct wording. One of the clear disadvantages with this method of transcription was the time it took to transcribe each of the twenty interviews.

Once all of the interviews were transcribed, I began an iterative process of coding and re-coding the data. Saldana (2013) distinguishes between codes and themes stating, "A theme is an *outcome* of coding, categorization, or analytic reflection, not something that is, in itself, coded" (p. 14). The process of coding and re-coding resulted in the categories, themes and sub-themes to emerge from the data. One of the themes that emerged was 'transforming self'. Many related categories emerged such as, mirroring men, man-speak, and related behaviours. Each theme, sub-theme and category was assigned a coloured sticky tab used to visually identify the location of said theme, sub-theme or category. As a visual person this was helpful to me in terms of

organizing the data and being able to locate themes and sub-themes easily. I also created a large mind-map on several pieces of flip-chart paper which hung on the wall adjacent to my workstation. This mind-map allowed me to visually plot each theme and sub-theme in order to better see how they relate to each other. This was an ongoing project and took many months to evolve.

The iterative process, or cyclical act as Saldana (2013) calls it, of coding in cycles not only helped to break the data into analytically relevant pieces of information, but also prepared me to ask further questions from this work. The themes I identified at the conclusion of the coding and re-coding process included: transforming self, navigating police culture, barriers to leadership, factors enabling leadership, and leading differently. On this note, I turn to the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Findings

Introduction

In this chapter I share the findings of my study, the stories and experiences as told to me by my participants. I honour the women's voices by using their own words whilst maintaining their anonymity. As discussed in Chapter Three, I conducted semi-structured interviews with 21 participants detailing how they navigated the hyper masculinized organization of policing. One major category and six themes emerged from my analysis. The major category is police culture. Within this category, my participants talked about the systemics of sexism, discrimination and harassment, although not all participants believed they had experienced this. A key aspect of police culture was what the participants called 'Type A' personalities, considered by some to be more salient than gender.

The first theme was how women mirror men and transform themselves in order to fit in. This includes an overwhelming sense to prove themselves worthy again and again, their need to learn what feminists called 'manspeak', as well as a focus on their own physicality. The second theme looks at women's sense of confidence in their work and their competence being questioned and/or undermined due to their gender. The third theme is the illusion of a meritocracy. Policing policies and procedures on issues such as recruitment, training, promotion, human resources and so forth are presented as though they are gender neutral and with significant emphasis on choosing the person who is the 'best fit'. My participants call this into question while also exploring their own sense that merit is more important than gender. The fourth theme to emerge is the importance of recruitment and promotion of women. My participants discussed their experiences of both the recruitment and promotion processes as gendered, while also raising the question of what proportion of policing should be composed of

women and other diverse hirings. The fifth theme centred around family: choosing to have children or not, how to juggle family responsibilities with their career, and how their careers have been negatively impacted by these decisions. The final theme is that of women leading differently. My participants spoke about the types of leadership they have experienced in their careers, their own leadership styles and the impact their leadership has had on those around them. They spoke about the gendered differences in leadership, and the need to change how policing leadership styles are differentially valued. Each of these themes speak to how the participants are changing policing and/or how policing has changed them. But before turning to my findings I provide further context with three stories from my participants.

Helen's story

Growing up in BC, Helen didn't think much about working in policing. Trying to figure out a career path, she attended a police recruiting event where she was told that if she did not speak French she should not bother applying. After finishing high school, she attended BCIT and graduated with a diploma in journalism. She found a job in a small city in the interior of BC where she embarked on her journalism career. Helen enjoyed the excitement of never knowing what the day would bring and what kinds of stories she'd be sent to cover. Eventually she was requested to cover the 'crime beat' which included meeting regularly with police personnel and reporting on crimes and other policing issues such as the community policing model. Helen's interest in policing grew and eventually she decided to apply at age 27. At this point she had been married for 5 years and loved her career in journalism but was looking for something more.

Helen was accepted into policing in 1996 spending 4 years in general duties before being promoted. Her work spanned joining the drug unit, working with youth, time in the sex crimes unit, domestic violence unit and working on the missing women's task force. Helen worked in

various parts of BC, the Yukon and Nunavut and was promoted numerous times. Helen completed an undergraduate degree and later a master's degree. She and her husband had two children however the marriage ended leaving her as the primary parent. In addition to raising her children and working, Helen also worked in recruiting and held events to increase women's interest in policing in the hopes of seeing more women joining. She noted that at the time she joined, the rate of women in policing was one in five, and in 2020 towards the end of her career, the rate remains approximately one in five. During her career, Helen had experienced and witnessed women officers excel in leadership. In particular, she noticed how women used the tools of collaboration, communication, and presence to engage and manage situations with great success. This was one of the reasons she saw it as necessary to get more women interested in working in policing. As a mentor and senior police leader, Helen cared deeply about her work and about the people working for her. She spoke about how policing needs to do a better job to support people and do more to build resiliency in areas such as bringing people back to work after a maternity leave or medical leave. Helen wants to see policing become more flexible to meet the requirements of women who are also providing care for children or family members by increasing part-time work or other more flexible arrangement.

Nancy's story

Like Helen, Nancy did not grow up intending to work in policing. She graduated high school and started studying health sciences at university with the aim of becoming a nurse. During her time at university, Nancy worked in a restaurant frequented by police officers. She had many conversations with them about their work and surmised that policing was a man's job and not something she would ever be able to do. Later, Nancy had an opportunity to go on a ride

along which piqued her interest in policing to the point of taking some criminology classes and eventually applying to policing. She was accepted and started her career in 2018.

Although relatively new to the job, Nancy spoke about hearing stories from other women about the sexism they experienced in their careers. Nancy has experienced being cat-called by members of the public, but not by her colleagues. She also spoke about the need for hiring diverse people and more women in policing. As she was going through her application process and hiring, she was told several times that she was not being hired because she was a woman, but rather because she was a qualified candidate. She found it irksome to hear this as men were likely not being told such things.

One of Nancy's primary frustrations in her relatively short career was the extent to which women officers were expected to attend to women and child victims. She noted that women victims often feel more comfortable speaking with a women officer, especially if the offender was a male, however her sense was that dealing with the women and child victims was a lesser role than dealing the male perpetrator or fulfilling other duties on a call. Although Nancy was good at her job and did well in her role with victims of crime, she also felt demoralized by the gendered dynamic created by her male colleagues. Despite this reality, Nancy's sense of confidence was clear, and she spoke about knowing that she could do the job and do it well. Her goal of getting promoted lies ahead and while she hears rumblings of her male colleagues saying that women get promoted to meet organizational diversity goals, she is looking forward to proving that she can do the job as well as anyone.

Anna's story

Growing up Anna experienced her family as egalitarian as both of her parents worked outside of the home and chores were shared equally amongst her and her siblings. She grew up

in a policing family and had many influences pointing her towards a career in policing. Anna tried on several other types of work such as the Coast Guard but later applied and was hired into policing. During her early career, Anna got married and had two children. One of her goals was to promote to a senior leadership role and after working in several different units and doing a great deal of community work, she was successful in gaining a promotion. Anna remembered her mother asking her if she had really thought about what her environment would look like once she promoted, and who her peer group would be. Anna spoke about her position of leadership as being lonely and noted that women in leadership feel isolated due to the lack of a peer group.

Throughout her early career, and more recently, Anna spoke about experiencing significant sexism, sexual harassment and misogyny in her policing agency. All of this had a profound effect on Anna. She began pushing back on the sexism she encountered in her work place; misogynistic commentary by some colleagues and leaders, sexist decisions in her union, and unequal treatment in promotional processes. Anna submitted sexual harassment complaints based on her experiences, none of which have been resolved or addressed. Anna's commitment to her work and her supportive colleagues was admirable, however the negative experiences she encountered ultimately led her to seek a medical leave.

Police culture

The major category found in my study is the issue of 'police' culture. There is no doubt that policing is a difficult job. Most police officers will tell you that their days are spent interacting with members of the community who are struggling with challenges such as substance use, mental health, and homelessness amongst others. Police also respond to reports of violence, assaults, domestic violence, car accidents, robberies and many other difficult situations. They engage with members of the community who are having problems that they are

unable to address including things such as neighbour disputes, noise complaints, and even odd or concerning behaviours observed in the community. The nature of the day-to-day work of policing has evolved alongside the workplace culture of policing. According to Yu and Lee (2020), workplace culture is created through the shared values, beliefs and "socially constructed patterns of action that guide the behaviour of their employees" (p. 3). There are a variety of definitions and components of workplace 'culture'. For Schein (1990) these include;

> 1) A pattern of basic assumptions, 2) invented, discovered, or developed by a given group, 3) as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, 4) that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore 5) is to be taught to new members as the 6) correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems (p. 70).

Adding to this is the Masculinity Contest Culture (MCC), created by Berdahl et al. (2018) to assess how strongly an organization endorses masculine norms. The MCC has added four dimensions of police culture from this lens: (1) show no weakness, (2) strength and stamina, (3) put work first, and (4) dog eat dog. Glick et al. (2018) have studied how these specific cultural components correlate with "negative organizational dynamics (e.g., poor culture and toxic leadership), dominative co-worker behaviours (e.g., bullying and harassment), negative individual work attitudes (e.g., burnout, turnover intentions), and poor personal well-being" (p. 449). In terms of police culture and the norms she experienced, Diana noted, "They all play hockey, or they all go out and drink together. So, if you didn't play hockey or you weren't able to participate in their social activities, then you weren't really part of the group. You're an outsider."

In my study, several aspects of 'police culture' were discussed by my participants, many of which correlate with the above, including experiences of sexism and harassment, while others reported that things are 'better now'. My participants also spoke about their Type A personality styles and how personality traits are more important than gender in some cases.

A culture of sexism

Not surprisingly, given the culture of policing outlined in Chapter Two and above, many of the participants of my study described police culture as first and foremost, sexist, and they spoke to this in a variety of ways. The first of this is at the more personal level and has to do with women's reproductive roles. Catherine recalled her experience of being interviewed for a position in the police force. She noted how, "I was going to be the second female ever hired there" and for her, this was very exciting. However, during the interview, "they asked me if I was on birth control, then they said, 'And what are we going to do if you get pregnant?'" Women's reproductive role was also raised and questioned by several other participants. For example, Emily talked about a similar experience, "Throughout my career I've been asked about my having babies by my colleagues and superiors." Similarly, Rebecca noted the different treatment that men and women get when trying to sign up for new courses or training,

> I've been looked over for things before, because I'm a mom. They also said that because I didn't submit a family care plan along with my intent to go on this training I was turned down. I asked if my male counterpart had been asked to submit a family care plan, and they said "no". I know my male colleague also has children so why was he not asked to submit one?

What Rebecca is calling attention to here is a double standard which is very much based on gender, very much based on women's biological production but also assumptions about

childcare. Experiences such as Rebecca's highlight the assumptions made by men about women who have children, who is responsible for the care of said children, and how this may impact a mother police officer's work. This type of differential treatment continues to ensure women have access to fewer training and promotional opportunities than do men. Janine, who has over 30 years of policing also spoke about the engrained sexism she experienced at the beginning of her career noting,

> I was the second women in that position. The first one lasted two months. On my first day there, my supervisor told me that as a woman in policing, you are one of three things. You're either a whore, a lesbian, or you're married.

With this tripartite classification system, it is easy to see how her predecessor lasted only two months. Women experiencing this kind of sexism would likely understand quickly the need to 'choose' which type of women police officer she would portray or remain as unobtrusive as possible in order to avoid being classified by this system. This type of hostility towards women in policing appeared to be both common and normalized according to several of my participants. They became used to dealing with sexism and hostility from their male colleagues and supervisors. Interestingly, research has found that those with fragile self-esteem are more likely to hold hostile sexist attitudes toward members of the out-group (women), and to prefer men in positions of leadership (Mansell & Gatto, 2022). Later in her career, when Janine applied for a different unit that had one woman working in it already, her supervisor told her that although she had earned the position she could not have it because "we don't want any more split tails in that unit. I asked what a 'spit tail' was and he told me it was someone with a vagina". Janine was told she could grieve the decision but that doing so "would not be good for my career".

Moving beyond the more personal, Anna discussed experiencing a broader sexist culture while working in the sex crimes unit. She positioned it as "not a position that very many men ever put in for." The reason she gave is "this underlying belief that women are lying when they report getting sexually assaulted. This is very strong in our department." This brings me back to Fricker's (2007) idea of 'testimonial injustice', where ingrained prejudices and assumptions cause "a hearer to give a deflated level of credibility to a speaker's words" (p. 1). In other words, women seeking justice are simply not believed. Testimonial injustice in part explains why in 2017 more than 37,000 sexual assault allegations in Canada are now being required to be reviewed because they were labelled as "unfounded" by policing agencies. Unfounded is when police receive a report of a sexual offence but do not believe it occurred or even was attempted (Doolittle, 2017). Testimonial injustice can similarly be used to explain how police repeatedly chose not to investigate the many Indigenous women and girls who disappeared in and around the downtown east side of Vancouver from the 1980s into the 2000s. The 2012 inquiry into MMIWG (Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls) noted that police treated the women and girls as an afterthought, they were simply not considered worthy of police time and attention, which is the primary reason the killings went on for so long and took such a long time to apprehend the serial murder who preyed on these women and girls (Oppal, 2012). When police officers take on the role of arbiters of morality and ethics, deciding who qualifies as a victim, or what types of offences they consider worthy of their attention, we should all be worried. This is not within the purview of policing, yet it was entirely normalized within police services. Concerning as this is, it is not the only time and space where police have behaved in this way.

Anna built on this problem when she stated that most male officers, "think that sexual assault is a woman's issue, not a criminal issue." Her argument is supported in scholarly literature as it has been found that police operate within a "culture of skepticism" towards complainants of sexual assault (Johnson, 2017; Quinlan, 2016; O'Keeffe et al., 2009). Factors including whether or not the accused was a stranger, if a weapon was used, if the victim was injured, and the extent of injury to the victim, as well as how viciously the victim fought back determine if the offence constituted a 'real rape'. Additionally, if the victim's testimony is inconsistent, or if they wish to drop the charges, this counts against them being perceived as genuine in their victimhood (Johnson, 2017). On one hand, having women work in sex crimes units is very important since most women have either experienced assault or harassment, or someone close to them has experienced this. In fact, the rate of sexual assault for women in Canada is 37 per 1,000, however research has found that 83% of sexual assaults are not reported (Department of Justice, 2019). For these reasons, women officers taking the sexual assault report are more likely to listen without prejudice than their male counterparts and thus less likely to determine that the assault never occurred. It is of deep concern if those in positions of power who are expected to uphold the law do not see sex crimes as 'criminal' behaviour deserving of police attention and response. I will return to this in the discussion chapter.

Of course, not all the participants labeled the culture of policing as sexist. In fact, a few participants made statements to the contrary, declaring they had never experienced sexism from their male colleagues. For example, when talking about her workplace culture Megan, who had been policing for 14 years and married to another police officer in the same department said, "I would consider the people I work with like family. We joke around, perhaps sometimes *off colour* but it is never inappropriate. I've never felt harassed or anything like that." Similarly

Kelly, a police officer of 15 years stated, “I’ve only experienced support in my workplace, and everyone I work with I have the sense that they would jump in front of a bullet to save me. That’s pretty powerful.” Kelly did however discuss the sexism she has experienced from members of the public. So, what exactly is ‘off colour’? Just some ‘harmless fun’? Interestingly, despite their protestations, these participants actually went on to describe events or norms that were clearly, at least to me, sexist and I describe those in the next section.

Another interesting dynamic was the need by some of the participants seemed to feel to protect their employer and colleagues and therefore, they did not speak of or report sexist behaviour. There are a number of possible explanations as to why some women experienced and discussed a culture of sexism at length while a few other participants reported that they had never experienced this and did not feel that sexism was present in their workplace. These will be discussed in the following chapter. There is also the ‘fitting in’ and belonging challenge, which I address shortly in this chapter.

Harassment

Linked to sexism is a persistent undercurrent in policing of bullying, harassment, and sexual harassment which has, in recent years, become public through class action lawsuits concerning gender and sexual orientation-based harassment and discrimination of female RCMP members. For example, the sexual harassment lawsuit, known as the Merlo-Davidson settlement, was settled in 2016 with over $125 million in compensation to victims, while another class action lawsuit centred on bullying, harassment and intimidation in the RCMP is still ongoing but expected to top $1.1 billion dollars in compensation to victims (Tunney, 2022).

According to many of my participants, sexism and harassing behaviour is endemic to policing across Canada. It is not a case of ‘a few bad apples’ as that is how it often is framed.

One example of harassment was shared by Devon. She noted that, "even as a supervisor I've had men (colleagues) trying to challenge me in very aggressive ways". Displays of aggression is one way in which men try to challenge and intimidate women. She argued that this was done because they hoped, "I was going to cry. They would think that if they were very aggressive to me, and going against whatever directive I gave them, that I would cry and then bow down or crumble". Devon stated that it was

> very fascinating from a psychological mindset that that's all you think you have in your toolkit to use rather than words, and being reasonable and professional…that you're going to bully me into what you want by being aggressive and because I'm a female I'm just going to fold like a cheap lawn chair.

Helen also shared an experience of harassment that occurred while taking a course. The course trainer showed a training video from the United States in which some female officers were wearing jewelry. After the video, he began insulting the women in the video, and "while doing so, he was staring at some of the new women in the course who happened to be wearing jewelry that day." Helen went to her supervisor to let him know about the trainer's inappropriate comments towards the women in the group. This supervisor did not intervene although he did share her comments with the trainer. But as it turned out, going to her supervisor only made things worse for Helen because, "the next day when we did our scenarios, the trainer followed me around all day and at the end of the day he failed me. Everyone else passed." She went on to say that,

> they didn't give me any documentation as to why I failed, but I still think it was because I had questioned his behaviour. I was so shocked that he was allowed to get away with this type of behaviour, and that all those guys would go along with it because it was obvious

they had all had a conversation about it and had decided that I shouldn't pass. And that's how they taught me a lesson.

One lesson is to keep your mouth shut and not disrupt or question misogynistic behaviour. The other lesson related to Helen's colleagues in the course; rather than stand up for her and what is right, they banded together to see her fail the course. This is one example of the closing of ranks which happens in the 'blue brotherhood' in order to maintain the 'old boys club'.

Another example comes from Sandra, a senior police leader, who shared this example: "currently we have a situation with two female members, very skilled, articulate, knowledgeable, who were demeaned and embarrassed, and one of them was physically assaulted by a male colleague in front of other colleagues." Janine, another senior leader with 32 years of service summed it up quite nicely as "male privilege – the only ones who say there isn't (harassment and sexism) are the white males". As previously stated, policing is a difficult job. What these examples make clear is that for many women, their work is made far more difficult by the injurious behavior of their male colleagues.

But it's 'better now'

Is policing getting better for my participants? As alluded to above, there were participants who stated that there seemed to be less sexism and harassment than before, and things were in fact, improving. The participants who shared this sentiment had been in policing for 15 years or more, hence they had the advantage of being able to look back at their earlier careers and compare them to current day experiences. These women also had risen through the ranks and held senior roles at the time that I interviewed them, hence they may also be experiencing less sexism, harassment or discrimination due to their senior positions. As Jessica noted, "at the beginning of my career, people (male officers) were very vocal about not accepting women, or

not wanting to work with women. They would talk about it openly." She went on to say, however, that, "as society has evolved and as the organization has evolved, I can't imagine now that someone would say something like that, like 'I don't want to work with women." Similarly, Sarah stated,

> We sometimes reference the 'old boys club' in terms of the mentality, and some of the relationships like how people are connected, and you don't even realize this can have an impact on who gets a certain course or even a promotion. Sometimes they will support people in their web, so there can be a bit of that undertone but I think women are combatting that or trying to combat that and doing their own thing.

What Sarah is making reference to here is how organisations change due to pressure from the outside such as women's movements and organisations that have publicly called out gender oppression and pressured institutions for change. Sarah is also suggesting that women officers on the inside have taken on (or 'tried' as she notes, which is important) the culture that they are having an impact. It is the joining of these forces – the inside and the outside – which has the best chance of leading to fundamental change, although it takes time and effort to make the connections and do the work.

Despite the 'things are better now' comments, two other participants were clear that little has changed. For them sexual harassment and discrimination are ongoing even if they are less blatant than before and of course, women are not necessarily just taking it. As Amy, with 22 years in policing noted,

> I've been shut down and shoved down for so long, and I really feel like I've been left out and shamed so much of my career that I am now, I'm just not willing to do it anymore. I've got the voice, and I'm pretty vocal.

In hearing Amy's words, I could not help but imagine how her career could have been so much more satisfying and efficacious if she had not had to manage through the stressors of being treated so poorly for so long. Imagine what else she could have accomplished had she not had to spend so much of her energy building herself up again and again due to feeling "shoved down" and "shamed". That said, Amy also noted that things were getting better, but we have to be suspect of the starting point especially in hearing her words. We can say that things are getting better if women police officers are finding the courage to speak out and I return to this in the next chapter.

Issues of identity

Some of my participants spoke about their identity and how closely it was tied to their role as a police officer. Some spoke about their personalities as 'Type A' or being an 'adrenaline junkie' and the necessity of being willing and able to be authoritative and give directives while on the job. Brenda noted how "policing is very aggressive, you have to be able to stand your ground, you cannot have a member of the public telling you they're not going to do something, you have to give directions, you have to be in charge." For Lisa, identity was imperative: "it's my identity, for some people their work is just work, then there's the rest of their life. For me it's all engulfed in one because my work is like so much of who I am as a person." Devon noted, "I think I'm more of an A-type personality. I like to win, you know? I think it's more prevalent in men and women in this kind of work". Jessica stated, "it's the element of being an adrenaline junkie, there are big, exciting adrenaline rush events." I string these comments together to show what for these women, their concept of self is closely tied to an understanding of police culture as an aggressive, adrenaline-fueled authority. With Lisa's noting it's, "who I am as a person", suggests that women police officers may internalize the workplace culture in order to fit in and

feel accepted in their workplace. Martin's (1979) typology of POLICEwomen and policeWOMEN is significant here as women police officers who align themselves with the masculine police cultural ideals may increase their sense of belonging, or at least their congruency with the majority of their colleagues.

Mirroring men, Transforming self

A critical theme that emerged in the data and every participant spoke to was the extent to which women tried to be 'like men' in a variety of ways. Participants stated they needed to constantly prove themselves; proving they are just as good as the men, and that they are worthy of working in policing in the same way as men. Some of the participants spoke about their physicality and how their strength and size was an asset because they were larger people and their physicality aligned with masculine norms. Other participants stated their physicality was a detriment because they were smaller and they felt they needed to work even harder to prove themselves worthy because of this physical attribute. This is of course, despite the fact that the women would have passed the same physical testing and training as their male counterparts prior to being hired.

Several participants talked about having to learn "manspeak", or "talk man" in order to be heard and taken seriously by their colleagues or superiors. Devon noted,

> It was like everyone was trying to be a male and not be noticed as a female. I just pretended to be a guy! I just faked it until I made it. You pretend you're super tough, you swear a whole bunch, and you're just like, 'yeah, fuck them, fuck this', and you go play hockey even if you don't like hockey.

The efforts Devon is describing to attempt to fit in and be accepted by imitating what men do speaks to both the deep desire to feel accepted, but also to the extent to which women were not

made to feel welcome. She later stated, "when I was more junior, it always felt like I had to hide my more sensitive side". In discussing issues of equality and a sentiment of some women that they should "do what men do, and what's been done for decades past", she stated, "most of us (women) didn't want to behave that way, we just don't know how to behave differently and still survive, and still be valuable". Similarly, Kelly noted that when she started in the police service she thought "I had to be really aggressive and loud. I thought I had to come across as very strong and intimidating and looking back I see how that failed me so many times." Kelly's comments are poignant as they convey how her perspective on her own gendered behavior has changed over time. In the earlier years of her career she took on the masculinized behaviors she felt were required to be accepted and 'do policing' by 'doing gender', however later in her career she realized that she could 'do policing' utilizing her own skills, knowledge and capacities as a woman police officer. This is a significant and important shift however it is a shift that most men are not required to go through because they are in a place of belonging upon arrival. Catherine aligned the assumptions and affections with a very important issue, stating,

> We were struggling because we didn't have any female role models or mentors. We were mirroring what we saw. We were those butch leaders who were always called a bitch. That's what we were because we were mirroring male leadership. It was all fine for a guy to lose his shit and yell, but if you did that, you'd get labelled and called all those things.

Although the women in my study spoke about mirroring men, Catherine here notes an important divide which is the extent to which women were still expected to behave 'like women' by integrating into the masculinized norms, yet not behave the way men did, such as yelling and losing 'their shit' as this was seen as unacceptable. Institutions are deeply gendered when, in this

case, women have to be so very measured by behaving and speaking in ways that are much like men, but not exactly like men. Such a delicate and tentative balance must be difficult to achieve and require much attention on the part of women, because of course, they cannot simply be themselves as men do.

Proving it again and again

From my research, and other scholars such as Archbold and Schulz (2008) and Wertsch (1998), women police officers struggle to be accepted as equals by their male colleagues often leading them to still work twice as hard to prove their value. Amy described her experience as follows,

> it's like if graduating from the police academy is like climbing a hill, as a man when you graduate, you are already at the top of the hill. If they are later found to be not very good, or not competent, then they start slipping down the hill. When I started, I think women graduated and were about halfway up the hill, and you had to grind your way to the top to get respect and be the same as your male counterparts. And if you struggled with anything, you're going to fall faster and harder than your male counterpart.

Amy's description suggests that men and women in policing are not operating in a system that is equal, but rather one where women are held to different and more arduous standards. Research on gender bias in the workplace indicates that women are held to higher standards than are men and this is especially the case in professions that are male dominated (Williams & Dempsey, 2014; Ridgeway et al., 2022). Nancy, with less than 5 years of policing stated,

> I think as women we have to prove ourselves from the beginning. Even with promotions, people say 'it's because she's a woman'. Or when a new guy comes into the department, he will automatically get the recognition or be seen as someone who's going to be more

successful.

One of the reasons women experience having to constantly prove their worth as an officer is because the male standard is 'the' standard and by not being male, women are not afforded the assumption of fitting the standards on an ongoing basis. This is part and parcel of hegemonic masculinities. Another reason women continue to experience the need to prove themselves may be because men engage in a kind of gender-blind sexism where they refuse to discuss or acknowledge the gendered organization and by doing so continuing the oppression of women police officers. Murray (2021) in her study of men and women police officers found that when asked about gender inequality, male police officers either denied its existence, or avoid any mention of gender differences or gender inequality. Her study found that, "although the men in this sample did not use outright sexist language or disparage female coworkers, by describing themselves and their agencies as gender-neutral, they obscure the hegemonic masculinity inherent to their workplaces." (Murray, 2021, p. 101). By avoiding or denying the gendered differences in a workplace, men are able to claim that it is an equal playing field and gender-neutral environment where anyone will succeed if they simply put in the work. This sentiment continues to be echoed in policing despite mounting evidence to the contrary.

Physicality

From the earliest stages of recruitment, there is a great deal of emphasis on being physically fit and strong. I have attended numerous recruitment presentations by various policing agencies and one key point for recruiters is the ability of applicants to pass the POPAT (police officer's physical abilities test). Researchers have argued that conventional policing is equated with physicality because of the coercive nature of policing and the crime-fighting aspect of the work (Chan et al., 2003). Anna spoke about her physicality as an asset, stating,

> I'm big, and I'm as strong as the guys my size. I didn't have the problems that a lot of other women have which is their size. They are seen as being of less worth, and that's because there is so much emphasis put on what you can do physically in this job. In reality, I can tell you that I have ever only been in a handful of altercations in my career because I can talk my way out of it.

It is concerning that women officers who are physically smaller may be, as Anna noted, of 'less worth' than physically larger officers.

Rebecca noted, "if you're a tiny female, if you're small and meek you might have to prove yourself more repeatedly to people as opposed to being like, brash or if you have a presence". So having a 'presence' or being a physically larger person is considered to be an asset as this conforms more closely to hegemonic masculinities and smaller bodies, especially of women are considered to be less worthy. This norm in policing is aligned with the devaluation of the feminine and high valuation of that which is considered masculine; another way men set the standards. Sophia noted that, "I realized early on, in order to fit in, I had to be better than them (men) in everything". She also spoke about her physicality stating,

> I'm 200lbs and 5'11". I'm big and I have a mouth on me. I'm good at firearms and I don't have a problem defending myself. When I had some rotten things tried to be done to me, I made sure what I did in return was far worse so they didn't mess with me about sexual stuff because I wasn't interested.

Sophia is eluding to being the victim of something "rotten" during her career and although she would not elaborate, she argued that her physical size and abilities allowed her to stand up to men who would otherwise try to intimidate or harass her. Again, physical size is seen as an asset

and used to keep others from "mess[ing]" with her. As noted, policing can be dangerous so like many other things, it is complicated.

Some participants who acknowledged they were physically smaller people stated that having 'tough skin' is an effective approach without being physically intimidating. Kelly noted that,

> I'm not good at fighting, I never have been. I mean I can go through the steps I've been taught but I will use the tools I'm good at which is talking and diffusing. I look like a mom and I talk like one and that diffuses situations more than anything else, but you have to have really thick skin.

Many of my participants spoke about the need to have 'thick skin' in order to avoid feeling impacted by the negative experiences they deal with on a regular basis both inside their institution and outside from the public. The emphasis, as expressed by my participants was that you had to be both mentally and physically tough. There is no doubt that police work requires some physical skill, however the continued emphasis on physical prowess and strength is entirely aligned with hegemonic masculinity and provides another avenue to exclude women and make them feel 'less than'. Being mentally tough and having 'thick skin' is more about creating positive and healthy ways of dealing the psychological stress of the work. Only in the last few decades have we started to recognize the importance of positive support networks and self-care in order to better manage the trauma, secondary victimization/traumatization, and in severe cases post-traumatic stress disorder that occur for all front-line workers, including police. Women experience high levels of stress in their policing careers, often due to the gendered environment, and the employer would do well to support employee mental wellness by reducing the inequality experienced by women in policing.

'Manspeak' or 'talking boy'

I have alluded to this a number of times above, but it is important to focus more closely on the amount of gendered discourse or better said 'manspeak' in policing that participants shared in my study. Some participants drew attention to the very different way women use language or speak as compared to their male colleagues. They were clear that this variation in gendered discourse has negative implications for women, most notably hindering a sense of belonging and secondly, for those women who attempt to promote to senior leadership positions. Belonging and fitting in are different conceptually and in how they operate. According to Brene Brown (2010), "fitting in is about assessing a situation and becoming who you need to be to be accepted. Belonging, on the other hand, doesn't require us to *change* who we are; it requires us to *be* who we are." (p. 25). The discourse and language of policing is used as a mechanism to 'other' women and their ways of communicating. As my participants noted, they had to mould and change themselves to fit in, and this included ways of speaking with their male colleagues and supervisors in order to be heard. Sandra noted, "men talk their language and their code, it wasn't emotion-based, it had to be logical, concise and to the point, and not go down the emotional path. So, I learned to talk boy." What is interesting is that my participants found that although their communication style had negative implications inside of the organization of policing, it had positive implications outside when working with and addressing members of the community. This may be due to the masculine image of policing as non-emotional which stands in contrast to the reality of policing which requires strong communications skills, verbal skills and conflict resolution skills (Miller, 1999). The participants in my study spoke about how they were better able to communicate with community members and this ability allowed them to avoid using violence or aggression in situations where they were trying to gain compliance.

Amy spoke about 'manspeak' in relation to leadership and promotion. She had a significant amount of experience both going through promotional processes herself, as well as being part of the promotional panel when she was in a senior leadership position. In running promotional processes, Amy stated that the panel members use the marking rubric of the policing agency which awards points for using "I" statements in a candidate's answers. She noted that, "women value collaborative leadership, but that's not what we are marking (in a promotional process). It's always the 'I' statements that are valued – 'I did this, and I did that'". Amy went on to state that, as a woman going through a promotional process, "we have to translate into what I call 'manspeak' because what I want to say is not what they (men) want to hear. I have to answer the question in a way that a man can hear it".

Anna too spoke about how she had to learn to adapt her communication style in order to be heard, stating, "I was in a promotional process and got feedback on my package saying the language was too soft, so I had to make changes. I'm saying the same things, but the language just doesn't resonate with men." Later in her career, Anna was part of selecting candidates in a promotional process and noted, "I had to browbeat those guys (male colleagues on the panel) into understanding their inherent bias; this systemic bias that exists. It's like translating every day. It's exhausting". This idea of being exhausted was in fact a leitmotif throughout the interviews as women expressed being tired of continually fighting to fit in or to change things, as Anna is trying to do. Sometimes women are just fighting the same battles over and over.

Confidence and competencies

A central theme that emerged from the data was that of women's level of confidence, and the extent to which women are considered to meet the competencies for a given role or promotion. In an examination of issues of confidence, it is necessary to step back and view the

hyper masculinized environment of policing in order to trouble the concept of confidence. Are women really less confident? Or are they being asked to operate in a patriarchal, masculinized environment where 'confidence' is embodied in a certain way, and a way that automatically discounts and excludes them?

An example of how women are not considered as competent as men in policing is Brenda Lucki who was appointed as the new commissionaire of the RCMP in April 2018 and is the first woman to hold this position. In May 2018 she made her first appearance at the House of Commons where she was asked by a Liberal MP how she, as a woman, would, "tell the guys how to behave" (Aiello, 2018). It is difficult to imagine a male commissionaire being asked the same question. This kind of commentary is significant because it shows the lack of confidence in female leadership at the level of Canadian federal government which is indicative of what women in the police force face on a daily basis. Any woman working in policing is, therefore, in an untenable position given this hyper masculinized environment and constant need to prove their abilities.

Jessica has supported and encouraged many women to seek leadership roles in the policing agency where she works. However, she was quick to point out the difficulties for women calling them "stumbling blocks". One of these, she noted is "if they have children, realistically they are still probably doing 90% of the care work while their partner does 10%". She indicated that one of the limiting factors to getting more women into more senior roles is that they "themselves don't think they can do it, or that they are capable, or they think that it's too big of a job". This lack of confidence in their ability is not however mirrored in the male population as Jessica reminds us. In her own words, noted, "it was uncommon to run into the same kind of thing when I would have a conversation with a male". The men virtually never say

that they are not sure if they can do it, "or that the job seems too hard." It seems that the men are conditioned to see themselves as natural leaders, as able to take up the reigns at the upper levels whereas women wallow in doubt. As Diana, another police leader argued, "women will not apply for a position unless they have 99.9% of the requirements, but men will apply with only 25% of the requirements". This sentiment was echoed by Amy who stated, "Men will put in for a position when they feel they are about 60% ready. Women will not put in for a position until they feel they are 110% ready. So, this is the confidence piece". Diana noted this is an issue related to confidence, however other factors may also influence a women's sense of not feeling prepared to take on a given role. One such factor is, as other participants noted, that women officers have few if any role models and they do not tend to have senior leaders who are mentoring them and supporting them to promote into other positions. By keeping more senior roles obfuscated, male senior leaders can support those that they see as willing and capable of doing the role, and most of the time that is another man.

Kelly added to this conversation when she talked about longevity. Although she is always happy to see a new women recruit, "in the back of my mind I'm asking myself how long she will stay?" She also noted that there have been, "some bad female hires and women tend to watch them more closely than the guys do because we want to closely guard our reputation and if one female police officer is a disappointment, we should have done better with our hiring." Kelly's comments point to the tendency for women to attrition out of policing more frequently than men, but as importantly, she is highlighting the scrutiny that women face from other women. One has to wonder if men would feel similarly; if a man were hired and is found to be a "disappointment", would that reflect poorly on all other men? For the participants, that was highly unlikely. This is another dynamic that women in policing face, in part, because they have

not achieved critical mass hence continue to be tokenized and scrutinized to an extent that puts a great deal of pressure on women to prove their worth. Rabe-Hemp (2007) found that when women are few in number, "the behaviors of female officers are more salient and draw more attention as novelties than those of male officers" (p. 253). This suggests another negative impact of having low numbers of women and the impact of their actions being in the spotlight.

Joan noted, "I think even though we are now in 2020, I think women have to work harder to establish that level of confidence". She also stated,

> I think the problem is we're doing an end run around competence. So instead of giving the right person the job which may or may not be a woman, optically we are trying to suppress the male dominance that we've had in this organization for 150 years by placing women in senior leadership positions that perhaps aren't ready for those roles yet, and that's hurting us.

On the one hand, Joan is suggesting that women still struggle to establish a level of confidence and women do not have the required level of competence (for some leadership roles). On the other hand, she is suggesting that having women in positions of leadership is an attempt to suppress historical male dominance and women leaders are not ready for the roles they occupy. As a woman in a position of leadership herself, is this an attempt to distance herself from other women in leadership? The suggestion that women do not have the competencies seems a pointed and damning statement, especially coming from a woman in leadership.

The illusion of a meritocracy

There has been much consternation about affirmative action and equity hiring policies with discussions centred on whether or not a workplace should change the entrance requirements in order to attract more minority groups such as women. Policing in Canada officially permitted

women to work as sworn officers in 1974. Since that time, women have joined without surpassing a national average of 23% of all police officers. Their participation remains at these lower levels without much optimism for improvement. One of the themes that emerged from my data centred on hiring and promotion and whether they are based on gender or merit. Most of my participants were clear about their own experiences noting that they met all the required benchmarks and criteria to be hired and/or promoted. They stated that they would not want to be hired as a 'diversity' hire due to being a woman as this would have been understood to mean that they were a less qualified candidate than the men in the same process. Being seen to meet the same standards as their male colleagues was of importance, even though the unwritten standards for women was even higher than for men as discussed above. Reflecting on her hiring process and early career, despite being highly qualified, Anna noted, "my whole career I've had people tell me to my face that I got hired because I'm a woman. You are automatically assumed not be as qualified." Regarding promotions, Anna noted, "God forbid a woman should get a position that a guy wanted, then she got it *because* she's a woman. Guys still think that we can't possibly be better than them". Speaking with a great deal of passion and with more than 20 years of experience, Anna's comments resonated because she knew herself as a knowledgeable and skilled police officer, yet her merit was constantly called into question. Might this be a reason women's 'confidence' is labelled as lacking (if we conceptualize confidence as a masculine trait as defined above)? As Janine noted,

> Coming up I had to work twice as hard just to get accepted and I'd hate for someone to say I got the job because I'm female. All I did was work, and my supervisor, he really hated women and if you weren't working 100 hours of overtime each month, you were a piece of dog shit.

Some of my participants were concerned about the merit of newly hired women and ensuring that standards for hiring women did not get whittled down or reduced in order to increase the number of women hired. Kelly was offered a position at her policing agency, and she had many years of related experiences prior to being hired. She noted that,

> I got in ahead of them (men), and they said, 'oh yeah, we heard they were hiring lots of women right now'. I just shut them down. I want to be hired based on merit, not my gender. I hope that hiring practices continue to be unbiased. I get that they want to increase our numbers but it should not be at the cost of the quality of the employee.

Kelly's comments reveal that the current hiring standards are understood as being 'unbiased' and should remain that way. The distrust of the qualifications of other women officers shores up the gendered norms entrenched in the organization. One result of this is an unwelcoming environment for women, who, again, must prove their worth.

Related to the issue of merit, some participants spoke about the proportion of women that police agencies should strive for. A few participants noted that policing agencies should have 30%-35% women believing that achieving critical mass would make women's careers less difficult and reduce the gender inequalities. Others stated that women should comprise 50% of all police officers as this would better reflect the proportions of women in the community and may help to reduce gender-based issues. In speaking about the proportion of women in policing, Megan noted,

> I think the goal is 50% but I also think we should not lower the expectations of entrance for women. What does that do for women? Instead, we should be going out there and actively recruiting women who meet the bar. This way we'd have a high standard of police officers instead of just putting through women to meet a quota. That is ridiculous

> because it creates a bias towards women and we are hiring women who are less capable of doing the job. Rightly or wrongly, if we have a female officer who is inept, it reflects poorly on all women in policing.

While what Megan says is important because it raises the challenge of 'bars' and 'standards' which are never gender neutral, it also assumes that there was no bias before and only the inclusion of women brings about a bias. However, the fact is if an occupation is all male, it is biased in favour of men. If men create all the rules and standards, it will be biased in men's favour. Megan's statement also positions 'bias' (and quotas) as purely negative when in fact, the United Nations pushes for a minimum of 33% women in workplaces (and politics), because they believe that critical mass matters for change, although it is not all that matters as Clover and McGregor (2016) found in their work with women politicians.

Some participants reflected on the extent to which they felt tokenized. Despite meeting the hiring criteria and getting hired, it became clear that their gender put them in a small category that was not intended to grow beyond the minimum number of women officers. Catherine discussed being hired into a smaller policing agency and being one of only two women officers. She stated that they were put on opposite shifts "because we could search women (suspects)" which was of assistance to the male officers. She noted that over time, her police agency hired two more women, "so now we had four females, each on a different shift so there was no need to hire any more women". Similarly, Sarah spoke about a recent promotional competition where the only two women in the process knew, "they were competing with each other just to get that one spot". Sarah also noted that women in her department "were completely tokenized" because their chief had made it clear, "we are pushing them through" in order to meet diversity targets.

For these women, their gender was highlighted while their merit was not which, for them, cast doubt on their abilities.

Although there are standards to meet for a promotional competition, at times there may be several qualified candidates, or, if a position is vacated, someone will be asked to 'act' in the position for a period of time. Acting work is beneficial as it gives the individual the experience necessary to promote at a later date. When either of these scenarios occur, the issue of 'best fit' arises and this is a subjective decision made by those in leadership roles. As noted by my participants, rarely is a women seen as the 'best fit' in these scenarios. Catherine also spoke about the organizational barriers she experienced including, "a culture where the only people getting promoted were those on the emergency response team (ERT), and of course there were no women on the emergency response team". Similarly, Brenda shared, "everybody knew that if you wanted to get promoted you had to go to Major Crimes unit. It was a total boy's network, they just promoted their friends". With these kinds of observations, it seems remarkable that women continue to have the fortitude to remain in a policing career.

Building on the obstacles discussed above, policy decisions regarding resource allocation appear to not only disadvantage women police officers, but women victims also. Helen was in a position to provide some provincial statistics regarding the departments that women typically are hired into; she stated that British Columbia "had over 800 gang investigators across the province and only six full time domestic violence coordinators". She made the point "what is the sexy work? the masculine work? It's gang work, not domestic violence". Surely policing must pay attention to gangs and gang violence, however the significant discrepancy between the number of gang investigators and domestic violence coordinators must be underscored. Domestic violence impacts so many women every day yet receives little police attention and resources. In 2021,

there were 114,132 police reported victims of intimate partner violence. This was the seventh consecutive year of increases for this type of violent offence, and 79% of victims were women and girls (Statistics Canada, 2021).

Just when you think you are being recognized for your merit, not targeted for harassment due to your gender, as Sandra experienced, you would be wrong. Sandra shared her experience of being propositioned in exchange for a promotion. She stated,

> I got pulled in for an interview. I couldn't understand why it was at 7pm, but when I got There, the only person there was the guy doing the interview and he asked me if I like red wine or white wine. I told him I don't drink. He asked me if my husband knew I was there. I said, of course he does. He asked if my husband minds if I have to work evenings. It took a few more minutes of this line of questioning before I thought to myself, you've got to be kidding me. I knew the saying, if you want to get ahead, get into bed. If you wanted the job, you did what it took. I told him thanks but I'm not that interested in the job and I walked out. But there was nowhere to go with that back in the day.

Putting women in these kinds of positions not only undermines their value, keeps them anxious about their safety, and nervous they could lose their job. And as Sandra points out, she had no recourse and nowhere to turn. Regardless of how skilled a woman police officer may be, her merit is moot in every such instance.

Recruitment and promotion

Recruitment and promotional processes vary across the country, from province to province, and between policing agencies and I outlined many of the historical norms of recruitment in Chapter 2. In addition, it is important to note that each policing agency has a

recruitment officer who is responsible for promoting their agency and addressing questions from potential applicants. The recruitment officer is a critical position as this person is also a gatekeeper and has the ability to draw candidates in or discourage their interest. Sandra initially spoke with a recruiter who, "was doing everything he could to discourage women from joining" which made her take another path studying at university. Five years later she re-considered stating, "no one is going to tell me what to do or not do, so I went and applied". She stated she was quickly hired and "I don't regret it. It's what I wanted to do". Similarly, Helen recalled meeting a recruiter,

> He asked me if I spoke French and I when I said no he told me not to bother applying. In fact they were hiring women like crazy at that time but he didn't want women in policing. I didn't find this out until later. He single-handedly probably turned away hundreds of women during his time as a recruiter.

As previously mentioned, the narrative of policing is highly masculinized and this narrative keeps many women and other minority groups from being interested in working in this career. The examples of Sandra and Helen above provide insight into how this masculinized narrative is re-produced by those with the ability to encourage or dissuade women from applying. Nancy spoke about the process of getting hired only a few years ago and the 'mixed messages' she experienced. She was assured that, "'you're not here because you're a woman, you're here because you're a good candidate'. I'd be interested to know if the males are being told that they are not here because they are male, but because they are a good candidate". Nancy's experience brings us back to the normative hegemonic masculinity of the organization and the need to point out that she is in fact a qualified candidate, which of course she is.

The use of a recruiting officer is not the only mechanism used by policing agencies to attract new candidates. Policing agencies use a wide variety of social media to provide information on their police service, what policing looks like, potential opportunities and how to apply. Of course, there is an element of advertising as policing agencies are needing to hire more recruits hence there is a need for the media campaign to be compelling. Recently, there have been recruitment videos circulating on social media that depict, in particular, Vancouver Police Department (VPD) as highly militarized. In this video (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XDysIx03yjI) one can see images of officers heavily armed with tactical gear entirely obscuring their faces, weapons drawn, doing things such as repelling down buildings and running from explosions. The video features dramatic music and the tagline "This is who we are" and "The place to be". The VPD faced backlash from the community and as a result pulled the recruitment videos, however they defended their advertisement stating that these activities are part of policing and recruits need to be informed about such aspects of policing. The deeper question is what kind of a message is VPD sending to the public and possible recruits? Is this really who they are? These advertisements depict policing as not only highly masculinized but as violent and dangerous. This narrative is likely to attract some individuals to policing, and likewise it will repel others, especially those who have strengths in collaboration, compassion and want to engage and improve their communities. These people are more likely to be women.

The promotional process has some consistencies in how it is managed across policing agencies. In order to be considered for promotion, one needs to meet the competencies for that position, they then need to put together their application package (often called a promotional package), and/or pass a test. There may be an interview, or a series of interviews at the

conclusion of which the candidates will be ranked in order of how well they did in the process. Depending on the number of positions available, individuals will be chosen from the list of candidates in order. Some of my participants were critical of the promotional process citing that it was bias and subjective despite a process being followed. Diana noted, "depending on who is in charge, if the guy in charge wants to hire all his buddies then that's what's going to happen. It's brutal and it still happens that men just hire their friends." Similarly, Amy noted,

> No one has ever tapped me on the shoulder and said, hey there's this great opportunity for you. With almost 300 members we do not have a single female in senior management. The highest-ranking female is as a Staff Sergeant. There are 37 Sergeants and five are women.

Amy's comments reflect the continuation of the 'glass ceiling' experienced by women in policing and many other careers (Todak et al., 2021).

In his report on the Merlo Davidson settlement agreement, the Hon. Michel Bastarache noted that the promotional process in the RCMP is, "fundamentally unfair and flawed", and "was described to me as the 'friends and family' plan." (p. vi). The results of this report echo the sentiments and experiences of many of my participants. In my interviews, several of the women discussed the hierarchy even within a group of police officers stating that often female officers and even some male officers (depending on positioning in masculine norms) fall outside the "inner circle" that is selected for promotion or otherwise given coveted projects or positions. It was described as a sort of jockeying to be in the "in" groups from which promotions were more certain. One such group was the ERT (emergency response team). As discussed previously, the ERT is almost exclusively dominated by men and very rarely do women join such units.

The possibility of promotion is also impacted by women's family obligations. Women tend to give significant consideration to the impact a promotion would have on her family and the time it would take away from meeting the needs of family members. Devon noted that,

> Men more often are more motivated to go anywhere to get promoted. They're not so concerned with consulting their wife, or it being detrimental to their family, as opposed to women I find they are taking the backburner, not taking promotion because they didn't want it to negatively affect their spouse and kids.

Similarly, Jessica stated, "women have often expressed that they just couldn't take on the promotional process or to step into a leadership or management role when their kids were certain ages." Catherine explains this further stating, "We often retire before we promote because we enter promotional competitions later in our careers. It felt like being the token women in any given competition." Catherine also noted that, "competition is extremely time consuming and there is not a lot of coaching or mentoring for us". She went on to say that

> For us it was perseverance and working 150 hours, and just pushing because it was not because you golfed with the boys, and it's not that you went drinking with them, you didn't hang with the boys, you didn't go fishing, you didn't get invited to go out on their activities, and they all pull each other up as they climb the ladder. Because they mirror each other, they're similar cloth, and they like each other's style, and support each other and mentor each other. We weren't any of those things.

Without the advantage of being part of the social circles of the senior officers, women who consider promoting are keenly aware that they are at a disadvantage compared to many of their male colleagues who spend social time with the leaders. Anna spoke directly to the idea of being, "lonely in leadership because where is your peer group?" Similarly, Sarah noted, "there's

not much I can identify with in terms of moving up in the organization because none of them look like me, they are all white males."

Hogan et al. (2011) surveyed Canadian police officers from 22 different policing agencies regarding promotional processes and almost half of them disagreed with the statement that the promotional process in their agency was fair and well understood. 18% were neutral on this statement while 33% agreed. This indicates that promotional processes are considered problematic by the people who engage in them. Helen noted the "promotional system in policing is kind of broken, and men spend a lot of time talking about how awesome they are. They are much better at talking about their own greatness than women are."

Megan noted inequalities in terms of promotions stating that she had recently returned from a maternity leave and, "was not able to use older examples (to meet competencies) in a promotional process". She also talked about being, "passed over for promotion and courses because people were making rumours I might have another baby." Decisions are made in this culture of hegemonic masculinities on rumours which is problematic but what is interesting is that it was Megan who raised this issue of bias. So, we have to ask: Is this not bias?

The processes of recruitment and promotions are deeply gendered and require further research. One of the primary issues that my participants spoke to in terms of assisting them through these processes is the need for mentoring. Women noted that they have few if any mentors who provide them with the information and support necessary to understand and successfully navigate the promotional process. As Brenda noted,

> In terms of promotion, women just didn't feel welcome. But when women are encouraged to apply, that's when you see them applying, and to apply for a promotion, you really need to know the formula, so you need to be mentored.

As mentioned by one of my participants, the RCMP previously attempted to introduce a mentoring program which paired up new recruits with more senior officers. This program was short-lived and criticized on many fronts. My participant noted that mentoring is required however it should be both voluntary and more organic in the formation of mentors and mentees.

Juggling work, family and children

Childcare and family responsibilities have been shown to inhibit the advancement of women, especially in male-dominated organizations (Babcock & Laschever, 2009). One of the most significant challenges articulated by my participants was the difficulties they faced making decisions about having a partner or spouse, having children, and balancing their family responsibilities with a career. As Sophia noted, "I don't have any kids. I decided I didn't have time (for having children)". It bears noting that women tend to attrition out of policing at higher rates than do men, particularly after they take a maternity leave some elect not to return (Prenzler & Sinclair, 2013). At the time I was doing my interviews, only one participant had left policing for different work. Certainly, more research is needed on the reasons why women opt out of their policing careers, and at what stage of their careers they do so.

At the time of interviewing my participants, 16 of them had a current partner/spouse while 5 were single. 14 of them had one or more children while 7 of them had no children. 20 participants self-identified as heterosexual while one self-identified as lesbian. Women must decide if and when they choose to have children knowing this has significant impact on their careers. Brenda noted,

> I'm very young in service to be where I am, and I will suggest that part of the reason is that I have chosen to remain single, and I have chosen to not have children. Those hours that people spend with their families are the hours that I put in after work.

Brenda's comments reflect the structure of policing as it is designed to fit well in men's lives as they tend to carry little responsibility for child and family care. Sandra noted,

> How do you balance a 70-80 hour work week with raising children? If your priorities are your family, how are you supposed to do this? For some time, the only women you saw advancing were single women, women with no children, or women who had an alternate lifestyle. That's not right either. Structurally there is no balance.

The bias inherent in policing careers are such that it is rare for women with family responsibilities to 'fit in' especially if they are to take on senior leadership roles. The requirement to work long hours negates the ability to also tend to the schedules and needs of children such as dropping off and picking up from school or taking a child to dentist appointments. Some of my participants questioned the necessity for such long hours and having to work extra hours regularly. As an example, Diana stated that in her experience,

> The mentality was that you had to be available 24/7 and if you weren't then just get out of here, regardless of your skills. I know I could do a better job working 40 hours per week than some of them were there pretending to work 80 hours a week. That's how they would justify it (not promoting women), that they needed someone who was available 24/7, and also calling something 'urgent' when it really was not.

Sandra also added that, "I lost out on two promotions, it's written in my file as a single parent 'single parent, not mobile' because I couldn't be called out in the middle of the night." She added, "my approach is, if you want to penalize me for my values, that's on you". Like other women, Sandra wanted to promote and purposely applied knowing that it might be necessary to be called out at odd hours. It is concerning that the employer is able to make these overriding decisions about an employee's status based on a family situation.

Anna noted,

> Women in upper positions, I don't know how they do it with children. Most of the women in leadership that I've known haven't had children. Those who can, they dedicate 60-70 hours per week and focus on promotion and they can do that because they have someone at home taking care of everything for them there.

She added that, "it's a toxic and unhealthy lifestyle and it's really about their [men's] need to scale it back a bit as opposed to us coming up to it". Here Anna is getting to the heart of the issue which is how the structure of policing has been created and evolved to fit with the gendered norms of hegemonic masculinities of men's lives, and this is then used as the standard that women must meet. She added that,

> It comes down to the choice and I still want my kids to have dinner, and he's not going to do it so you see a lot of divorces, and then what? It's not a choice. It does not allow for a healthy family environment. They talk about work/life balance, and it's all a load of crap. It is window dressing.

Anna's comments about her policing agency's approach to work/life balance and the possibility of an unhealthy family lifestyle and the likelihood of divorce seems to suggest that the framework of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, or a good work/life balance is a male-centric framework. Women's attempts, as Anna notes, fall short unless they have someone at home taking care of things such that they are able to focus on their careers. Women very rarely have a stay-at-home spouse who can fill this role.

Another challenge for women is in deciding when to tell senior management about a pregnancy as this has several implications. The women in my study felt constrained by the policy on the timing of revealing their pregnancy as well as the requirement to take on a 'desk

job' during their pregnancy. Helen noted, "the first time I was pregnant, one of the senior constables made a comment about how now that I was pregnant, I was useless for 18 months". She noted that the policy in her policing agency is that "a woman must disclose if she is pregnant by 12 weeks." Helen of course takes real "issue with this because a bunch of men decided it should be this way and once a woman is pregnant she should not be on the road. Women can decide this for themselves." One of the most significant changes to a work unit when a woman takes a maternity leave is that her position is not backfilled in her absence. This seemed to be a consistent practice in municipal policing services as well as the RCMP. This practice creates a great deal of strain for the work unit to complete the work of the missing member, as well as being stressful for the woman taking the leave as she may feel guilty leaving her colleagues short. Helen also stated, "when you're away for 18 months they don't backfill your position." Regarding paternity leave, she noted,

> Men can now take 36 weeks of paternity leave. This often means there are two people at home. I know some men who have completed their master's degree during that time because they had lots of free time to get it done. They weren't helping with childcare.

Diana, who was married to another police officer noted that unwed women without children, and lesbians don't seem to be "taking a step back. I had to take a step back to keep my family together. It was going to be my family or my career because my partner wasn't going to step back (in terms of his career)." She went on to say that,

> After we had kids there was a lot of fighting because of who was going to have to come home. I'm the one who took some part-time work. I was not able to take some roles offered to me because it would have required more after hours or on-call so I had to decline them. That hurt my career.

Certainly, many women who have full-time careers face the kinds of decisions when they realize they are being forced to choose to prioritize either her family or her career. As previously discussed, taking on a job-share or part-time work is one solution to this dilemma for women, but it has significant impacts on her career including things like reduced accruing of seniority, not being offered certain trainings or courses, and being seen as less dedicated to her job. Working part-time should not be viewed negatively by police administrators and leaders and women should not have to accept career set-back due to working reduced hours in their profession.

Some of my participants did not consider the issues faced by women who attempt to balance a career and family to be an unequitable social construct. Their understanding seemed to suggest that women need to make a choice because policing careers and family obligations are incompatible. One possible way to make both work is to utilize a job share where two people share one full-time position. This is a relatively recent development in many policing agencies and one that, according to my participants, only women choose to utilize. Kelly noted,

> I don't see that women are held back because they are women. Sometimes I see a lack of interest in being a leader at the top and taking on that responsibility. There is a focus on family rather than work. I lost seniority because I did a job share because I wanted to be with my kids. But I would always choose that. The women I know here would always choose family far more than the men do. There haven't been any men who have done job share.

She added, "If any woman wanted a leadership position, the doors are open but you have to commit all your energy and time to competing for that". Kelly's comments about 'choice' and women choosing to focus on their families to the detriment of their career is certainly a constrained choice. Framing it in this way may allow some women to avoid having to accept

that their workplace is bias and structurally unequal for women who choose to have children. By adopting a male-centric view of their workplace women are able to avoid developing a gender consciousness. This allows them to 'see' their workplace as equitable which enhances their sense of being 'part of the policing family'. In listening to my participants, it was interesting to hear how reluctant some were to coming across as being critical of their workplace, colleagues or their supervisors. There is certainly an element of 'biting that hand that feeds' when one is critical of their employer however this may also be a function of me, as a researcher, not being part of the policing world hence being in the 'out' group and an attempt to keep me at arm's length. That said, I did not have the impression that the participants who were uncritical were 'faking good', rather they seemed very genuine in their responses.

Lisa, who has been a police officer for less than two years spoke about the equality she has experienced in her work stating, "I feel that I get all the exact same opportunities and experiences, and I get spoken to and treated the exact same as my male counterparts. The males do a great job, they are very inclusive". This optimism around equality was also present in Lisa's future goal of wanting children and her sense that her career would not be impeded by her career aspirations. Lisa stated,

> I definitely want to be a mom, but I've always felt that I don't want to do a job share. I don't want to take that much time off. I would rather figure out different childcare options and figure something out rather than take time off or job share. I know what I'm capable of I guess, and I know I will be able to manage it and go back because I love my job.

This optimism was tempered as Lisa shared that she has almost always worked with a male partner and when attending a call she stated, "I personally always just go to the female (victim)

because I know that my male partner probably wants me to do that". In further discussion about working with her partner, Lisa stated, "Sometimes your partner might just completely do something that you don't necessarily agree with but you just have to go along with it". Lisa's sense of feeling like an equal, but also experiencing the internalizing of what her male partner directs her to do without recognizing the gendered norms inherent in this dynamic is an interesting juxtaposition that I discuss further in Chapter Five. Again, it is complicated.

Women leading differently

Most of my participants spoke about their experiences of engaging in leadership roles, either formally or informally in their workplace. As mentioned in Chapter Three, twelve of my participants held formal leadership positions which, for the purposes of this thesis are those police officers who have promoted to the level of sergeant or beyond. The other nine participants were at the constable level at the time of my interviews. They also discussed experiences of having a bad boss, some of whom were women. Some spoke of having poor supervisors who were women, while some spoke of male supervisors who had very negative effects on them. It seems logical that any organization but particularly organizations with significant power imbalances such as policing with their paramilitary hierarchal structure should have ethical, supportive, knowledgeable leaders in supervisory positions, however this is not always the case as discussed by my participants.

Informal and formal leadership

The little research that exists on women's leadership in policing suggests that women adopt a more transformational and collaborative leadership style than their male counterparts (Brown, 2007; Rabe-Hemp, 2008; Silvestri, 2007). This leadership approach, whether used formally or informally, allows women to see and understand challenges differently from their

male colleagues which often leads to new and novel solutions. Catherine spoke about her informal leadership experience in creating a new unit to address offences against women and children. She stated, "This was informal leadership for me as I was not promoted, I just did the work. My passion was really around women and children because it (the need) wasn't being met". She added, "it's just a tradition in policing that crimes against women and children are just not a priority". In terms of styles of policing, Catherine stated,

> They do not police the same way at all. I'd say right now there are a lot of very strong women police officers who are doing informal leadership with really creative ideas. When you get into formal leadership positions you put yourself out there for criticism. You have to have really thick skin, but over the years it really wears you down.

Catherine makes several important points including that crimes against women and children are not a priority, hence she felt she wanted to address this gap by creating a new unit focused on the needs of women and children who are victimized. This was both novel and necessary which Catherine easily saw and addressed. Another point made by Catherine is the need, again, for 'thick skin' in taking on a formal leadership role due to the criticism one is likely to experience in this role. Catherine, a senior leader with 30 years of experience noted the pressures and stress of formal leadership roles take their toll and "wear you down". Catherine spoke about the different skills of women and men stating,

> Women learn very quickly that physical force isn't necessarily going to work for them. Conversation and dialogue is how they police. This is totally different from men, they just get physical and take it on. Their thought process is more linear, women are more creative and inclined to find a solution that will not require a use of force.

Amy spoke about the importance of attending women's policing conferences and, "the chief wanted to send at least seven women which was great but I told him it's not women that need to understand women's issue, you guys need to go to the women's policing conference". Amy also noted that her police union executive has recently been required to allow for one woman to sit on each hiring panel and noted, "this had never happened before and there has never been a female on the union since I've been here". Amy added that, "women bring that collaborative, teambuilding, humility, and putting others first to try to achieve the goal", and adding that, "men are not as collaborative, nor as humble, they don't multitask as well, it's just a lot of ego".

Megan noted that women in policing, "are seen as less confrontational, less authoritarian and more approachable. We are more likely to get disclosures about some things than our male colleagues, and we are good at talking people down who are violent". Brenda too reflected on the differences that she felt existed between the women and men officers. For her,

> Women might be more facilitative whereas guys are more directive. Women tend to engage in more discussion and collaboration than men do. At the leadership tables and the chief of police meetings, it's virtually all men. That's what leadership is about, being important and having medals on your chest, telling people what to do, directing people and not giving much explanation, and that's fine because that's one type of leadership. But I think that as we have more women promoted to the upper ranks, I do see that attitude or that persona changing.

Brenda ended with, "if we continue along the path of just having men in charge, the organization will eventually fail". Janine also spoke to the strength of women, and its implications. Sandra felt that a strength of women was that they "relate through relationships, and relationships

matter. We are people oriented, we are nurturing [whereas] men tend to relate to power, rank and authority.". In addition, Janine argued that women bring "diversity to the table and enhance policing because we can build relationships. I think women are better conflict negotiators. Females have an easier time having difficult conversations with their subordinates than men – I've seen it." However, Janine was quick to point out that within the category of women, there was insufficient representation of those with disabilities and all too often, strategic plans for change "are a joke. It's all window dressing". In other words, the face and ideas presented to the public are not the reality.

It is disconcerting to think that strategic plans are seen as 'window dressing' by the very people who create them to provide the public with a sense of the goals of a police service, however it is also concerning that the very people who could benefit from the actions indicated in strategic plans are the same ones who see it as 'a joke', namely, women and other minority groups. In April 2018 I was asked to give a presentation on the topic of 'women in policing' at a policing conference in British Columbia. Perhaps not surprisingly, the attendees were a mostly homogenous looking crowd: the vast majority were older white males with only half a dozen women or visible minorities present. In preparation for this talk, I undertook a review of the strategic plans from a number of the larger policing agencies on the South Island and the lower mainland of BC. I found it very encouraging that almost every policing agency had identified one of their primary goals as increasing their diversity and inclusion by hiring more women and racialized minorities. What I was not able to find was any reference to the action plan or steps taken by any policing agency as to what they had done to achieve this goal. When I posed the question to the group about their action plans, there was silence followed by one police chief who spoke up stating that, "it's on our radar". I concluded my talk by asking the group to

consider what steps they could take to achieve their goal of hiring more women and people from the BIPOC communities. The act of putting this goal in writing is simply not enough. It must be followed by an action plan, and resources dedicated to achieving these goals. The experience of speaking to this group was disappointing because it highlighted the problem: policing agencies provide the public with lofty goals and politically savvy objectives, but without an actionable plan, benchmarks for achieving their goals, or political pressure for meeting their stated objectives, the goals are rendered moot.

Chapter 5

Discussion

I turn now to a discussion of the findings of my study with a group of 21 women working in the hierarchical, bureaucratic and hyper masculinized organization of policing in Canada and the complexities and potentials of their experiences. My aim was to understand how these women were changing policing, and, how policing was changing them. In other words, the ways women in policing were disrupting or maintaining the patriarchal order. What did I learn? Why is it important? What are the implications? These questions guide this chapter.

I divide my reflections and discussions into distinct categories, but I also draw attention to the links between these categories, as when it comes to gender inequality and inequity, there is much cross-over as little is 'distinct'.

'Doing gender': The complex issue of confidence

One of the most difficult aspects for women working in highly masculinized careers such as policing, and this was certainly true of my study, is the extent to which they are constantly 'doing gender'. The phrase 'doing gender' first appeared in the work of West and Zimmerman (1987) as the process of behaving according to the expected gender roles as set out by society's standards. Prior to West and Zimmerman's (1987) work, Martin's research (1979) classified women in policing as either 'POLICEwomen' or 'policeWOMEN'. The former rejected so-called feminine behaviours and roles in favour of more masculine, aggressive and authoritarian roles, while 'policeWOMEN' capitulated to perceived feminine qualities and passively accepted the limited duties or assignments considered suitable for women. Later Rabe-Hemp (2009) found that policewomen are still 'doing gender', however they tend to use both masculine and feminine behaviours in their work, combining or using them as circumstances dictate.

This more complex take up, rather than the either/or was clear in my own study. As I showed, participants often spoke about 'mirroring men', taking on men's behaviours, ways of speaking and even hobbies in the hopes of fitting in, of being accepted and belonging to the institution of policing. As they reflected on their own attempts to mould or perhaps better said contort, themselves to fit in, especially early on in their careers, they seemed to not only need to constantly prove their worth but also, to distance themselves from their membership in the subordinate group of women. How much of this did they set and how much is set for them is the question. Tatum (2018, p.8) suggests that "dominant groups, by definition, set the parameters within which the subordinates operate. The dominate group holds the power and authority in society relative to the subordinates." My findings also suggest that Martin's concept of 'policeWOMEN' and 'POLICEwomen' is operating as much in the present as it was in the past. And yet it is not the entire story.

The women in my study also spoke about their recognition of the skills they brought and a pride in these, although they acknowledged that their male colleagues and supervisors did not understand nor appreciate this 'other' ways of doing police work. In my group of participants, the more seniority they had, the more they seemed able to move away from 'mirroring men' and assert their own ways of doing things. Similar to Morash and Haarr's (2012) study, my senior participants began to consider feminine qualities as an advantage, giving them unique skills of negotiation and empathy. For example, several of my participants spoke about using their communication skills to de-escalate a situation and gain compliance from a suspect to sit in the police car despite watching male colleagues who still tend to rely on the use of physical force to gain compliance. Participants believed that their skills and abilities which they related to being a

woman were not just as good but perhaps better in many situations than those of their male colleagues.

My results indicate that women continue 'doing gender' as they evaluate their capacities compared to men's capacities, however similar to studies by Morash and Haarr (2012) and Rabe-Hemp (2009) my own research now in 2023 indicates that women are beginning to see and value their policing skills and abilities as unique, positive and something that contributes to 'doing policing'. In other words, there is a greater sense of confidence and agency in the senior women which is hopeful for the future. Confidence in women matters because they are better able to assert agency, to assert change. The question for me is how do we build this confidence 'before' they are in senior positions? What could I do in my own work as an educator and with students I teach to make this happen earlier or at least, to plant new seeds? I take this up in the final chapter.

As important as this sense of confidence in terms of women police officers working differently, we must remember that they have spent many years having to exceed expectations and to force their contributions in as 'exceptional' or perhaps better said very necessary to policing today. They have asserted their confidence; they have spoken out. Their sense of confidence does not, however, insulate them from being 'othered' by their male colleagues. My study shows that for the most part, the power dynamic – the 'culture' of policing – has remained intact. As Vintges (2017) reminds us, the patriarchy has remained far more resilient than any of us ever expected. In addition, women's sense of confidence is not entirely visible as the culture of policing does not seem to have changed.

Role models: Dearth and invisibility

My study brought me to the world of dearth and invisibility and their implications for the now and the future. The first is the lack of role models – what I call dearth – which is due to the lack of women in policing (Workman-Stark, 2017; Brown & Heidensohn, 2000; LeBeuf & McLean, 1997). As past studies have shown when women were finally permitted to join policing and become police officers, there were no women role models, and no women in positions of leadership (Reilly-Schmidt, 2015). These first women to graduate police academy were truly avant-garde in career environments devoid of women. The problem is that they are not really visible in society. There are few mentions or tributes to these women and that is something that needs to be rectified and I will discuss this in the next chapter. But unfortunately, my study shows the challenge of role models has remained quite stable. One problem is still the lack of women – the dearth – as there is not the critical mass the United Nations calls for. The second problem, which brings me back to an earlier discussion in this chapter, is the problem of 'add women and stir' which is in itself a 'visibility' problem. I had hoped when I began this study that there would be the clear problem in the first decades of policing when women were not considered to be a unique group, but rather were expected to conform, behave and working within an existing normalised masculinized environment but that things would have changed. As noted earlier, almost 50 years later, my study shows that women continue to mould themselves to 'fit in' in the masculine policing environments. What this means is that women's entry into police services is still easy to miss. They have been stirred into the soup of masculine culture so that it still looks the same and therefore, they are not offering clearly visible images and messages of difference, that there is 'something else' going on in policing. What my study shows therefore is on one hand, there are still too few women in policing, and this results in a

lack of role models, but more sobering is the fact that the changes the women on the inside are trying to make is invisible to outside eyes. It is also relatively invisible to inside eyes, meaning women who have joined policing more recently still have few role models as there are still so few as immediate supervisors or leaders who are 'seen' to be practising differently. The negative impacts of dearth and invisibility on women's careers cannot be overstated. While there are many problems, the primary one is that it has kept women silent in the face of abuse. It has only been in the last decade that women have gained the courage to come forward into the media spotlight telling their stories of their experiences of sexual assault, harassment, misconduct and inequality in their policing careers. One of the first high profile cases was that of Catherine Galliford who was the RCMP spokesperson for the Missing Women's Task Force. She came forward in 2011with sexual harassment claims dating back two decades (Dufresne & Clancy, 2016).

Courage and uniqueness

What this and my study show, going back to the issue of confidence, is that women in policing are gaining the confidence to make policing problems public. To speak experiences to power, so to speak. It also shows that women are a unique group within a field that has excluded them for so long. While I do not conform to the idea that there are rigid masculine and feminine traits and that these cannot be crossed, or when they are it is simply a problem, the women in my study do believe that they bring skills and capacities as women that they believe their male colleagues tend to lack, or perhaps choose not to use given the pressure 'to be' masculine which clearly unlay the findings. They see themselves as being both held back by 'normative' expectations of women in policing but also, capable of wielding their own abilities and confidences to make internal changes. My feminist study enabled participants in senior

leadership positions to look back over time to see how they had changed. Kelly for example, saw herself as becoming comfortable enough to rely on her own style of interacting with others that did not include behaving "aggressively" like her male colleagues.

The Catch 22: Isolation and over-compensation

But there is always the 'catch 22' to being a woman in a senior role and bringing new ways of working. This in fact violates two norms in the highly masculine occupations, and this can lead to isolation and othering. Most of the participants were keenly aware of their isolation and being 'othered' at all stages of their policing careers, especially in senior leadership. As Anna noted, "it's very lonely in leadership positions because, where is your peer group?" This of course brings us back to the lack of role models and camaraderie that the men enjoy. It matters that we have colleagues who are 'like us', who share what we know and experience. How much can the woman police officers be 'alike' as women when they are expected to be like men? This is a question I am not sure my study has fully answered but one worth exploring more in the future. But running alongside this idea of 'isolation' is an equally vexing challenge: over-expectations. As participant Diana stated so succinctly,

> as a woman you have to overcompensate for your stature or whatever because they (male colleagues) don't take you seriously. [Women are expected] to work twice as much and harder and longer in order to be recognized for half of what the men are recognized for, and you are dumbed down.

As difficult as this is, it could provide images of 'role models' – women doing better and more than men – but to return to invisibility, it is not seen by the outside world and it is not very well recognized within the police service. This dual invisibility has implications for those who are overcompensating and working twice as hard on the inside and for those of us on the outside

watching what is going on in policing and seeing only a) the same old, and b) sexual harassment (although brilliant that we see this now thanks to the courage of a growing number of women). But the question becomes: What young women would look at this and think, "oh yes, sign me up!" In other words, what implications is this having on young women entering the force in the future?

Role Models Matter

In light of my query, I state that role models matter, and they matter a lot. Firstly, they allow others in the organization to imagine being and doing similarly. When women are able to see that there are pathways and opportunities in their careers, they are more likely to consider it as a possibility. In my research, many participants did not consider the possibility of taking on leadership positions because they had children, and the policing leadership environment is not set up to accommodate those who have family responsibilities. This is supported by Duxbury and Halinski (2018) who found that those who spent more hours per week in dependent care experienced more family-role overload and were more overwhelmed, hence unlikely to take on more senior roles at work. Secondly, role models provide the external world, such as the public, with opportunities to relate to the role and connect in a different way. Women in my study noted that they felt like a novelty early in their careers as they were often the only woman, or one of very few, hence the public was not used to seeing women in the role. More recently, women in my study indicated that they are still very few in leadership roles, however the public is now more receptive to women officers. Silvestri (2015) argues that women in policing enhance relations between the public and police by building better relationships with communities and thereby acting as positive role models in the public sphere. This has been supported by Schuck (2014) who found that, in working with the public, women officers showed higher levels of

empathy and concern. The result of this was improved relations with the public and fewer citizen complaints.

Dress and deportment: Beware uniformity

How women dress and act has been central to gender control and gender conformity for centuries. The history of women is a history of what she wears, looks like and how she conforms to 'femininity', to being 'a woman' as defined by men (e.g., Dzubinski et al., 2019, Acker, 2006). It is therefore not surprising that in my study, participants felt the need to conform in dress and deportment, ensuring the 'gendered' rules of presentation were met and maintained. One aspect of dress and deportment concerns how officers wear their hair. Prior to 2019, officers had to ensure that their hair was either cut or put up in such a way as to not have a single hair touching the collar of their uniform (Kingdon, 2019). Hair has both social and cultural significance hence policies aimed at restricting how hair is worn also curtails gender expression, and this is especially the case for Black women (Kringen & Novich, 2018). One of my participants, Brenda noted that when she was hired and entered training her hair was in dreadlocks and her hair was scrutinized by her trainers. She noted that, "my difference was shoehorned into a very male centric perspective of what you are supposed to look like." Sandra also noted that she initially had long hair which she had to learn to pin up to keep it off her collar as well as shaving her neck in order to meet the rules of deportment. But Brenda brought up something else here. She was one of the few non-white participants whose experience highlighted the double challenge for women like her in terms of both gender and white conformity. Crenshaw (1991) provides a metaphor of 'intersecting roads' as a means for understanding the exponential oppression experienced by those with two or more minority identities, such as women of colour. Brenda's experience allows a window into the very narrow

institutional norms of police deportment. Kringen and Novich (2018) remind us that, "given mandatory compliance, women's limited options to express resistance explains how policies that remove agency and require gender repression function as barriers to women's participation in careers" (p. 209).

A few of my participants who had been policing for approximately 30 years did speak about the feminized uniforms that women police officers had to wear in the 1970s and into the 1980s. Julie noted the difficulties in doing police work in this uniform stating she wore, "an A-line skirt and high heels, I had to chase a guy over a fence and the skirt really hobbled me and I ended up falling". Sophia noted, "we wore skirts, little shoes and pantyhose, one-size fits all panty hose, blazers and white turtleneck, long white gloves and little pillbox hats". Eventually women's uniforms were discontinued and now all officers wear the same uniform. The question of course is: Does 'sameness' in dress translate to equality and equity?

Leadership: Damned if you do

Building on the above is the term 'double bind' which is often used to describe a particular predicament faced by women leaders. According to research by Catalyst (2007), women are evaluated using 'masculine' standards, hence they are left with "limited and unfavourable options, no matter how they behave and perform as leaders" (para. 1). Women in policing experience a double bind where they have a choice between two undesirable actions or outcomes. On the one hand they experience having to work twice as hard as their male counterparts, as noted above, in order to prove they are capable officers and belong amongst their male peers. But, on the other hand, they are criticized if they go above and beyond their male counterparts, if they stand out, do more and do it differently, as I have alluded to often in this chapter. As my participants noted, these accomplishments are belittled by their peers but

perhaps worse, the women themselves diminish them if they are to be promoted to a position of leadership or seniority. The women in my study spoke about balancing the need to prove themselves worthy, while simultaneously making themselves smaller in order to avoid bruising or threatening the egos of male colleagues or supervisors.

One outcome of having to shrink oneself is the impact on both agency and self-esteem – a return to the issue of confidence. Reducing women's agency ensures they stay 'in their place'. The energy required to obscure one's talents and avoid drawing attention to oneself in order to avoid raising the ire of male colleagues should be considered a full-time job in and of itself. This energy drain is a likely contributor to women's sentiments that taking on more responsibility by promoting or taking on leadership roles may be too much. In addition to being a double bind, this can also be considered to be a second shift. The work of being a police officers is difficult enough without the work of having to manage the sensitivities of male colleagues who may feel threatened by a woman's skills and abilities.

Being the female face

The women in my study who had experienced promotion to a position of leadership spoke about how their male colleagues would state or insinuate that they were promoted because of their gender and "administration wants a woman" in that role. Women continue to be subjected to such comments as men take it as a slight when a woman is promoted. Many policing agencies recognize the need to increase the number of women and persons of colour and this is reflected in their strategic plans. These diversity goals as set out in the strategic plans of most policing agencies are considered to be window dressing, or what one participant called, "a total joke." The ability of women who are promoted under such traducement to lead effectively is undermined from the outset. When women are treated as a token and considered by their male

colleagues as token promotions, their effectiveness is likely to be called into question, and their authority rebuked. Such experiences highlight the need to examine gender in organizations and how the gender status quo is sustained or challenged. Drawing on the work of Acker (1990), Prokos and Padavic note,

> gender operates in organizations through several interacting processes: the construction of divisions along gender lines, the construction of symbols that reinforce those divisions, interactions between groups that produce gendered social structures, and, as outcomes of these processes, the production of gendered components of individual identity and of a gendered frame for understating other social structures (2002, p. 440).

They add that gendered divisions continue and bolster the othering of women in policing. Some of the women in my study pointed out that one of the reasons for the lack of women's participation in leadership is that women have never been part of the police union executive membership. The promotion of women in policing may be on the radar of many policing agencies however, the police union is powerful in terms of making changes and with no women on the executive committee, men continue to make decision that are to the advantage of men, not women. For example, one of my participants noted that she approached the union only a few years ago asking them to change the health benefits to cover contraceptives. She was told that contraceptives would not be covered because any changes to the health care coverage had to be advantageous for the majority of employees, hence it was denied. Preventing unwanted births is clearly a woman's issue that has nothing to do with men. Men in policing are clearly not involved in procreation (or at least worrying about it). I am being facetious here but policy decisions like this do not just fly in the face of logic and reasoning (and justice), they send a message to women that their biological needs and issues are their own and have nothing to do

with work, nor with men. This is 'equality' run amok and reminds us that equality is not equity. This nonsense also has a 'public face' because it stands in stark contrast to the public mission of police agencies to be viewed as progressive and as addressing gender disparity.

Backbiting and bitchiness: Performing patriarchy

One of the curious issues that appeared in some of my interviews with women police officers was, for a few women, their experiences with more senior women who treated them poorly although these were fewer than I expected. The dynamic between women working within a masculine work environment is one that has scant research however bears mentioning. Both Helen and Joan spoke about having a female supervisor who made their lives very difficult by devaluing them. Helen stated, "she felt threatened by me, she did a lot of things to undermine me, demean me and made me feel like I didn't have value". Joan stated that her supervisor, "was building camps within the unit, ostracizing people that she felt threatened by". This gendered dynamic of senior women treating other women poorly in the work environment needs further exploration, however if we accept that women must work twice as hard to be accepted in policing, it may be that they internalize the oppression they have experienced and make life difficult for upcoming women to ensure that they also must 'prove' their worth in the organization. This sentiment was reflected by Lisa in stating, "I'm trying to keep our reputation at the department of female officers to a very high standard."

A very high standard of what? Compared to whom and to what? To what end is this 'standard'? Where does it actually get us? This comment is significant because it reveals the ubiquity of the patriarchy existing everywhere all at once. Vintges (2017) likens the patriarchy to a mythological hydra – it simply grows another head when one is cut off. It also illustrates women's complicity in the patriarchy. As feminist studies have shown, women get ahead best

when they conform fully to patriarchy (Criado Perez, 2019; Sangster, 2021). The patriarchy forces women to enter into competition with each other both to convince themselves and those around them that they belong. I am not arguing here that women cannot be cruel and exclusionary, but the root cause of this behaviour needs to be made visible everywhere, all the time.

A number of participants in my study spoke about the pressure to be in competition with each other, especially if there were two women in a promotional competition. One participant spoke about her experience of knowing fully that there was no chance that both she and the other woman, a good friend, would be chosen to fill numerous vacancies because only one of them would be promoted along with a large number of male colleagues. Seems that we are back to equality again. Perhaps the thinking is that if there are more men in an institution then 'equally" they would need to fill more positions.

Having to vie for acceptance in a male dominated workplace, as some participants pointed out, results in women being hard on each other and even trying to distance themselves from other women (Williams & Dempsey, 2014). This may be required in order to gain acceptance by their male colleagues, to compete for advancement or to align themselves with those in authoritative positions (O'Connor Shelley, et al., 2011). Engaging in the performativity of patriarchy further entrenches women, all women, who take up the cause of policing. It seems doubtful that women who identify as feminists would decide on a career in policing as this career requires stepping into masculinized hierarchical norms where women, as women, matter little.

Nothing to see here

Some of my participants discussed their experiences citing they had never experienced sexism or harassment, nor did they feel they had ever been treated differently because they are

women. These women described their experience in policing as being part of a "family" with strong connections to their male colleagues. They described feeling supported by their colleagues as they felt that their relationship was a "powerful" one as any one of them would "take a bullet" for them if needed. Such characterizations are not uncommon in policing and other justice and first-responder types of work. It is also known that policing has a significant in-group/out-group dynamic. So how can it be that, by most accounts policing has a culture of sexism and harassment of women while some women experience this not at all and do not report any such thing existing in their policing experience? Firstly, women may experience being in the 'in-group' by virtue of not being a civilian, hence part of the policing group. Everyone wants to feel like they belong and are part of the group, especially if this is their chosen career. However, even within a group there can be many factions or levels of belonging. One may be a member of the group but still not be in the 'inner sanctum'. Secondly, women may be reluctant to point out negative aspects about their chosen profession because they do not wish to sully it further, especially to an outsider researcher. Thirdly, not everyone is willing to develop a gender consciousness in reflecting on their day-to-day work because it may create too much cognitive dissonance which may increase stress levels or make work life unsatisfactory or even unpleasant. In other words, there may be a necessity to 'buy into' the hyper masculinized culture, for better or for worse, in order to increase your odds of being part of the team. This dynamic may also partially explain why some women in policing treat other women, especially their juniors, poorly. The sentiment being that if a few women 'make it' to senior positions and put up with the sexism and harassment, then their followers should do the same and not complain about it because it is simply part of the landscape of a masculinized institution. To be clear, none of the

women participants in my study were of this mindset however some spoke of senior women they had known who behaved in these ways.

Women's leadership

For the purposes of this research, I used a broad view of leadership as it was used in my classes as well as by scholars such as Batliwala (2013), and Clover et al. (2016). Leadership is both a position – formal leadership – and also a process – what I will call informal leadership. In this, people take decisions, make changes, and have an impact on others from wherever they stand, rather than from a formal position of 'authority'. This distinction and use of formal and informal leadership is important in my study because women in policing most often do not rise to occupy formal leadership roles and therefore, they must play these roles from different positions because as stated by Catherine, "we retire before we promote", for many of the reasons discussed previously in this chapter. Women's leadership must not be myopically considered only when they achieve formal leadership roles because so much important work occurs between and amongst women; work that is most often not recognized.

Formal leadership: Many of my participants held senior or supervisory roles in their work and this allowed them to speak about their experiences of formal leadership from a place of extensive experience having worked their way up in their organization. These women had 'made it' as they had experienced promotion and had achieved a broad range of influence. This is important for several reasons. Firstly, having women in senior leadership allows junior women to 'see themselves' as possible future formal leaders. Women in formal leadership roles can act as mentors for other women providing support and guidance which was mentioned by some of my more junior participants as lacking in their police agency. Secondly, it is important for men at all levels of policing to see women in formal leadership roles. Having women in positions of

power lends further credibility to women's leadership practice. Women in policing have been found to utilize a more transformational leadership style encouraging participation, co-operation and collaboration which aligns with a more progressive, proactive, evidence-based policing model (Silvestri & Paul, 2015). This is consistent with the findings that women leaders in general (not specifically policing) utilize a more democratic, and participatory style than do male leaders (Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Eagly et al., 2003). Thirdly, it is important for the public to see women in senior leadership positions as the narrative of policing continues in 2023 to be highly masculinized and premised on the ideas of strength, toughness, crime-fighting and avoiding vulnerability as discussed in Chapter Two. This narrative must be dismantled if policing is to become more equitable, further professionalized, and less militaristic. Changing this narrative requires significant diversity in formal leadership positions with women and people of colour with decision-making powers advancing inclusivity and equality.

Informal leadership: Some participants had yet to hold a senior or supervisory role hence they did not have formal leadership experience within their organization but they spoke of their experiences of informal leadership. It should be noted that the act of policing, even for very junior members, engenders leadership as police officers are relied upon to respond to the public and often manage difficult situations. Members of the public often expect police officers to take charge of a situation and provide a resolution. This takes both leadership skills along with good communication skill, the ability to prioritize, compassion, and many other skills. Those who are hired into policing are screened in as having met the competencies identified as required, and in training, other skills are taught and honed. Hence all new recruits have met a certain standard of skills, knowledge and ability. However once recruits enter their training, they are exposed to a 'hidden curriculum' that constructs women as different, and thereby rife for exclusion,

denigration, objectification and disregard based on their gender (Prokos & Padavic, 2002). Thus begins the 'othering' of women in their policing careers whereby the message is that they are 'not as good' as their male peers. Women engage in informal leadership because they see a need and take on the challenge of meeting the need, knowing that most often their accomplishments will not be recognized or framed as that which will lead to their promotion.

Pink and blue tasks: It is all about sex

One of the long-standing challenges facing women's leadership in policing is the gendered division of work, which I liken to pink and blue tasks. Due to the masculine narrative of policing, women officers are often relegated to paperwork, dealing with victims, children, community relations tasks and responding to sexual assault victims (O'Connor Shelley et al. 2011; Dick & Jankowicz, 2001; Brown & Fielding, 1993). The fact is, as Westmarland (2001) found and my study confirms, women have fewer opportunities to work in various other units. There are a number of reasons for this.

Firstly, women are considered to be 'de facto' experts on issues involving child abuse, domestic violence, and sexual assault victims. These issues are constructed as women's issues. They are not the exciting or sexy parts of policing, rather they involve emotional labour which tends to fall to women both inside and outside of policing. Women are expected to engage in the emotional labour in dealing with children and women who are victimized. This kind of task segregation allows men to avoid engaging in these tasks and furthers the socially constructed gendered norms of police work.

Secondly, men do not want to work in this area, or as Anna put it, the sex crimes unit is "not a position that very many men ever put in for". The key reason for this, Anna stated but others also alluded to, is because there is, "this underlying belief that women are lying when they

report getting sexually assaulted. This is very strong in our department". It is profoundly unsettling that police officers whose role is to ensure public safety and respond when offences occur, carry such negative and harmful assumptions about sexual assault victims. Research suggests that reporting rates for sexual assault remain low. It is estimated that 6% of sexual assaults come to the attention of police (Cotter, 2021). We need to be curious as to why these reporting rates are so low, and what role policing plays in this. It is not a stretch to understand that most sexual assaults are committed by men, policing is primarily men, and policing has a long history of not believing women as evidenced by the work of Doolittle et al. (2017). Resistance to believing women's victimization is outrageous and constitutes what Fricker (2007) calls testimonial injustice, or a "form of credibility deficit" (p. 21). Why would police deny or disbelieve victims of sexual assault? One possibility is that it maintains the gendered divide between 'real' police work and that which is constructed as 'women's work'.

Why bother trying?

When women start to see that the road to promotion is rife with obstacles, most of which are not experienced by their male peers, the sense of defeat is palpable. Several of my participants spoke about the ERT (emergency response team), as well as Major Crimes Unit of their police agency as being almost entirely comprised of only men. Not only was this the norm but it was well known that men would be promoted from these units into more senior roles. This was touted as the "best buddy" system, or as Diana noted, "if the guy in charge wants to hire all his buddies, then that's what's going to happen". This type of glass ceiling effect continues to keep women from advancing into leadership roles.

Merit and gendered standards

I talked briefly about standards before, and they really matter hence I am back. My study showed clearly that even today, women who do apply for promotion in the police force are measured by the same qualifications as men. On one hand, this may not be a problem given women, as discussed above, are doing as well and of course often a better job than their male colleagues. However, as feminists have argued for decades, merit standards are not gender neutral, although there is a narrative that surrounds which people have bought into (Rivera & Tilcsik, 2019). How many of us have heard something about not 'biasing' merit standards? I have and so have the women in my study. Can women meet the standards? Yes, but it takes its toll. Equally important, men in the culture of masculinity of the police force have set the standards and benchmarks of merit, men who do not carry the additional responsibilities of domestic labour, childcare and emotional labour, and men who do not question their 'belonging' in the group. The issue of merit is front and centre for both men and women when hiring and promotions are at hand.

Being the token woman

Earlier I talked about 'being a woman' as something that gives the police service an important 'face' – the face of a woman. See, we have a woman in leadership or in the police service so we are 'doing the right thing'. Merit also includes this. As discussed by Acker (1990), women are keenly aware of their status as the token woman, and they are often used as virtue signalling to the community as proof their policing agency is engaging in diversity.

Everyone wants to believe that they are hired or promoted because they meet the criteria and have earned their spot. However as past studies have shown (Todak et al., 2021; Bikos, 2016) and my study confirms, women are consistently made to question their belonging and

whether they were hired due to their gender rather than merit. As Kelly noted, "I got in ahead of them (men) and they said 'oh yeah we heard they were hiring lots of women right now'…I want to be hired based on merit, not my gender". In addition, the women in my study discussed their experiences of having their promotions chalked up to the sentiments by male colleagues that the administration was looking to hire women as the reason a women got the promotion. This not only belittles the accomplishments of these women, but also serves to solidify their 'otherness'.

As participant Catherine noted, over her 30 years she did get promoted numerous times and, "felt like the token women in any given competition". She noted that women tend to enter promotional competitions later in their careers, in part due to taking time away from work for childcare and family responsibilities. This time away is not considered of value and does not count when being asked competency-based questions in a promotional interview. Catherine's statement that "we retire before we promote" sums up the experience of many women who's experience and expertise is not 'enough' to meet the standard set by men for men.

Police organizations and the communities they serve do not benefit from having so few women in positions of leadership. Research has found that women in policing perform their role as well as their male counterparts, or better, and are positively viewed by the community (Archbold & Schulz, 2012; Rabe-Hemp & Schuck, 2007; DeJong, 2004; Dodge & Pogrebin, 2001; Balkin, 1988). It has also been found that women outperform their male colleagues in several areas including being less likely to be involved in corruption (Lersch, 2002), more cautious in their use of force (Brandl, et al., 2001), more able to use communication to resolve or deescalate disputes (Eagly & Steffen, 1986), and build better relationships with communities (Silvestri, 2015). In addition, women have been found to incur few disciplinary infractions in terms of unethical behaviour (Waugh et al., 1998). This research suggests that women in

policing is a positive advancement, and we should be striving to increase women's participation in policing especially in leadership capacities. As noted above, my participants experiences suggests that women continue to feel like they are 'pushing the boulder uphill' in terms of advancing their careers in policing.

It's a different language

Their lack of familiarity with the discourse is seen by the organization's elites as evidence of the lack of 'managerial potential'. The participants in my study called this experience learning how to 'manspeak' or 'talking man'. The need to adjust their language and how they speak in order to be taken seriously and be head is another way that women experience exclusion and dismissal. Such entrenched language norms whereby men only hear what is being conveyed if it 'fits' with their gendered understanding of language and communication style reveals how narrow and exclusionary their language norms are.

Testimonial injustice, as Fricker (2007) noted, is about one's words not being believed. It is also about belittling words, walking over top of them. Several of my participants recounted being in meetings and promotional processes and having to learn how to speak so that men would hear them and listen to their words. As Sandra noted, "it had to be logical, concise and to the point, and not go down the emotional path". Amy discussed how in promotional processes, candidates were scored higher if they used "I" statements about their achievements and how this was detrimental for women candidates as they tend to use more collaborative language reflecting teamwork.

Police Officer Mothers

Many of the struggles discussed by my participants revolved around their decision to have a child and take maternity leave knowing the kind of impact this was likely to have on their

careers and future promotional opportunities. The women in my study who had chosen to have children and take maternity leave spoke about the timing of their decision to tell their supervisor about their pregnancy. This is a delicate issue as women police officers are assigned "light duties" for the duration of their pregnancy. For most women this is akin to being taken out of their position and placed at a desk job. In addition, police officer mothers are aware that their position will not be backfilled for the duration of their maternity leave which is normally 12-18 months. This is a significant issue as the colleagues of a police officer on maternity leave are aware that they will have to pick up the work of their missing colleague. This system often leads to feelings of resentment on the part of the colleagues and guilt on the part of the police officer mother (Lanigan et al., 2017). It is significant that the police service has evolved in such a way as to normalize the avoidance of backfilling a position that is vacated for a period of time. The implication here is that no one is likely to leave unless they quit or retire. The failure to create a system where backfilling is normalized is to continue to put pressure on women who are considering having children, or who are taking maternity leave(s). The pressure to 'commit' to your unit and not take a maternity leave was best exemplified by one of my participants who had been promoted into a particular unit and her all-male colleagues sat her in a chair, tied her legs together in the chair and told her that she had better not plan on having children because "no one gets pregnant" in their unit.

Another group of women participants made the decision to not have children because they wanted to dedicate their time and efforts to their policing careers and could see that having children would set them back. The fact that women in a particular career understand early on that having a family is incompatible with their career choice is one indicator that the career path is both sexist and bias in favour of men.

Office Mom

Another interesting finding from several of my participants who were in senior leadership positions was how they described their leadership style and referred to themselves as 'Office Mom'. Women in policing are often expected to behave in nurturing ways and to support the emotional needs of their male colleagues (O'Connor Shelley et al. 2011; Martin, 1999). Helen, with 24 years in policing and a senior leadership position noted, "people feel comfortable sitting down and talking to me about what's going on with them" adding, "we joke about how I need a ticket taker outside my office because of the never-ending need". Similarly, Sandra noted, "I was in an acting supervisory role and to this day that group of people still call me Mom. They were looking for the nurturing, someone to care for them". It is not a stretch to imagine that this kind of caring engagement with stressed out employees may just be a better method to support, encourage, and grow employees in policing or any organization; these women seemed to take on the role of listening and providing a safe environment for their employees to turn to when they were struggling. That said, it is important to avoid essentializing women because this limits women's life choices if they do not adhere to gendered norms. Essentialism assumes sex and gender are the same thing, and essentialism perpetuates false gender stereotypes such as women are more 'emotional' than men.

Research by Fejes and Haake (2012) considered the socially constructed discourse of policing as highly gendered "where male officers work in more prestigious and 'dangerous' areas, while female officers are left with less prestigious, more caring-associated working areas" (p. 281). Although policing has long been a bastion of hyper masculinity underpinned by 'daring and danger' over 'caring', is it possible that having more caring in policing may be the way forward? Providing a more caring environment for employees is not an exclusive domain of

women as men are equally capable of providing caring, however, men are discouraged from doing so in highly masculinized environments. Rather, men are encouraged to perform masculinity as congruent with being 'men' (Butler, 1990).

In considering the experience of the 'Office Mom', it seems that in the period of their early career they feel they must conform and transform themselves to fit in, however later in their careers when they hold leadership positions, they have the latitude to lead in the ways they see fit. For some of these women in my study, caring for their employees and providing a supportive environment seemed to fit with their leadership style. This is consistent with transformational leadership styles. When employees feel supported, they are likely to increase their commitment to the organization as they feel valued.

It's just a *joke*

It is not uncommon for men to attempt to pass off sexualized comments or behaviour towards women in the work environment as 'just a joke'. In the last two decades, both public and private organizations have instituted sexual conduct policies in the workplace due to the increased recognition that this behaviour is yet another type of harassment endured by women and is not acceptable. But workplace gender norms endure and highly masculinized organizations such as policing continue to centre men as the default. O'Connor Shelley et al. (2011, p. 353) noted that, "some male officers use offensive humour (often in the form of sexist jokes), sexual stereotypes, harassment, and profanity to reinforce the masculinity of policing and segregate women as an out-group". Lisa stated, "You have to be comfortable working with men. It takes a certain type of female because men can be gross, insensitive. You have to have thick skin. You have to be able to just not care sometimes." Research by McDiarmid et al. (2017, p. 353) on the use of discursive strategies of young men found that "men with high levels of

masculine identification were more likely to use all forms of insults (homosexual, nonhomosexual joking, and nonhomosexual pressuring)". This may help to explain but it absolutely does not excuse 'jokes' that land as personal and disconcerting if not outright harmful and harassing. In describing her work environment Lisa stated, "it's a really good atmosphere, it's fun." But is it really fun? How is something fun when it belittles? Like satire, humour only works when the one making the joke is 'punching up'. By punching up, I mean going not for a person, but in policing it could be for the 'culture'. When we 'punch down' we are engaging in revealing cultural values and norms in the workplace (Kunda, 1992) or correcting colleagues' behaviour through ridicule or mockery (Butler, 2015) causing distress to those around you and at the receiving end of 'the joke'. Perhaps if you feel that you are 'in on the joke' it might feel like fun in the moment, however this 'fun' does not seem to last long for women as they progress through their careers and become even more the target of the 'jokes'. You could say here that they are in positions of authority over men so this is 'punching up', but the power dynamics, as I have been alluding to throughout this chapter, are very different. Power matters because those who do not have it, and are on the receiving end, or subject of the 'jokes' are rendered powerless by being 'put in their place'. For every Megan who argued, "we joke around and have fun, my teammates are really respectful and don't think less of me because I'm a woman" countless others do not feel the same. And going further, is it really that they are respected or is it what Chan et al. (2010, p. 441) called tolerating "sexist jokes… in order to be treated as equal"? Anna shows this clearly: "I feel upset at myself thinking about all the jokes I laughed at, and all the jokes I even made, thinking that I have contributed to that environment. But I also know that it was survival".

Joking aside, sexism is a woman's issue

Building on the above, joking is directly connected to sexism. As I write this, a news report about four Vancouver Police officers has emerged as a video was created by the officers in an interview room at police headquarters "mocking internal sexual harassment investigations" (Lindsay, 2022, para. 1) but it also brings us back to my conversation above about sex crimes units and men not believing women as the video also includes "troubling misogynistic behaviour and was being explained as 'black humour'" (para. 4). The article does not mention if the creators of the video were men or women. Worse still, the video was then shared with other police officers including a supervisor who did not intervene or report this behaviour as I noted in the previous chapter.

Sexism is an all-encompassing issue and term which includes several important aspects. The Council of Europe has defined sexism as, "any act, gesture, visual representation, spoken or written words, practice, or behaviour based upon the idea that a person or a group of persons is inferior because of their sex, which occurs in the public or private sphere, whether online or offline" (Calderwood & Sanchez, 2019, para. 6). It has long been known that policing is rife with sexism and we are nowhere near eliminating this behaviour. Speaking about sexism and sexual harassment, Catherine noted,

> Some women had no problem doing it, if that's what their bosses wanted, and there were the girls who didn't. You had to draw the line in the sand, you had to decide if you were going to have sexual relationships with senior members. Some women ended up leaving because they wouldn't participate in those types of relationships, and they would rather give up their career than do that. We tried not to judge each other for it.

Policing is a difficult career and dealing with the public can be exhausting work, however it is difficult to imagine how men might respond if they had to not only perform their work but do so within an atmosphere of constant sexism and sexual harassment. As mentioned in Chapter Four, the prevalence of sexism and sexual harassment is not perpetrated by 'a few bad apples' as it is so often framed. Rather it is endemic in the hyper masculine culture of policing.

Ferguson (1984) states, "compassion, generosity, solidarity, and sensitivity to others are crucial values; that they are more often found in the oppressed than among the oppressors indicates that it is the dominant social order that devalues these traits and that distorts them to serve the interests of the powerful" (p. 94). Ahmed (2017) considers the acceptability of pointing out current and historical racism and sexism in institutions and the oft response that we should just 'get over it' or that it's in the past. Ahmed calls these strategies "overing" stating, "You are asked to get over it, as if what stops it from being over is that you are not over it." (p. 155). This type of strategy keeps the attention on the one who is willing to bring forward such concerns and in this way, sexism continues to be framed as a woman's issue.

Developing gender consciousness

Much work has been done by feminist academics, writers, and thinkers to define and develop the concepts of gender and gender consciousness (hooks, 2015; Hill Collins, 1990; de Beauvoir, 1989; Scott, 1986). It has been only in the last few decades that social scientists have turned their attention to investigating gender and the normalized structural social relations that embed normative gendered behaviours (Jaunait, 2022; Ridgeway et al., 2022). Gender bias at work has also begun to be troubled by feminist academics in an attempt to shed light on the gendered experiences women face in the workplace especially in male dominated areas where women and people of colour do not fit the 'ideal worker' image (Ray 2019; Acker, 2006). By

this engagement, critical reflection of gendered behaviours, gender performativity and gender norms have begun to be examined and this is significant as it encourages the development of gender consciousness. As stated previously, there is scant research on women's experiences in policing and even less from a feminist perspective. Research by Sharp and Hefley (2007) found that research published in criminal justice journals between 2000 and 2004 in the United States addressed gender differences only 15% of the time. In addition, research on women and criminal justice, or feminist criminology articles tend to be published in either specialized journals or in special issues. The result of this is the continued marginalization of feminist knowledge and research (Falvin, 2001).

Recent research on gender bias in the evaluation of leaders points to further reasons for leaders to develop gender consciousness (Salin, 2020). There are numerous barriers for women that make it difficult to obtain positions of leadership, including the use of gender stereotypes in performance evaluations, and women receive less favourable performance ratings than men, especially in jobs that are highly masculinized (Koch et al., 2015; Eagly & Karau, 2002). One of the reasons there may be hesitation in the examination of gender norms in organizations and the development of gender consciousness is the unwillingness to examine the status quo. As an example, recruitment is one area of policing that has been identified as needing significant improvements in order to attract women and diverse applicants. However, recruiting officers have come up through the ranks and are embedded in the culture and norms of the organization, hence their willingness to critically examine hiring practices and make changes are akin to questioning their own position. Through the course of my work, I spoke with a woman recruiting officer of a local policing agency who told me that women just "want to be moms", which makes them unwilling to apply. There are so many concerns with her comment about

women in policing but most importantly, her role is to attract candidates. What message is she sending to women? And as a woman, how does she see her own positionality (and complicity) in her work? These are other questions that require further study and on this note I turn to my conclusion and recommendations.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

We experience the world as gendered individuals, gender shapes our experiences and is inextricably tied up in our other identities (Bond & Mulvey, 2000). By extension, social life including all institutions, bureaucracies, and organizations such as policing should be examined through a feminist gender lens if we wish to illuminate challenges based on gender and create more equitable, diverse and inclusive public institutions. As Ferguson (1984) reminds us,

> feminist scholarship has two primary roles. One is to "unearth this buried knowledge…the buried historical knowledge about women, about what women have done and been, spoken and dreamed, sought and found" and the second is to reveal women's "invisible and disqualified knowledge about themselves and their world, knowledge that has been inadequately elaborated because it is dismissed by the powerful as 'naïve knowledge', located low down on the hierarch. (p. 157).

As in Fricker's (2007) work, my study reminds me of the importance of testimonial justice. Not only do women's voices and experiences need to be as much a part of the foundation of knowledge and truth as those of men, women need to be heard and to be believed, to be taken seriously in terms of how they experience the world and as knowledge producers and agents in this case, of policing. Also, we may not always like what we hear which brings us back to how complicated (implicated) our gendered world remains. What my study showed, like so many before it, is that the narrative of policing was built on hegemonic masculinities, a justice context created by men for men, and it remains largely intact. But will it stay that way? Only the future can answer that question for the future.

My aim in this research was to explore women's policing experiences, how they navigated the hyper masculinized environment of policing and the blockages that keep them

from attaining promotion. My central questions were: How are women changing policing? And how is policing changing women? With 50 years of women's participation in policing careers, and a national average of 23% women in policing in Canada, it seems evident there would be embedded cultural blockages for women which kept them from participating in larger numbers and most fully as 'women' and keeps those who choose such a career from being promoted into senior leadership positions. These inequalities need to be considered unacceptable if we are to address the hyper masculine and oppressive conditions faced by women in policing and its implications for the public, because there are implications. As stated by Acker (2006), investigating and troubling inequalities in the workplace is important because, "much societal inequality originates in such organizations" (p. 441). Inequalities in the workplace, including harassment and abuse, is not exclusive to policing and has been more broadly highlighted by the #metoo movement in recent years.

My decision to embark on this research journey was not taken lightly nor without apprehension. I recognized that this work could have been seen as criticism of the institution of policing and possibly of those individuals – particularly women - who take up this career. There was a sense of risk-taking for me in criticizing a formidable institution such as policing and that it could unsettle the participants of my research. I also teach in this area which also propelled my curiosity and compelled me to do this research.

My study illuminated a strength and tenacity in the 21 women whom I recruited to discuss their experiences with me. The police service is lucky to have them, and we need more women in the police service. My participants were both remarkable and inspiring, and it shows the value of feminist studies, of giving women a place and opportunity to talk about their experiences, to share, and to reflect with someone who is knowledgeable and connected, who is a

feminist and concerned with the plight of women, but who is also, as noted, 'outside' the policing structure. My position of privilege as an academic researcher 'looking in' allowed me a distance from the realities faced by my participants but my life as a feminist working in the criminal justice service, means I am with them. These women taught me so much.

What I have learnt

The participants taught me that policing has evolved and become further professionalized over the past several decades. We now have more evidence-based policing, also called knowledge-based or evidence informed policing, and how much women have brought to this is unknown, but we can be sure they have contributed. But my participants also taught me, to borrow from the French that *la plus ca change, la plus la meme chose*. Many things are the same for these women, at least in essence, although the world has changed, community needs have changed, some argue that policing has changed very little. More importantly, more women are speaking out and asserting themselves. They have taught me that it is not just important to add women and stir but these women have taught me the importance of resilience in oppositional or even hostile work environments, as well as the importance of rendering the invisible visible by persistent navigation of masculine norms of the policing world.

Engaging in this research allowed me to delve into some of the questions I laid out in Chapter Three. However, it has also left me with many new questions such as: Why do women keep entering this hyper masculinized profession? What is it they want? What is it they believe? Does it matter that they keep trying? What would be the problem if they stopped? These questions are yet to be addressed.

As an educator and post-secondary instructor teaching courses in criminology and criminal justice, I want my students to be excited at the prospect of working in the justice

system. I want them to know how important they are because they will be 'running the show' in a short time, and they will be the ones to make the changes that are necessary in order to bring greater equity, diversity, equality and gender justice to the justice system. Over time, I have noted that the women students in my classes who aim to join policing do not suffer from a lack of confidence in their ability to work in this area, but they continue to see the images of policing as highly masculinized and they see the narrative as not only masculine but at times unwelcoming or even hostile towards women. Institutions such as policing need to be willing to examine the gendered aspects of their structures including policies, procedures, governance, and so forth. They must also be willing to make changes that would attract women and other minority groups by engaging in EDI (equity, diversity and inclusion) work and allocating resources to transform the lofty goals of their strategic plans into reality. Without such a commitment it seems unlikely that necessary changes will come to pass.

One of my aims in doing this research was to contribute to the literature and to improve the lives of women. Creating change takes the work of many dedicated individuals. As a first step, being willing to listen and learn about the experiences of others is a great place to start. While I believe this happens with regularity in many work environments including policing, I also believe that it is not for a lack of information that change is slow and intractable. Change is made only when the ongoing inequalities and oppression are deemed unacceptable by everyone, then changes will be made to reflect the desire to ensure everyone is valued and respected as part of the group. Wisdom tends to lag behind knowledge and my hope is that this research is contributing to the body of knowledge that will be taken up in order to make necessary changes in policing.

Significance of this study

The findings of this study contribute to the literature of policing, to past studies. It echoes as noted above, many of the findings but it also adds beneficial information about women's experiences in policing and their leadership today in British Columbia. This study is also important because it contributes to feminist scholarship adding to the area of women in policing. Policing is much in the news as the dangers in society grow alongside sexism and racism. My study shows that while women are transforming policing they are still more often being transformed by the practice of policing. Something needs to change and change dramatically. Finally, my study is also important because it shows that despite the demographics of BC, of Canada, policing is still predominantly 'white'. This opens another door for future explorations.

Recommendations

As I noted, I teach in the field of criminal justice so it is important for me to conclude my study with ideas on how to advance change for women in policing.

Recommendation One: It has been apparent for some time that there is a need to re-engineer the recruitment process with a significant focus on diversity. Research by Rigaux and Cunningham (2021) found that minority groups askew policing due in part to the organizational culture and human resource officers are unable to interest minority groups in pursuing policing. This is problematic because what I know from own work, and in conversations with participants is that most policing agencies are experiencing high rates of retirement along with some attrition, however the number of applicants is low with many policing agencies struggling to hire enough recruits. Policing agencies require a 'rebranding' as well as education and learning about equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI). These steps would contribute to the necessary culture shift of policing. The recruitment process, including all advertising and promotion, should be managed

by both policing human resources experts in conjunction with external experts who specialize EDI work. This means dedicating resources to contracts enabling external professionals to jointly create new pathways in recruiting and hiring.

Recommendation Two: The process of promotion needs to be streamlined and made far more inclusive. There are two options of doing this. One is, instead of requiring interested individuals to put together promotional packages which are very time and labour intensive, those who meet the criteria of a certain number of years of service and so forth, should automatically be put into the pool of qualified candidates. This removes the need to spend significant time and effort putting together a promotional package. The second option, for those policing agencies that wish to maintain the use of promotional packages, the identity of the applicant should be double blind. Each applicant can be assigned a number and ensuring that identifying features are removed from the information in the package. One of the significant barriers to the promotion of women was that men tend to support and hire each other into promotional positions. Due to this issue, external professionals can be brought in to review and rank the applicants based on their promotional packages. In the event a policing agency uses the pool of qualified candidates without the use of promotional packages, external experts can still be used in the process to ensure fairness with an eye to EDI.

Recommendation Three: There needs to be a 24-hour, 7 days per week daycare on-site and available to all employees. Childcare is one of the most difficult issues faced by those who engage in shiftwork. The fact that women put off or choose not to have children in order to advance in policing is a signal that it is biased against women. Having access to a dedicated daycare on-site would allow women far more flexibility and options when considering a career in policing.

Recommendation Four: Women must occupy a minimum of 50% percent of the seats on the union executive. It is clear from my research that women continue to be excluded from powerful tables where important decisions are made. In 2023 these decisions are still made by men for men and in the best interest of men. It is self-evident that this must change.

Recommendation Five: There must be the use of direct entry as discussed by Silvestri (2018). Direct entry allows for qualified women (and men) to be hired into leadership roles without having to first work as a police officer before the possibility of being promoted. Direct entry has been met with mixed reviews in the UK, however one of the results of using this method is the increased professionalization of policing. The reason for the use of direct entry is that it would allow qualified women to work in police leadership more expeditiously. In Canada, all senior police leaders have started from 'the bottom' as police officers and ascended to leadership roles via promotion and years of experience. At the current rate of the promotion of women it is unlikely to see even 30% of women in police leadership in the next many decades. Choosing to utilize a pathway such as direct entry requires police leaders to have to answer the question: What exactly do we want police to do? In other words, what role should police play and what are their responsibilities in our communities? These are important, and yet unanswered questions because policing has become the 'catch all' for social ills including intervening on those who are homeless, experience mental health challenges, and so forth. Huey et al. (2023, p.1) argue that "no significant and sustainable police reform can occur until we take steps to answer this challenging question" of the "wicked problems" of police reform in Canada.

Recommendation Six: Each policing agency must have specialized training for the sex crimes unit and have them staffed primarily or exclusively by women. Some policing agencies such as Saanich Police (BC) have made some similar changes to their sex crimes unit. There are

a multitude of reasons why women are a better choice to staff such a unit as discussed in previous chapters.

Recommendation Seven: We must establish an institute for the study of women and diversity in policing. Such an institute would be independent from any policing agency and would engage academic and community research for the reform of policing and the betterment of public policy. Ideally such an institute would be housed at a public university with an independent accountability structure. Funding could be provided from provincial/territorial, federal and municipal governments as well as post-secondary sector.

Future Studies: What else we need to know

This study has posed at least as many questions as it has answered. There is so much more to learn and discover about women's experiences in hegemonically masculine work environments and this study has provided a looking glass into some of the challenges women in policing are experiencing. One key area that we need to interrogate further is the visibility of women in policing. Visibility is important because women need to be known in their work as unique and valuable, skilled and capable. The focus on EDI over the past decade should be a vehicle to increasing visibility of women however we have not yet seen this come to pass. What is it that men and masculinized institutions are afraid will happen if women were to be equally participating in the organization? The longstanding resistance to women's participation in policing begs the question: What is it that men are afraid of if women were equally represented in policing? A very good question to use in interviewing male police officers indeed.

We also need to know more about how individuals and communities interact with police and how women officers provide policing services differently from their male counterparts. Policing is a civil service engaged in community safety. Keeping communities safe is of concern

to all community members, and virtually all community members will interface with police members throughout their lifetimes. For these reasons, and many more as discussed in previous chapters, we need to learn more about how women in policing at all levels are doing policing differently and positively impacting their communities.

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APPENDIX A

University of Victoria

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Certificate of Approval - Annual Renewal

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:	**Darlene Clover** (Supervisor)	**ETHICS PROTOCOL NUMBER** Expedited review - delegated	**19-0464**
PRINCIPAL APPLICANT:	**Eva Silden** **PhD student**	ORIGINAL APPROVAL DATE:	14-May-2020
		APPROVED ON:	12-May-2022
UVIC DEPARTMENT:	**Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies EPLS**	APPROVAL EXPIRY DATE:	13-May-2023

PROJECT TITLE: **Women's Leadership in Policing**

RESEARCH TEAM MEMBERS: **None**

DECLARED PROJECT FUNDING: **None**

DOCUMENTS INCLUDED IN THIS APPROVAL:
Appendix C - Focus group questions.pdf - 08-Mar-2020
Appendix D - interview questions.pdf - 08-Mar-2020
Appendix B - invitation to participate, draft #2.pdf - 11-May-2020
Appendix A - Informed Consent draft #2.pdf - 11-May-2020

Conditions of approval

This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above term provided there is no change in the protocol.

Amendments
To make changes to the approved research procedure in your study, please submit "Amendments" or "Annual renewal with amendments" form. You must receive research ethics approval before proceeding with your amended protocol.

Renewals
Your ethics approval must be current for the period during which you are recruiting participants or collecting data. To renew your protocol, please submit a “Request for Renewal” form before the expiry date on your certificate. You will be sent an emailed reminder prompting you to renew your protocol about six weeks before your expiry date.

Project Closures
When you have completed all data collection activities and will have no further contact with participants, please notify the Human Research Ethics Board by submitting a “Notice of Project Completion” form.

Certification

This certifies that the UVic Human Research Ethics Board has examined this research protocol and concluded that, in all respects, the proposed research meets the appropriate standards of ethics as outlined by the University of Victoria's policies for research involving human participants.

Dr. Sandra Gibbons
Chair, Human Research Ethics Board

Dr. Matthew Murphy
Vice-chair, Human Research Ethics Board

Certificate Issued On: 12-May-2022