Norwegian University
of Life Sciences

Master's Thesis 2022   30 ECTS
Faculty of Landscape and Society

Gendered Power Relations in UN Peace Missions: Accounts of Policewomen's Perseverance and Empowerment

Merethe Albrecht Stensvik

Master of Science in International Relations

The Department of International Environment and Development Studies, Noragric, is the international gateway for the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU). Established in 1986, Noragric's contribution to international development lies in the interface between research, education (Bachelor, Master and PhD programmes) and assignments.

The Noragric Master's theses are the final theses submitted by students in order to fulfil the requirements under the Noragric Master's programmes 'International Environmental Studies' 'International Development Studies' and 'International Relations'.

The findings in this thesis do not necessarily reflect the views of Noragric. Extracts from this publication may only be reproduced after prior consultation with the author and on condition that the source is indicated. For rights of reproduction or translation contact Noragric.

Declaration

I, Merethe Albrecht Stensvik, declare that this thesis is a result of my research investigations and findings. Sources of information other than my own have been acknowledged and a reference list has been appended. This work has not been previously submitted to any other university for award of any type of academic degree.

Signature………………………………….. Date: *3rd of June 2022*.

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to thank the participants who trusted me and kindly shared their experiences and perspectives so openly with me. Without them, this thesis would not have been possible, and I am indebted to them for their contributions.

I would like to thank my wonderful supervisor Ingrid L. Nyborg who has given me invaluable advice and support throughout the process. Thank you for your patience and all the kindness you have shown me throughout this journey.

I would also like to thank Kirsti Stuvøy for offering thoughtful advice during the thesis seminars this semester, pointing me in new directions, and especially for helping me reflect on the purpose and value of my research.

Thank you, Surendra Kumar Sharma, for being so encouraging and engaged in my thesis throughout the entire process, from brainstorming about my research topic to the final product it is today. I am very grateful for your continuous help and input this past year.

A big thank you to Tor Damkås for all your insights into the policing world.

I would also like to thank Jorunn Hæstad for participating in a trial interview and helping me prepare the interview questions for this study.

Thank you, Priya, for sharing your experiences and valuable advice regarding the thesis process with me.

Simon, thank you for helping me deal with some of my biggest struggles and pointing me towards the tools I needed to overcome these. Your advice has made this journey much easier than it otherwise would have been.

Thank you, Tore and Tora, for our weekly meetings during the last semester. It has been very helpful to discuss different issues with you and to stay motivated throughout the process.

Thank you to my dear family and close friends for always supporting me. Your many caring acts, encouraging words, and advice have kept me going this semester.

Thank you, Hannes, for your endless love and support and for always helping me believe in myself.

I am indebted to these people for their contributions, but any errors or omissions are mine alone.

Abstract

This research investigates policewomen's experiences of gendered power relations in UN peacekeeping missions. It employs the theoretical framework of IR feminism and draws inspiration from feminist institutionalism and IPS. It seeks to establish the multidimensional nature of policewomen's experiences with challenges, agency, and empowerment, vis-à-vis their everyday experiences in peace missions. Building on interviews with ten policewomen and three male police commissioners, this study finds that policewomen may face many similar gender-related challenges as women in military peacekeeping roles, including on the structural and personal levels. While this is a harsh reality, the study also shows that policewomen exercise various levels of agency and find unique ways to navigate challenges, including making use of various forms of capital to this end. The findings further reveal how the policewomen perform actions that contribute to their and other women's strengthened positions in missions and beyond. This study thus points toward the reality that policewomen's experiences with gendered power relations in UN peace operations are best explored through a multidimensional framework of power. This allows an understanding of the interrelated nature of the women's challenging *and* empowering experiences in peace missions. Based on these findings, this thesis argues more attention should be directed to the ways policewomen may potentially be disrupting and changing gendered cultures and hierarchies in UN peace missions, especially if supported by the right institutional measures.

Keywords: *International Relations, Feminism, Gender, Power, Policewomen, Peacekeeping, Peace Operations, Women Peace and Security, United Nations, Barriers, Challenges, Empowerment.*

Abbreviations

FFPU - All-Female Formed Police Unit

IPS – International Political Sociology

IR – International Relations

MINUSMA - United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali

MINUSTAH – United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti

ONUMOZ - United Nations Operation in Mozambique

RQ – Research Question

UN – United Nations

UNAMA - United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan

UNAMSIL - United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone

UNDPO – United Nations Department of Peace Operations

UNFICYP - United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus

UNIFIL - United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

UNMEER - UN Mission for Ebola Emergency Response

UNMIBH - United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina

UNMIL - UN Mission in Liberia

UNMIS - United Nations Mission in Sudan

UNMISET - United Nations Mission in Support of East Timor

UNMISS - United Nations Mission in South Sudan

UNPOL – United Nations Police

UNSC – United Nations Security Council

UNSMIL - United Nations Support Mission in Libya

WPS agenda - Women, Peace and Security agenda

Contents

1 Introduction

Since the 1990s, the nature and design of peacekeeping missions have changed to become more multidimensional, thus including more actors beyond military peacekeepers (Rupesinghe et al., 2019, p. 207). Following an increasing recognition that "establishing the rule of law is a crucial element in the transition from war and peace", police became a more central (rather than supportive) component of peace missions, and their numbers have therefore increased substantially (Williams & Bellamy, 2021, p. 365). With the expanding mandates of peace operations, police peacekeepers contribute to tasks including "capacity building, observation, and the restructuring and reform of the local police and law enforcement institutions" (Williams & Bellamy, 2021, p. 382).

Alongside this development, women's inclusion and participation in matters of peace and security have received increased attention and support following the adoption of the UNSC resolution 1325 in October 2000 and the subsequent resolutions that together make up the WPS agenda. In terms of peacekeeping, this has resulted in various strategies to include women and gender perspectives to a greater degree in UN peace missions (Williams & Bellamy, 2021, p. 360).

The WPS agenda and other efforts have managed to increase the number of policewomen taking part in these operations (albeit slowly) (Rupesinghe et al., 2019). While the number of female personnel in missions is still low (particularly for female military personnel), constituting only 7.3% of peace operation's total personnel, figures for policewomen's participation show a brighter picture (United Nations Department of Peace Operations, 2021). Even though women constitute only around 15% of formed police units, they represent 29.6% of individual police of 7675 total police personnel in missions. The latter figure is only 0.4% short of the goal set for female individual police officers by the UNDPO's Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy for 2028, and the longitudinal data reveal that the UN has managed to increase this number substantially in the last few years (Smit, 2021).

Despite positive increases in numbers of military and police personnel, the literature reveals that women still face significant barriers to their full and equal participation in peace missions. These include barriers prior to and during deployment that limit women's ability to participate in and contribute to peace missions (Ghittoni et al., 2018). While an increasing body

of literature has identified gendered barriers and challenges faced by women during their deployments (Alchin et al., 2018; Jenne & Ulloa Bisshopp, 2021; Karim & Beardsley, 2017; Kurebwa & Ndlovu, 2020; Osland et al., 2020; Vermeij, 2020), these have mainly been established based on the experiences of women military personnel or in combination with the police. As will be shown, very few studies have given exclusive focus to the gendered challenges faced by policewomen in peace operations which therefore presents a notable gap in the literature. Further, while literature offers some insight into gendered challenges in missions, they have given little attention to the ways women navigate and respond to these (apart from one exception in the military context). Consequently, policewomen's experiences of gendered power dynamics in peace missions remain understudied, and (particularly) so do their strategies to deal with gender-related challenges and the effects of these experiences.

While the police may operate in a somewhat less hypermasculine environment than military personnel, gendered cultures and hierarchies are very common in policing institutions and have been identified globally (Garcia, 2021). Further, the literature frequently combines military and policewomen when studying these barriers, indicating they may face many similar challenges (Karim & Beardsley, 2017), as is also confirmed by police-specific studies (Harris & Goldsmith, 2010). This master thesis will, therefore, further investigate how policewomen experience and navigate gendered power dynamics in UN peace missions. The research will thereby contribute to a growing body of literature on (police)women's participation and experiences in peace missions and will generate valuable insight that may help future policy work in the area.

1.1 Research Questions

This original contribution aims to increase our understanding of barriers policewomen face, how they navigate them, and the broader effects of these experiences. As such, it poses the following RQ and sub-RQ to investigate their multidimensional experiences with gendered power relations in peace missions:

How do policewomen experience participating in UN peace missions?

    i. *What challenges may result from gendered power relations in missions, and how might they create barriers to policewomen's participation during their deployment?*

ii. How do policewomen navigate and respond to challenges resulting from gendered power relations in missions?

iii. How does participation in peace missions affect policewomen?

To investigate the posed RQs, this study utilises the theoretical frameworks of IR feminism and draws inspiration from the work of feminist institutionalism and IPS. The study further employs a qualitative and exploratory approach to understand women's participation and experiences in UN peace missions. It analyses thirteen semi-structured interviews with policewomen who served in UN peace operations and three male police commissioners who led such missions. The interviews are analysed using constructivist grounded theory, resulting in an in-depth understanding of how gendered power relations play out in various UN peacekeeping missions, how policewomen navigate them, and their experiences' wider effects.

1.2 Thesis structure

This thesis will be presented as follows. It starts with a review of relevant literature, presenting essential background information and research on peace operations and the police, the WPS agenda, perspectives on women's participation in peace missions, barriers to women's deployments, and studies that explore women's experiences in peace missions. Next, I introduce the theoretical framework of IR feminism and other relevant theoretical directions, as well as pertinent analytical concepts. The following chapter lays out the study's methodological inspirations, choices, and considerations. These include a presentation of the participants and sections on reflexivity, research ethics and quality, as well as a presentation of the method of analysis. I then present a chapter with context on recruitment processes and the environment of UNPOL missions. In the next chapter, which is divided into three sections on different forms of power, I present and discuss the study's findings in relation to relevant literature. The following chapter offers an overall discussion of the findings and their implications, and a concluding chapter summarises the study and offers recommendations for future research.

2 Literature Review

In this chapter, I present existing literature relevant to understanding the context of this research on policewomen's participation and experiences. It starts by briefly defining and introducing peace operations and the police's role in them. Thereafter, the chapter transitions to the WPS

agenda and presents central strategies and debates on the topic, including gender balancing, gender mainstreaming, and arguments for women's inclusion in peace operations. The next part offers an overview of the barriers and challenges women may face before and during their deployment to peace operations. After that, I present further studies that employ female peacekeepers' perspectives on challenges, including a few studies on policewomen's experiences. The last section emphasises how most existing literature mainly focuses on women's participation and experiences as military peacekeepers and justifies how this study will contribute to current understandings of policewomen's participation in UN peace missions.

2.1 Peace operations and the police

Peace operations have, with time, "become one of the principal international instruments for managing armed conflicts" (Williams & Bellamy, 2021, p. 1). Currently, the United Nations has 12 active peacekeeping operations globally (United Nations Peacekeeping, 2021). To define peacekeeping is challenging due to the comprehensiveness and changing meaning of the concept (Dwan, 2014, p. 247). However, in very general terms, peacekeeping "refers to the authorized deployment of international personnel to maintain peace and security" (Dwan, 2014, p. 247). Several international organisations use such operations, most commonly the UN, as a tool "to enforce, maintain, and build peace between and within states" (Dwan, 2014, p. 247). Peace operations are largely authorised by resolutions from the UNSC, which also determine their mandates and the responsibilities of different actors, including the UN Police (Sanchez, 2021a, p. 180). As a result, each peace operation is unique, and its mandate is designed according to the context of the conflict taking place. However, they generally aim to "prevent, limit, and manage violent conflict as well as rebuild states and societies in its aftermath" by supporting peace processes and observing/enforcing ceasefires or peace agreements and/or their implementation (Williams & Bellamy, 2021, p. 1). Since peace missions ' inception, the changing nature of armed conflicts has changed their form as well as the actors involved in them.

Peace operations have continuously evolved alongside the dynamics of world politics since their beginning, transforming the role of the police alongside it. The evolution of missions can generally be understood through two types of missions: classical/traditional peacekeeping and multidimensional peace operations, the latter of which is more prevalent today (den Heyer, 2021, p. 4). The 'first-generation' of peace operations were most prevalent prior to the end of the Cold War, where peacekeepers were typically tasked with monitoring cease-fires and other

observational assignments (Howard, 2007, n. 7). Along with the changing political environment at the end of the Cold War, the "strategic context for UN Peacekeeping changed dramatically" (United Nations Peacekeeping). Multidimensional peacekeeping missions began to develop as a result, focusing more on the conditions required for long-term peace (Rupesinghe et al., 2019, p. 207; United Nations Peacekeeping). The mandates of such peace operations are more complex and comprehensive, with many of them focused on supporting authorities in post-conflict environments to reconstruct state institutions, including security sector reform and others (Koops et al., 2015, p. 613).

While military presence has remained a fundamental part of peace operations, this change in mandates required more actors, including a more prominent role for the police. UN Police first took part in a peacekeeping mission in 1960. Their involvement remained relatively low until 1994 before increasing to current levels of over 7200 police officers (den Heyer, 2021, p. 3; United Nations Peacekeeping, 2021). Initially assigned with observing local police to prevent violations against locals (Sanchez, 2021b, pp. 204-205), the UN Police's task has now evolved into multiple duties. Contemporary UN Police responsibilities include operational tasks, protecting civilians, strengthening security, performing investigations, and helping develop local police and other law enforcement institutions by training and mobilising resources, assisting with executive policing functions as well as other services needed in areas affected by conflict (United Nations Police, 2014, p. 3). To fulfil these many tasks, police are deployed as individual police officers (IPOs), Formed Police Units (FPUs), Standing Police Capacity (SPCs) or as Specialised Police Teams (SPTs) (Williams & Bellamy, 2021, p. 369). Their expanding and integral role in peace missions is arguably largely a result of increased recognition of the rule of law's importance for lasting peace (Williams & Bellamy, 2021, p. 365).

This evolution of UN peacekeeping missions (particularly following the Brahimi report in 2000) took place alongside the WPS agenda, which formalised an increasing recognition of and push for women's role in peace operations as a matter of peace and security (Karim, 2018, p. 334). As a result, women's representation and the role of gender in peacekeeping missions became a priority on the global agenda.

2.2 Women and peace operations

2.2.1 WPS agenda

While "gender relations have always influenced the design and course of peace operations", states and international organisations have only recognised and actively dealt with this in the past few decades, most evidently through the framework of the WPS agenda (Williams & Bellamy, 2021, p. 360). The UNSC Resolution 1325 is commonly considered the WPS agenda's founding document and was followed by several other resolutions building on the agenda (the WPS resolutions) (Davies & True, 2019, p. 14; Kirby & Shepherd, 2016, p. 373).[1] Evolving from the work of feminist IR scholars on gender and international politics and following numerous calls of transnational activist networks, the WPS agenda sought to bring attention to the gendered aspects of security issues (Swaine, 2018, p. 512). The WPS agenda thus constitutes an international legal framework concerned with how war impacts women and the critical roles women have in conflict resolution and the aftermath of war through peace processes (Karim, 2018, p. 334).

The WPS agenda outlines four 'pillars' that aim to increase women's positions and involvement in matters of peace and security, with the overarching goal of achieving gender equality globally (Kirby & Shepherd, 2016, p. 373). These four pillars are (1) prevention, (2) participation, (3) protection and (4) relief and recovery (Williams & Bellamy, 2021, p. 345). Through these foundations, the WPS agenda brings attention to the gendered dimension of peace and security issues and aims to address "the historical exclusions and invisibility of women and their interests" within these areas (Swaine, 2018, p. 513).

Rupesinghe et al. (2019, p. 206) argue that the "participation" pillar is the most relevant and discussed on the topic of women and UN peacekeeping missions. In this respect, the WPS agenda brought further attention to gender's influence on the design and effects of peace operations, as well as women's inclusion in peacekeeping missions (Williams & Bellamy, 2021, p. 360). Importantly, as an international legal framework, it legally mandates peace operations "to include women in decision-making roles in all aspects of the peacekeeping and peace-building processes" (Karim & Beardsley, 2017, p. 2).

---

[1] The WPS agenda consist of eleven UNSC resolutions that can be grouped into two broader clusters (Williams & Bellamy, 2021, p. 345). Resolutions 1325 (2000), 1889 (2009), 2122 (2013), 2242 (2015), 2492 (2019), as well as the most recent resolution 2538 (2020), are concerned with issues surrounding women's inclusion in peace processes. Resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013) and 2467 (2019) focus on conflict-related sexual violence.

Consequently, for the past two decades, the UN has attempted to bring gender equality – "the equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of women and men" - to peace operations through gender balancing and gender mainstreaming (United Nations, 2000, p. 6). The former refers to "the degree to which men and women hold the full range of positions in a society or organization", while the latter is "the process of assessing the implications for men and for women of any planned action, including legislation, policies, or programmes, in all areas and at all levels" (United Nations, 2000, p. 6). Gender balancing thus refers mostly to achieving equal numbers of men and women, while mainstreaming is more a strategy to ensure that both gender perspectives become "an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and social spheres" (United Nations, 2000, p. 6). Women's participation in peace operations through gender balancing is most commonly measured through numbers. In contrast, their broader inclusion is measured through the inclusion of gender mainstreaming in missions' design and execution. While improvements have been made, the literature also emphasises that more work is needed to achieve gender equality in peace operations (Dharmapuri, 2013; Karim, 2018), and specifically to ensure women and gender are not sidelined or "sidestreamed" (Newby & Sebag, 2021). Because the WPS agenda created a legal mandate for women's inclusion in all levels of peace operations (Karim, 2018, p. 335), a large part of the academic literature has scrutinised the effects of women's inclusion and participation in peace operations.

2.2.2 Women's effectiveness in peace operations

A significant academic debate revolves around the effect of women's increased participation in peace missions. Indeed, a frequently presented argument from institutions and in the literature is that women's inclusion in peacekeeping missions will increase peace operations' operational effectiveness (Jennings, 2011, p. 2). The UN has, for instance, expressed claims over the past decade that female peacekeepers are important to empower local women, make the peacekeepers more approachable and help reduce conflict and confrontations in both the host country and the peace operation itself, among others (Williams & Bellamy, 2021, p. 350). The arguments concerning women's effectiveness in missions can generally be grouped into three overarching areas, including missions' outreach to civilians, reduction in the use of lethal force, and increasing the legitimacy of peace missions from the perspective of the host population (Ghittoni et al. 2018 in Williams & Bellamy, 2021, p. 350).

While institutions and several scholars have argued for the inclusion of women based on their positive effects on missions, other literature criticizes such an approach for its validity and the broader effects it may have on women wishing to take part in peace operations. In this regard, scholars emphasise: the problematic nature of putting the responsibility of changing men's unlawful behaviour (sexual exploitation) on women and how focusing on women's unique contributions retracts attention from the issue of gender equality in peace operations Simić (2010); to what extent women can really make a difference in missions without proper training for these ends and when operating in a hypermasculine environment Heinecken (2015); how valid claims of women's particular contributions really are given their low percentages in missions, and why it is in inherently problematic to promote women's inclusion based on their "unique" contribution when this is not expected of men who constitute the overwhelming majority of peacekeeping personnel, thus running the risk of creating an added burden on women in missions Wilén (2020).

Wilén (2020) makes a particularly useful contribution to the literature, offering an alternative focus for future researchers trying to improve women's access to and participation in peace operations. The scholar argues we should rather focus on the elements that contribute to transforming the environment personnel work in (including representative leaders) and current factors that can inhibit women's equal participation irrespective of whether they add something unique to missions. This thesis takes a similar standpoint to Wilén (2020), maintaining that women should have the opportunity to participate in peace missions regardless of their 'effectiveness' as peacekeepers. This is not to say that women cannot positively impact peace missions. It points instead to the fact that increasing women's participation in peace missions is a step closer toward gender equality in security institutions and "should be a goal in its own right" (Ghittoni et al., 2018). Thus, even though some of these points are referred to back in the discussion, this study is more concerned with their actual experiences of participating in peace missions, how they navigate this and how the mission experience impacts the women themselves.

2.2.3 Gender equality in peace operations

The discussion around women's participation in peace operations also occurs within a larger feminist debate on the best ways to achieve gender equality. While this debate is long-standing and is "unlikely to be resolved any time soon" (Jennings, 2011, p. 2), it is important to understand the context discussions on women's inclusion takes place within. Regarding

women's participation in peace missions, both police and military, the debate largely revolves around the two positions of "right to fight" and "anti-militarism" (Duncanson & Woodward, 2016, p. 5). While some feminists see women's inclusion as a step towards gender equality, where they participate in matters security matters to the same extent as men, others believe women's participation in hegemonic institutions does little to change their inherent nature as masculine creations that uphold patriarchal systems and is, therefore, the wrong focus (Duncanson & Woodward, 2016, p. 6).

As seen in the context of peace operations, arguments for women's inclusion contend they contribute something unique to missions and, in the process, may 'transform' peacekeeping to be less masculine and militarised. However, some literature indicates there is questionable evidence to support this (Simić, 2010; Wilén, 2020). Thus, leaving the risk that women become 'tokens' only partially included whilst masculine cultures and underpinnings remain unchallenged, raising the question of how much change women's inclusion can create (Carreiras, 2010; Henry, 2019). On the other hand, maintaining the position that dismantling and eradicating militarised endeavours (such as peace operations) is the only possible way for change risks essentialism and reifying the notion that *all* women are peaceful, thus neglecting the diversity of women's experiences (Duncanson & Woodward, 2016, p. 6). Importantly, it discounts the experiences of an increasing number of women who wish to participate in these institutions and have done so in a fulfilling way (Agostino 2000 in Duncanson & Woodward, 2016, p. 6). The debate is indeed tricky, and there are limitations to both positions.

In response, Duncanson and Woodward (2016) suggest an alternative approach, given the emerging reality of women's increased participation and changes related to developments on gender and peace operations. The authors emphasise "it seems fundamental…that feminist theorising… needs to understand and account for that fact" whilst remaining focused on and contributing to the goals of feminist research (Duncanson & Woodward, 2016, p. 4). Inspired by Cynthia Cockburn's theorising, they suggest feminist scholars have dismissed possibilities for change too soon and argue we need to be more open to how one can identify a transformation. Among others, they suggest, research needs to investigate "*when* and *how"* women's participation can lead to changes in masculine institutions, and "equally, the circumstances when it does not, or when it even incurs backlash" (Duncanson & Woodward, 2016, p. 14). The authors theorise primarily about military women's participation in military institutions (including peace operations). However, I later argue the same approach can be

applied to policewomen in peace operations, given the police's similarity to the military as an institution largely built on masculine notions of security and violence. The following section thus investigates the existing literature on barriers present to women's participation in peace missions.

2.2.4 Women's participation in peace operations: Barriers and challenges

Given that women's increasing numbers in peace operations are a reality (especially for police personnel), it is essential to consider what obstacles inhibit their participation irrespective of the different stances on women's inclusion in masculine institutions. Indeed, the literature shows that women face several challenges before and during their deployment in peace missions that may make their participation more difficult. This section reviews the literature on the obstacles preventing women from being deployed in the first place and then offers studies' insight into challenges they may face during their deployment.

A first issue is found through the "pipeline problem", which addresses the fact that women's participation (as measured in numbers) cannot increase unless there already are enough women in the national military and police forces (Williams & Bellamy, 2021, p. 351). While this is an issue for several countries, the number of women serving in these capacities in some of the UN's troop-contributing countries is high enough to meet targets, demonstrating there are also further barriers to women's participation in peace missions (Williams & Bellamy, 2021, p. 351). Additionally, this may represent a smaller issue for policewomen who more commonly can apply independently from contingents compared to military women (Karim & Beardsley, 2017, p. 166).

Building on the research of Karim and Beardsley (2017) and others, a report by the Canadian *Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations* (Ghittoni et al., 2018) identifies further obstacles to women's deployment (for both military and police personnel). They argue women face barriers to being deployed to peace missions in the following areas (chapter 4):

1) Equal access to opportunities

- Lack of information on deployment opportunities (p. 22);

- (Gendered) corruption in nomination and selection of peacekeeping personnel (p. 23-24);

- Women being seen as needing protection rather than as potential protectors by senior leaders; (p. 24)

2) Deployment criteria

- Years of requested experience for deployment (p. 28);

- Physical fitness tests (p. 29);

- UN minimum criteria for deployment (p. 29)

3) The working environment [2]

- Ostracism within training cohorts (p. 31)

4) Family constraints

- Lack of adequate family-friendly policies (p. 34)

Finally – and particularly relevant to the focus of this thesis – for the women that have broken barriers to become deployed to a peace mission, the question is what further challenges they may face once on the 'inside' that can inhibit their full participation in peace missions (Williams & Bellamy, 2021, p. 351). The same report suggests that women may also face challenges in the following area during and after their deployment:

5) The working environment

- Inadequate accommodation, facilities and equipment (p. 32)

- Lack of specific medical care (p. 32)

6) Family constraints

- Lack of adequate family-friendly policies (p. 34)

7) Equal treatment during deployment

- Sexual and gender-based violence (p. 36)

- Unequal opportunities on deployment and missed opportunities at home (p. 38)

- Unreasonable expectations (p. 40)

8) Career-advancement opportunities

- Lack of support networks (p. 43)

---

[2] In the Elsie report, this category also covers gendered barriers related to facilities and medical care in missions. However, since these relate more directly to barriers *during* women's deployment than barriers *to* their deployment, I will present these in the next paragraph.

The Elsie study identifies important barriers to women's equal participation in peace missions. However, the report is mainly based on a literature review approach and is only complemented by a limited number of interviews with female peacekeepers. Therefore, it is helpful to identify further literature offering accounts of women's first-hand experiences in peacekeeping missions. Several other studies investigate female peacekeepers' experiences, identifying similar or additional barriers to women's participation in peace operations. The studies have different objectives, with some investigating the effectiveness of women peacekeepers while others focus on the implementation of the WPS agenda in different contexts. However, they similarly shed light on the various barriers and the existence of gendered cultures in missions that impact women's equal participation.

Alchin et al. (2018) draw on the experiences of women peacekeepers from the South African National Defence Force and thus have an exclusive focus on military personnel. The study locates itself in the debate on women's unique contributions to peace missions and draws attention to women's challenges in realising these. The scholars highlight challenges arising from recruitment processes, the women's self-perception of their contributions, patriarchal ideologies in their home nations, and the hyper-masculine cultures in the military. It thus indicates similar but also some additional challenges to those previously presented by other literature.

Jenne and Ulloa Bisshopp (2021) also investigate women military peacekeepers' perspectives, focusing on to what extent the WPS agenda's objective of incorporating gendered perspectives has been achieved in the Chilean armed forces. They investigate the experiences of women serving in MINUSTAH, analysing their formal and informal roles in the peace operation from a qualitative perspective, including through interviews with policymakers, among others. They find that the implementation of the WPS agenda has been limited in the nation's policy and practice related to peacekeeping. Therefore, they find that the women still face obstacles during their deployment due to gender stereotypes about women's security and abilities (2021, p. 149). As the authors note (2021, p. 136-137), this study provides a unique contribution to the literature by examining the issue from the standpoint of female practitioners, especially those from Latin America, which is an underrepresented context in the existing literature.

Kurebwa and Ndlovu (2020) analysed the experiences of Zimbabwean women peacekeepers serving in Liberia and East Timor from 2006 to 2014. They bring to light the

personal experiences of various uniformed peacekeepers (including police) and offer particular insight into challenges that affect women's participation in peace missions. Such challenges include low numbers of women, gender discrimination, lack of acceptance from male peacekeepers, language barriers, as well as martial challenges. The study offers first-hand information on female peacekeepers' experiences with challenges but has limited information on its methods and does not provide information on how women deal with these challenges. However, the study provides robust suggestions for how women's experiences in missions can be improved, focusing on measures for sustained recruitment in national institutions, women's safety and security, and robust pre-deployment training.

Finally, a report by Vermeij (2020) offers a unique contribution to the literature by investigating the challenges faced by 143 female military peacekeepers from 53 countries through personal interviews. The study thereby stands out from most other studies on the topic, which commonly focus on one country and/or one mission. Vermeij thereby offers solid data demonstrating that military women in peace operations face stigma and taboos independent of their nationality, rank, or religion at three different levels: the individual and community level, in their national defence structures and during their deployment. These include (among others): being regarded as less feminine or marriageable at the first level; being perceived as in need of protection and facing taboos over speaking up against discriminatory or sexist behaviour at the second; and finally, facing high levels of discrimination and sexual harassment, lack of respect for their leadership, gendered working stereotypes and intersectional experiences during deployment. The study particularly stands out because it also pays attention to the women's mitigation strategies, which include proving themselves by working harder, direct confrontation, joining women's network, or leaning on colleagues and leadership figures, and maintaining distance from others. By offering insight into this side of women's gendered experiences in missions, the study contributes valuable information on an aspect that has otherwise been largely neglected by literature on the topic.

A study by Osland et al. (2020) also offers further insight into barriers faced by women prior to and during their deployments to peace missions. The study found a lack of gender equality in peacekeepers' home countries, stereotypical gender roles, and low numbers of women to be the most significant barriers to women's participation in peace missions. The researchers investigate barriers using data from a survey and therefore complement the literature with a quantitative perspective on the topic. As a result, the study has strength in

terms of the numbers of respondents it draws upon, but it offers limited insight into women's experiences with these issues beyond discussing them as barriers. Finally, while the study focuses on both police and military personnel, it offers little understanding of how these contexts differ and the prevalence of these barriers for female police personnel exclusively.

The important work of Karim and Beardsley (2017) investigates the topic both quantitively and qualitatively, offering robust insight into why women may face barriers to their deployment. The scholars maintain that peacekeeping missions are (by extension of the military and police institutions of which they are composed) "gendered institutions in that they project and replicate structures of power that privilege men and certain forms of masculinity" (Karim & Beardsley, 2017, p. 3). Despite efforts for gender equality by the UN, the scholars argue the current culture of peace operations, and specifically gender power imbalances, "prevent…women and men from equal participation and perpetuates discrimination and violence" (Karim & Beardsley, 2017, p. 3). The scholars argue this arises from the privileging of the warrior, protection, and militarized masculinities that devalue feminine characteristics, while women are associated with peace and in need of protection (Karim, 2018, pp. 30-43). Finally, they note that, while these are most prevalent in the context of militaries, there is evidence that these cultural aspects may exist in policing as well (Karim & Beardsley, 2017, p. 42). They argue this has led to women's exclusion, discrimination and violence against women, and them being sent mostly to safe missions (Karim & Beardsley, 2017, pp. 30-43).[3]

Their case study on female peacekeepers in UNMIL finds that female peacekeepers are restricted in their work due to the 'protection norm' as well as gender discrimination, including sexual harassment. From their analysis, the authors conclude that simply increasing the numbers of women is insufficient to address the origins of these and that one needs to turn to 'equal opportunity peacekeeping' to overcome institutional barriers to women's participation (Karim & Beardsley, 2017). This idea entails an increased recognition and valuing of non-dominant forms of masculinity. The scholars suggest this can be achieved through "framing; leadership; recruitment and standards; promotion, demotion, and discipline; training and professionalism; access and accountability; women's representation; and gender mainstreaming" (Karim & Beardsley, 2017, p. 5; see pages 165-194).

---

[3] Although some argue the empirical evidence for the latter is inconsistent, see Williams and Bellamy (2021), page 352.

The study by Harris and Goldsmith (2010) is the only identified study that exclusively focuses on the experiences of *policewomen* in peace operations. They conducted qualitative interviews with Australian policewomen who served in Timor-Leste, the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea. Their findings showed that women have varied experiences but nevertheless face challenges based on their gender (such as harassment), especially from some male colleagues from their home country. The authors suggest that insecure environments in international missions may work to 'confirm' the masculine nature of policing and functions as a justification for women's exclusion (2010, p. 301). Given the literature's lack of focus on policewomen's experiences in peace missions, this study contributes significantly by highlighting the gendered challenges they face in the international field and challenges' possible origins.

Pruitt (2016) has also offered insight into policewomen's experiences in missions but does so in the context of India's FFPU in UNMIL. The scholar's focus is primarily on understanding the emergence, function and effects of FFPUs as a tool for women's participation in peace missions. She argues it is a 'temporary but useful measure' for women not wanting to be subject to challenges that may come with male-dominated units (2016, pp. 114-115). Pruitt's findings (2016, pp. 113-114) on challenges facing policewomen in FFPUs may be less transferrable to women in male-dominated units. However, some similarities are evident in, for instance, gender-stereotyped expectations of women's contributions to peace operations. The study is nevertheless worthy of mention as a valuable contribution to the literature, being one of the few studies that exclusively focuses on policewomen in peace operations.

2.3 This study's contribution

A general trend in the literature on women's experiences in peace operations is either an exclusive focus on women as military personnel or a mix of military and police personnel. Indeed, several scholars generally call for more research into women's own perspectives and experiences from peace missions (Henry, 2019, p. 255; Rupesinghe et al., 2019, p. 216). Given the increasing role and importance of police personnel in multidimensional peace missions, there is also a particular gap in knowledge of policewomen's experiences with gender relations in peace missions. Literature similarly calls specifically for research into policewomen's experiences (Vermeij, 2020, p. 31).

Further, whilst most existing studies focus on women from specific country forces or missions, this study engages with an exploratory approach to investigate policewomen's experiences in UN missions. By including women from various national backgrounds and missions, the study aims to understand policewomen's experiences with gendered power relations and the potential barriers they may have faced during their deployment. Moreover, it is also notable that few studies have aimed to understand how women respond to and navigate gender-related challenges in missions beyond seeking to identify ways to improve their participation (usually with a focus on increasing their numbers).[4] Understanding how women navigate gender relations in missions can give important insight into not only how their experiences can be improved (including, but not limited to their numbers) but also how women accept or resist masculine forms of domination, and is therefore worthy of exploration. This focus also particularly compliments Duncanson and Woodward's critique (2016) and suggestion that feminist research should be more attentive toward the ways women's increased numbers and participation *can* create change within masculine institutions (whilst also being attentive to the original aims of feminist undertakings). Given that women's increasing numbers are a reality (albeit a slow one), it is reasonable to assume the study's dual focus on women's empowerment will be of interest to feminist scholars, regardless of one's stance in the debate on women's inclusion in masculine institutions. The next chapter presents the theoretical approaches used to investigate the posed RQ and sub-RQs.

3 Theoretical Framework

This chapter presents the research's theoretical framework. Its main starting point is IR feminism, but I also draw on additional feminist understandings of gender, power, and intersectionality to deepen this theoretical framework. The final part of the framework also includes a section with other theoretical fields that inspire the analysis, namely feminist institutionalism and IPS.

Some may argue that IR feminism is a relatively new addition to the discussion and understanding of international politics, first gaining substantive ground at the end of the 1980s and into the 1990s. On the other hand, Tickner and True (2018, p. 221) argue that "international

---

[4] Vermeij (2020) is an exception that looks at women military peacekeepers' strategies both before and during peace missions.

relations came late to feminism". As the authors highlight, women have sought to participate in and influence discussions on international politics, war, and peace from before World War I until today. Despite long resistance from the discipline and practice of international politics, feminists have indirectly and directly broadened discussions on international politics over the past century (Tickner & True, 2018).

Defining (IR) feminism is essential given that it is often misinterpreted by some to be against men and as seeking to empower women at their expense (Tickner & True, 2018, p. 5). Instead, Tickner and True (2018, p. 5) explain feminism as constituted by two "interlinked phenomena". The first is the origin of feminism as a political movement that has been and continues to be interested in the rights of women and gender emancipation. The second is feminism as a theoretical framework for studying the world. Feminism uses a gender lens to understand more about women and the world and commonly directs its focus on women's lives and perspectives for this end (Tickner & True, 2018, p. 5). Thus, at the heart of feminism's contribution to IR lies the suggestion that a change in the subject of investigation (from a traditional state lens to women's or marginalised people's perspectives) will change our understanding of not only "*what* global politics is but also *how* it works and progresses (or not)" (Tickner & True, 2018, p. 231). Indeed, feminism valuing different ontological and epistemological perspectives than conventional IR theories has sometimes created tense discussions on what feminism can and should contribute to the field (e.g., Keohane, 1989, 1998; Tickner, 1997, 2005). However, as Tickner notes, this very difference allows feminism to broaden the scope of IR and investigate matters from a new perspective (Tickner, 2005). Feminists, therefore, argue that a gender lens contributes to our understanding of the world in three ways: on a conceptual level to understand patterns and developments in world politics; on an empirical level to understand the gendered dimensions of lived experiences and their causes and outcomes; and finally, on a normative level where feminist research promotes and contributes to emancipation and positive change (Sjoberg & Tickner, 2011, p. 11).

As a theoretical framework, IR feminism provides us with a gendered lens and several analytical concepts, such as gender, power, and intersectionality, to investigate women's stories and conduct feminist analyses of gender and world politics. Below, I introduce and define some of the most central concepts that inform this research and the forthcoming analysis.

3.1 Gender

Gender is the lens through which feminists try to make sense of world politics and is central to any feminist analysis. To understand gender as a concept, it is first helpful to see it in relation to *sex*, which refers to whether someone is biologically male or female. *Gender*, on the other hand, can be described as "the socially and culturally constructed characteristics… that are stereotypically associated with masculinity" and "their opposites are associated with femininity" (Tickner, 1997, p. 614). These characteristics have traditionally been linked with a person's biological sex: being female has normally been associated with characteristics deemed feminine, such as weakness, emotion, dependence, and domesticity. In contrast, being male has typically been associated with masculine traits, such as strength, power, leadership, rationality, and public life – traits usually deemed more valuable and positive than feminine ones by society (Sjoberg & Tickner, 2011, p. 4).

From a feminist viewpoint, the world is therefore structured around gender, where masculinity (and those men who possess or perform such qualities) is defined as "the desired norm", while femininity (and, commonly, but not exclusively women) "function as the failure of the norm" (Kinsella, 2020, p. 146). This gender hierarchy is perhaps most explicit in the feminist idea of patriarchy which describes "…the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (Connell, 1995, p. 77). However, different degrees of femininity and masculinity are argued to yield varying degrees of power, with one being dependent on the other for its position (Connell, 1995). Building on Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony, Connell (1995, pp. 76-77) has, for instance, demonstrated this through the concept of hegemonic masculinity, which is "the masculinity that occupies the hegemonic position in a given pattern of gender relations…". The concept typically refers to an idealised type of masculinity, usually embodied by white and heterosexual men, although Connell (1995, pp. 76-77) stressed that it can always be contested and changes across cultures and time. Subordinated forms of masculinities that assimilate feminine traits, particularly homosexual masculinities (but also other heterosexual masculinities), thus become subordinated in the gender hierarchy (Connell, 1995, pp. 76-77). As such, gendered power relations do not just configure between men and women but also between men and between women.

Because masculinities and femininities work to regulate the behaviour of individuals, gender becomes "a way of structuring social practice in general…" (Connell, 1995, p. 75). Feminists further maintain that gender is 'systemic', meaning that gender manifestations are

"less individual 'choices' than effects of institutionalized codes, norms, and rules" (Peterson, 2007, p. 13). They also argue that the system of gender does not only manifest in people but also in other aspects of our world, like human activities that become gendered by association with femininity or masculinity (Cohn, 1993, p. 229). The hierarchical implications of associations with masculinity and femininity and "norms and practices of gender" thus affect who experiences privilege or exclusion (Kirby, 2020, p. 272). It also influences what social, political, and economic structures one can participate in and, in turn, how one is affected by them, as will be shown in the forthcoming analysis. Therefore, the interaction of gender and power is a central part of feminist analysis (Kinsella, 2020, p. 147).

3.2 Power

Over the past decades, feminists have contributed important analyses on the inextricable link between gender and power relations. Some have exposed the ways in which men dominate women, for instance, through the marginalisation of women's experiences, perspectives, and involvement in world politics (Tickner, 1992). By posing the famous question "where are the women?", others have revealed how the personal is international and emphasised women's agency by demonstrating their importance to the functioning of world politics (Enloe, 2014, p. 1). The collective power dimension of feminist research has also been revealed in debates over who defines and constitutes the category of 'women' (Stuvøy & Sinevaara-Niskanen, 2009, p. 34). As such, feminist works have long argued and demonstrated that "gender is a primary field within which or by means of which power is articulated" (Scott, 1988, p. 45).

However, Allen (1998, p. 21; 2018) argues that traditional feminist understandings of power dynamics have been limited in understanding the full complexities of gender and power. Allen (1998) maintains that feminists have largely examined power relations as *either* men's power over women (power as domination) or women's resistance towards this domination (power as empowerment). Simultaneously each part has been critiquing and/or neglecting the other's point of view, thus seeing women's experiences respectively as struggles or empowerment. Instead, Allen (2018) suggests power can be analysed in a more multi-dimensional sense, recognising that both these processes can and do coincide. Appreciating this avoids the pitfall of telling "only one side of the story" (Allen, 1998, p. 22). It recognises that women engage with both forms of power, as potential victims but also as empowered individuals who simultaneously resist domination (Allen, 1998, p. 22).

3.3 A multidimensional feminist power analysis

To understand the intricate dimensions of power relations in a more multidimensional way, (Allen, 1998) suggests understanding instances of power in three different (but interconnected) ways. The first form, 'power-over', is defined as one or several actors' ability to "constrain the choices available to another actor or set of actors in a nontrivial way" (Allen, 1998, p. 33). Importantly, this definition includes the types of power often exercised by actors inadvertently. These include when men dominate women unintentionally, but also domination by men who deliberately tries not to do so or that exercised by white women (Allen, 1998, p. 33; n. 9). Secondly, 'power-to' is "the ability of an individual actor to attain an end or series of ends" (Allen, 1998, p. 34). This form describes the power taking place when women act even if subordinated, that is, their ability to achieve something despite facing male domination (Allen, 1998, p. 35). This form of power should not be regarded as synonymous with or exclusive to acts of resistance. Rather, resistance is a particular form of 'power-to' - that is, actions the individual can perform that specifically *undermine* the domination they face (Allen, 1998, p. 35). The final form of power is 'power-with', which expresses the collective empowerment or solidarity that is performed by individuals' facing similar domination to achieve a common end, such as through the feminist movement (Allen, 1998, p. 35). Power should thus be understood through three dimensions: 'power-over', 'power-to' and 'power-with', which is particularly suited to understanding feminist interests in power, including domination, resistance, and solidarity (Allen, 1998, p. 36).

While these forms of power can be distinguished analytically, they are nevertheless interrelated. Allen (1998, p. 37) emphasises that "an action that involves 'power-with' which presupposes 'power-to' may also be used as a means to achieve power over others". Understanding power in this way provides a particularly advantageous account that allows us to see women as more than 'just' dominated. Instead, it recognises how many women not only resist domination but also how they navigate it and even perform power with other women. This understanding of power is therefore particularly useful to analyse the experiences of policewomen serving in peace missions because it enables me to recognise the ways in which many of these women may do more than being exclusively dominated or resisting.

3.4 Intersectionality

To further understand the complexities of power relations, it is also necessary to consider how different aspects of an individual's identity may influence their experiences. The concept of

intersectionality is central to understanding how different power structures intersect and is today described as "a basic feminist analytical tool" (Ackerly & True, 2008, p. 156). Intersectionality was developed as part of a significant criticism of feminism: the assumption that some (Western) women's experiences and struggles can be universally applied to all women (Kinsella, 2020, p. 147). Coined by (Crenshaw, 1989) in the late 1980s, the scholar pointed toward the lack of focus on and recognition of how different systems of oppression intersect, particularly those of gender and race. Crenshaw built her point by analysing several legal cases of discrimination in the United States. The scholar highlighted how a group of black women were not permitted to file a discrimination lawsuit against their previous employer who had fired them if they based their claims on *both* racism and sexism (Crenshaw, 1989, pp. 140-142). Instead, they could only file based on one of them. Crenshaw highlighted that this was highly problematic since the business could claim that they employed both (white) women and some black men, essentially blocking the women's claim to justice. The scholar argued that having a narrow focus on only certain (privileged) members of a marginalised group would lead to "a distorted analysis", since our understandings of struggles can then represent "only a subset of a much more complex phenomenon (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 140). Crenshaw, therefore, urged feminist theories to consider how various forms of suppression intersect and can thereby disadvantage particular groups more than others. As Crenshaw emphasises, "among the most troubling political consequences" of neglecting the intersection of gender and race is that feminist research risks reproducing the subordination of the very women they aim to empower (Crenshaw, 1990, p. 1252).

While intersectionality was developed to understand how gender and race intersect, it "can be used to analyze any context of intersecting systems of oppression" (Ackerly & True, 2008, p. 156). It has, for instance, been applied to examine how gender intersects with other power structures like nation and discipline within IR (Ackerly & True, 2008). However, in the forthcoming analysis, the concept is mainly applied to generate a more comprehensive understanding of how race intersects with gendered power relations in UN peace missions and its influence on the policewomen's experiences.

3.5 Women's knowledge and hegemonic institutions

Beyond the central conceptual framework above, this thesis broadly draws on standpoint theory and its concern for women's perspectives and lived experiences to understand policewomen's experiences in peace operations. Central to feminist standpoint theory is the argument that one

can generate essential and emancipatory knowledge by studying the experiences of those who are dominated and marginalised (Kronsell, 2005, p. 288). Standpoint scholars have mainly focused on women in marginalised places (which has traditionally not included women who take part in institutions of hegemonic masculinity since these are regarded as "co-opted or too few to be representative") (Kronsell, 2005, p. 298). However, Kronsell's critique of standpoint theory argues that its emphasis on women's perspectives and knowledge is, in fact, instrumental to discovering "gendered practices" in the context of hegemonic institutions (Kronsell, 2005, p. 290). She argues that women's perspectives can reveal practices that may otherwise be normalised and are rendered invisible to men who are privileged in these institutions (Kronsell, 2005, p. 290). It is this 'modified version' of standpoint theory that the thesis engages with to understand and unfold gendered power relations in peacekeeping. This focus on gender relations in institutions thereby also takes inspiration from feminist institutionalism.

3.6 Other theoretical frameworks

The feminist IR lens thus offers many vital tools to understand policewomen's experiences in peace missions. However, the analysis is also inspired and informed by the work of feminist institutionalism and further draws on aspects from IPS as well. The former brings a particular focus on understanding and explaining how power dynamics play out in institutions, including in its informal structures (Holmes, 2020, p. 214; Holmes et al., 2019). This includes examining the gendered nature and effects of various bureaucratic practices and rules (Holmes, 2020, p. 214). A feminist institutionalist approach can also be applied to informal institutions, of which peacekeeping is an example (Holmes et al., 2019, pp. 212-123). This is where feminist institutionalism has much to gain from IR feminism, and vice versa, because it can draw a focus toward international institutions and their informal structures from the perspective of everyday experiences and practices. As (Holmes et al., 2019, p. 230) argue, generating "feminist knowledge of international institutions…is essential if we are to understand more comprehensibly the myriad ways in which the personal is international" and poses it as a challenge to IR feminism.

Holmes further observes that feminist institutionalism has also informed Critical Military Studies. This field has investigated military and police institutions and how they function to enable and constrain women, as well as gender reform programmes. However, these studies have been mainly conducted on a national state level and not in relation to international structures such as peacekeeping (Holmes, 2020, p. 220). This thesis, therefore, takes inspiration

from the work of both feminist institutionalism as well as the prior work of Critical Military Studies scholars when it seeks to investigate policewomen's everyday experiences of gender and power structures in UN peace missions.

Moreover, the analysis also draws some inspiration from IPS, and its focus on *practices,* defined as "socially meaningful patterns of action" that take place and are generated from and in relation to particular contexts and structures (Adler & Pouliot, 2011, p. 4). Like feminist IR, IPS thus draws attention to the everyday and practices, aiming to understand (among others) what they can tell us about power structures in the wider context they take shape in (Adler & Pouliot, 2011, p. 30). IPS and, specifically, their use of Bourdieu's concept of *capital* offers this analysis an additional, powerful thinking tool to understand power dynamics. Capital can be explained as a form of "resource…which actors aim to accumulate and benefit from" when it is recognised as capital by other actors in their environment (Pouliot & Mérand, 2013, p. 36). I choose to engage with this concept (and this concept only) due to the following. While the presented framework by Allen offers a comprehensive way to identify and analyse multidimensional power structures, it is weaker in allowing identification of *where* actors find sources of power for deterrence or resistance when challenged. Bourdieu's capital thus offers a theoretical anchor to identify what sources actors draw power from and is an aspect I engage with as part of women's resistance to gendered challenges in missions.

4 Methodology and Methods

4.1 Feminist aims and research methods

The diversity of feminist research is reflected in their different stances on gender, ontology, and epistemology. However, it is generally informed by "four methodological guidelines" (Tickner, 2005, p. 5): (1) the RQs we pose (and why); (2) research that is valuable to its participants (men and women) and less biased than traditional research; (3) a recognition of and focus on the researcher's subjectivity and reflexivity; and (4) conducting research with emancipatory qualities. Using these methods, feminists seek to change existing frameworks of knowledge, often using women's lives and experiences as a starting point to expose the functioning and implications of gender hierarchies (Tickner, 2005).

As mentioned, standpoint feminism particularly emphasises this latter aspect through shifting focus from states to women's (marginalised) experiences as the unit of analysis. This

alternative lens seeks to "bring out the implications of the patriarchal state" and understand the effects of (patriarchal) economic and security structures on individuals (Hansen, 2010, p. 21). Consequently, standpoint feminism typically places women at the centre of analysis, with a particular emphasis on their lived experiences of national and global political structures (Hansen, 2010, p. 22). Such a shift in focus and unit of analysis has important implications for research methods and design.

It follows that feminist research (and particularly standpoint feminism) has a general preference for conducting research of qualitative nature, which is considered more compatible and adaptable to its aims. Qualitative research is a research tradition that puts a particular focus on "words rather than numbers" (Bryman, 2016, p. 375). It aims to investigate individual experiences and perspectives, their nuances and meanings, as opposed to quantitative research's focus on producing generalisable claims (Bryman, 2016, pp. 32-33). Therefore, qualitative methods align more closely with feminism's emancipatory goals because it allows both a focus on individual voices and reduced exploitation and objectification of participants in the research process (Bryman, 2016, p. 403). Consequently, I considered a qualitative research strategy most suitable for an explorative study aiming to understand policewomen's experiences and perspectives on gender and power structures in UN peace operations.

Relatedly, the study engages with an interpretivist epistemology and a constructivist ontology. Epistemology refers to questions around "what we can know" and how to acquire this knowledge, while ontology questions what exists, what researchers should study, and what the nature of the object of study is (Hansen, 2010, p. 17). Interpretivism, which contrasts with positivism, advocates for knowledge generation that recognises the differences between individual experiences (Bryman, 2016, p. 26). This epistemological position requires the researcher to understand subjective meanings, which are considered inherent to social behaviour (Bryman, 2016, p. 26). Ontological constructionism considers structures to be "produced through social interaction…[and] in a constant state of revision" (Bryman, 2016, p. 29). Therefore, this ontological position assumes that social objects or structures are constructed by the social actors engaging with them (Bryman, 2016, p. 29). These qualities allow the study to consider how meanings and structures are created and how they can change. They thus enable a more comprehensive analysis of the policewomen's experiences with gender, how they engage with gender structures and their effects.

This study started with a general RQ, guided by the existing literature on women's participation in peace operations. The research utilised both primary and secondary data to answer its RQs. I collected the former through semi-structured interviews with policewomen and male police commissioners and the secondary data from currently available and relevant literature. The latter helped form and develop the initial RQs and inform the research aims.

4.2 Study participants: Presentation and recruitment

The participants in this study were recruited based on a non-probability technique, namely purposive sampling. The participants were therefore selected based on their relevance to the study's RQ and aims (Bryman, 2016, p. 408). The sampling process was also further guided by theoretical sampling, meaning the number of participants was not fixed but open to change depending on what I considered appropriate to generate a theoretical understanding of the women's experiences (Bryman, 2016, p. 411). However, I did have to limit the iterative component of this somewhat to ensure the study's feasibility, which is a common critique of grounded theory (Bryman, 2016, p. 580). I ultimately recruited thirteen participants to take part in the research. They are composed of two groups: policewomen and male police commissioners.

For the first group of participants, I aimed to recruit participants that were female police/police advisors, who were currently or previously deployed with UNPOL in a peace operation, and that had experiences from the past 15 years. I included the last criterion to ensure participants had somewhat recent experience from missions, though some participants had further experiences outside of these years as well. I also tried to recruit policewomen with different national and cultural backgrounds and mission experiences. Importantly, diversifying the sample was not a measure to create a sample representative of world regions (this would require a much larger sample size) or to draw generalisations about policewomen's experiences in UN missions (Bryman, 2016, p. 408). Instead, because the study is qualitative and exploratory, I was preoccupied with ensuring a diverse sample and preventing the research from being Eurocentric. This focus was beneficial in understanding how women from vastly different backgrounds navigate and engage with gender dynamics in the missions. I recruited all the policewomen through contacts in my supervisor's professional network, who put me in touch with a pool of women who would be relevant to the research aims.

I ultimately recruited ten policewomen for the study. Their ages range from 36-61 years. They have backgrounds from the following countries/regions: India, Sweden, Jamaica,

Rwanda, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Norway, Jordan, the United Kingdom, Indonesia and one additional Asian country.[5] The policewomen held various ranks and served in various capacities during the missions, from chief of staff, team leaders, coordinators, special advisors, and special assistants, to inspectors, sergeants, and superintendents. The policewomen's experiences are primarily from various periods between 2008-2021 (although one participant has deployments from even further back), and their deployments cover the following peace operations: UNMIL, UNMIS, UNMISS, MINUSMA, ONUMOZ, UNMIBH, UNMISET, UNAMA, UNMEER, UNAMSIL, UNSMIL, UNFICYP.

I also recruited a second group of participants, namely male police commissioners (one was an acting police commissioner), to get the perspective of men who held the highest forms of leadership positions in the missions. Beyond the participants having to be men who had served as a police commissioner (or acting police commissioner), I did not set any further criteria for this group of participants. This was because the outreach was more limited than with the first group since fewer people serve in these positions in missions. Consequently, there was no ready pool of participants where I selected whom to include or not, as was done with the policewomen. In total, I recruited three police commissioners with backgrounds from Europe, Africa, and Asia.[6] Ideally, I would have liked to speak with more male participants (from various ranks and positions), but this was not feasible because of the study's time constraints and limited scope. However, including the police commissioners in the study offered additional valuable perspectives on gendered power relations in the missions and helped triangulate my data sources.

I recruited the policewomen through contacts in my supervisor's professional network, which was an efficient way to locate interviewees for the study. The first contact sent out a common email explaining the study and why they were contacted, asking the participants to get in touch with me if they wished to participate. Many policewomen got back to me and stated their interest, from which I recruited five policewomen from varying cultural and geographical backgrounds. Upon realising that I would like to get more perspectives and further increase the representation of the participants' national and cultural backgrounds, I got in touch with a second contact from my supervisor's network. This contact similarly reached out to people who fit the criteria and cleared with them beforehand if they would be willing to

---

[5] This is not specified further to ensure the participant's confidentiality.
[6] Due to the small number of police commissioners, I similarly present these participants by world regions to ensure their confidentiality.

participate in the study. The contact thereafter put me directly in touch with the participants, where I would offer them further information about the study and schedule interviews upon their agreement. I also recruited the police commissioners through this same contact.

During the recruitment processes, I unfortunately had to turn away some interested candidates because they did not fit all the criteria or if a region would become overrepresented in the sample (say, for instance, Scandinavian countries). One contact also emailed me back only after some time and was not included because her country was already represented in the study. Finally, one candidate's email (unfortunately) ended up in the spam folder, and I did not see it until halfway through March. By the time I emailed the contact back, she was too busy to participate anymore. In this sense, the recruitment process ended up being largely first-come-first-serve. I am sure these policewomen's individual experiences would have also contributed something unique to the study. However, I am nevertheless confident I was able to capture the overarching themes with the distribution of participants I interviewed for the study. The recruitment of the police commissioners was less directed from my side and more dependent on whom I could reach through my contact. Nonetheless, I think they provided valuable insight as alternative perspectives on gender relations in the missions.

4.3 Semi-structured interviews

I used interviews to investigate the participants' experiences and perspectives. Interviewing is one of the most common data collection methods within the qualitative research tradition (Bryman, 2016, p. 377). More specifically, I decided to use semi-structured interviews, which allow more flexibility compared to interviews commonly conducted for quantitative research (Bryman, 2016, p. 467). In contrast to unstructured interviewing, this form of interviewing relies on an interview guide that ensures certain topics are discussed (Bryman, 2016, pp. 468-469). The semi-structured form nevertheless allowed the respondents flexibility in the interviews and permitted me to explore new ideas that participants brought up (Bryman, 2016, p. 468). This flexibility allowed me to understand what aspects were important to the women and police commissioners on the topic area and how they understood and framed their experiences (Bryman, 2016, p. 468). Due to these qualities, I found the method particularly appropriate for my study's aims. Finally, since I did not want to direct the participants too much in their responses, semi-structured interviews also aligned well with the feminist nature of the study.

This type of data collection is common for feminist research, particularly because of the complementary qualities it offers to the theoretical framework (Bryman, 2016, p. 488). For instance, Oakley (1981) has emphasised the masculine origins of *structured* interviews and argues that the more flexible form suits feminist research purposes better because they allow: more interaction between the interviewer and interviewee; women's perspectives to come through to a more considerable degree; and thus create a less hierarchical relationship than in structured interview (cited in Bryman, 2016, p. 488). As a feminist researcher, I wanted to prioritise a form of data collection that would let the policewomen provide their personal perspectives and experiences from missions rather than performing selective data collection where I looked for confirmative and pre-defined answers. The semi-structured format thus allowed for a more relaxed relationship between the participants and me, where we could engage in a somewhat structured dialogue about their experiences as one woman to another. As Oakley (1981, p. 58) argues, the relationship between researcher and participants needs to be acknowledged as something more than a "dangerous bias". Rather, it is often the level of engagement that opens the door for the exchange of truly personal experiences and perspectives, which is consistent with my experience from the interviews. This is not to say that the semi-structured format completely removes power relations, but it is certainly presented as a suitable approach for the goals of my study.

4.3.1 Interview guides

The interview guide ensured that I could explore the interviewees' ideas and experiences in relation to my research focus and the tentative RQs. It was prepared with care to include questions that would allow me to understand my participants' experiences and their understanding of dynamics in the missions (Bryman, 2016, p. 470). I also tried to avoid leading questions that would direct their responses too much. Instead, I sought to use open-ended ones, so the respondents could bring in their points of view and even new topics if they wished (Bryman, 2016, p. 470). As such, questions often involved phrases like "how do you believe" or similar. Before conducting the interviews, I organised a trial interview with a Norwegian policewoman to understand how my interview questions were received and to modify any unclear aspects (Lune & Berg, 2017, p. 77). I also consulted my supervisor and peers and modified the interview guide accordingly.

The final interview guide for the women police covered several aspects related to their experiences in peace missions. These included (among others): their experiences with gender

28

dynamics in missions; their understandings of it; differences between missions and working environments/team compositions; and how they navigated gender-related challenges (see appendix A for the complete interview guide). In hindsight, I think the interview questions were quite influenced by the literature. My impression was that most policewomen would have had challenging experiences and would have found their deployments quite tough. While challenging situations were certainly a part of the experience for several participants, for some, it was not, and most of them viewed their deployment as a very positive experience nevertheless. One notable effect of the interview questions was therefore that it became *very* apparent when the women did not perceive themselves to have had experiences with challenging gender relations. In hindsight, I think these aspects could have been explored more. However, since I included broader questions on desired improvements and their personal and professional development from the mission, I think the interview guide was still able to explore their empowering experiences to some extent as well.

For the police commissioners, I included questions on their understanding of and reflections on gender dynamics in missions, effects of UN policies on mandates and missions, how women's participation can be improved further in the future, and similar (see appendix B). These questions mostly worked well, and I was able to get some informing alternate perspectives on gendered power relations in missions. However, it should be mentioned that I believe some of their responses could have been influenced by wanting to present a positive image of the UN and themselves. This became evident in one case where challenges between personnel were mentioned only briefly as something small that could always be handled without the participant wanting to elaborate further.

4.3.2 Digital interviews

The interviews for this study were all conducted digitally through software such as Zoom. This was the preferred solution for several reasons. The international focus of the study and the multiple nationalities of the policewomen firstly meant that the participants were all located in different geographical areas. Therefore, it would have been extremely costly and time-consuming to conduct the interviews in person. Coupled with the global pandemic still ongoing at the time of writing, there was a clear preference for digital interviews. Since the Covid-19-pandemic has made digital meetings common, all participants seemed familiar and comfortable with the digital form. Because such software allows communication through both video and sound, digital interviews do not lose all body language in comparison to phone interviews.

There are thus some clear advantages of conducting interviews digitally, but some limitations are also worthy of mention (Bryman, 2016, p. 492). While one concern is that some "visual cues" may be lost since the video only shows a person's upper body, researchers argue this form of interviewing comes very close to the quality of traditional in-person interviews (Thunberg & Arnell, 2021, p. 9). Another obvious challenge is that the process is vulnerable to bad connections breaking up the interview flow, negatively affecting the resulting transcripts (Bryman, 2016, p. 492). This was the case in a couple of the interviews, but I made sure to clarify cases where this impacted the dialogue noticeably. Further, while the digital format made it easy to schedule the interviews with flexibility, this and/or the digital format itself also seemed to reduce timely responses from some participants. While I started with a strategy where I let the participants themselves propose the time of the interview, I later changed to proposing specific times instead. This seemed to give quicker and more reliable responses. Finally, the digital format is similarly vulnerable to the participants being influenced by the visual appearance of the interviewer (Bryman, 2016, p. 492). To mitigate this, I sought to dress in a professional but neutral way and to remain true to my own character during the interviews (Lune & Berg, 2017, p. 83).

4.3.3 Data quality

During and after the completion of the interviews, I took several steps to ensure the integrity of the data. I kept a temporary sound recording from each interview to transcribe them afterwards. While time-consuming, transcribing ensured the quality of the analysis by removing "the natural limitations of our memories and the intuitive glosses we might place on what people say" and offered the possibility to revisit responses and examine them closer (Bryman, 2016, p. 479). Finally, it also enabled me to follow one of the "ten commandments of interviewing" by being present during the interview, engaging with my participants, and demonstrating that I was genuinely interested in hearing their responses (Lune & Berg, 2017, p. 89). I believe this was a crucial aspect, as the respondents would often elaborate and bring in new information depending on my responses to their statements.

4.4 Reflexivity

While many research traditions have attempted to maximise research objectivity by emphasising professional relations with participants and researchers' neutrality, feminists disagree with these practices. Instead, feminists see value and opportunity in the personal involvement of the researcher and argue that objectivity can instead be achieved through

awareness and acknowledgement of one's positionality (Oakley, 1981, p. 58; Tickner, 2005, pp. 8-9). In fact, because subjectivity permeates all social science research, feminists believe reflecting on one's subjectivity is critical (Tickner, 2005, p. 8). Open reflection will increase the researcher's own awareness of potential biases and provides other researchers insight into influential factors in the research. In the following paragraphs, I describe myself and how my identity has possibly influenced the research.

On a personal level (Tickner, 2005, p. 8), my interest in the research topic largely arises from my identity as a woman and being familiar with systemic structures of gendered power relations myself. As such, I have always admired women who persevere and succeed in challenging environments. To me, these women are a source of inspiration whom I very much look up to. Beyond the academic justification presented earlier, I believe my interest in how they navigate these environments arises largely from this admiration.

Reflecting on how my identity has influenced the research process, I believe a couple of things are worthy of mention. Firstly, being a woman certainly helped me understand the women's experiences with gendered power relations better, although I do not claim nor believe that one can ever fully understand another individual's experiences. However, my identity as a woman was likely a significant influence on the degree to which the women were willing to share their experiences with me. Being a woman meant that I could relate to the experiences they shared (at least to some extent, but this was also different depending on each participant's experiences) and likely spurred the conversations to a deeper level. It may be less likely that the participants would have shared some of these experiences as fully with a male researcher, especially when it comes to sensitive experiences like harassment. With the police commissioners, it *can* have had the opposite effect. They may have felt pressured to say the 'right' things, especially given the nature of their profession as part of a normative and (or at least aspiring to become) gender-equal institution like the UN. However, I nevertheless felt that they shared their perspectives quite openly with me, especially the police commissioner who gave me insight into his experience with managing a case of sexual harassment.

Certainly, my identity as a white woman also played a role in this process. My studies have taught me the privilege I have, from my daily life to my education, by being born a white woman in Norway. This has motivated me to be more aware of my own positionality and biases to reduce a Eurocentric focus in my study. I, therefore, made sure to include the intersectionality concept as part of my analysis. This was also a significant reason for why I

continued to increase my sample size beyond the first five participants, as I wanted to ensure a variety of perspectives and backgrounds were represented. However, this aspect of my identity may have made me less sensitive to picking up on racialised aspects of the women's experiences since I have not experienced this type of discrimination myself. It can also have influenced how comfortable some participants felt sharing such experiences with me.

Finally, my academic and professional career, involving several years of studying criminology and a year with the police in Norway, was likely a big part of my motivation for focusing on *police*women. With a background in criminology *and* feminist studies also comes my interest in personal (power) relations and sociology, which likely influenced my interest in examining lived experiences rather than a top-level approach. My interest in and inspiration from the fields of feminist institutionalism and international political sociology also likely derive from this sociological background.

4.5 Ethics and research dilemmas

I made several ethical considerations to maintain integrity and quality during the research process. Research ethics are concerned with the fact that "social scientists…have an ethical obligation to their colleagues, their study population, and the larger society", especially when we examine people's lives and personal experiences (Lune & Berg, 2017, p. 43). Ethics are therefore concerned with issues such as "harm, consent, privacy and the confidentiality of data" (Lune & Berg, 2017, p. 43). However, it also relates to the research itself and its effects on broader society (Nygaard, 2017, p. 36). Because ethical issues are not always blatant and obvious, I have taken extra care to consider these (Nygaard, 2017, p. 35). In the following paragraphs, I discuss ethical issues encountered in the research process and how I dealt with them.

I approached the first set of issues by considering issues like harm to participants, informed consent, privacy, and deception (Bryman, 2016, p. 125). Firstly, I considered aspects of anonymity and confidentiality concerning harm to participants. Participants' names were naturally anonymised and replaced with a participant number. However, I also considered that participants could still be recognised through other background information (Lune & Berg, 2017, p. 48). This presented a more significant issue than I first expected. I quickly realised that background information (like the policewomen's nationality, mission, and deployment period) could enable recognition since the number of participating policewomen in some missions is quite low. I therefore chose to present the participants' background information

jointly (instead of individually), and I have further been very conscious of how I discuss them and their experiences in my findings so they will not be indirectly identified (Bryman, 2016, p. 127; Lune & Berg, 2017, p. 48).

Reducing harm to participants is also closely linked with the fundamental principle of informed consent (Bryman, 2016, p. 130). It concerns the fact that "research participants should be given as much information as needed to make an informed decision about whether or not they wish to participate in a study" (Bryman, 2016, p. 130). All participants in this study were required to sign an informed consent sheet (physically or digitally) before the interviews started. The informed consent sheet detailed the study's objectives and (tentative) RQs, why they were being asked to participate, what participation entailed, how their anonymity would be ensured and how data processing would be handled. It also informed them of their right to withdraw their consent at any time during the research process. By using signed informed consent sheets, I ensured the participants were taking part in the study out of their own free will with a proper understanding of what their participation entailed (Lune & Berg, 2017, p. 46).

I also took several measures to secure the personal data I had collected. Among these were to: only store collected data securely (with two-factor identification) and in compliance with privacy regulations; remove any personally identifiable information from transcripts and to keep the shredding key secure and separate from the dataset; and to only keep the collected information for as long as was truly necessary (Bryman, 2016, p. 128). I sought ethics approval from the Norwegian Centre for Research Data which assessed whether the research had considered the major ethical principles (informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, and similar) and that the processing of data was in accordance with applicable privacy laws. NSD's ethics approval was given prior to the start of data collection. Nonetheless, I am aware that "ethical considerations are less about checking boxes" through an ethics approval and more about critically reflecting on my experiences and actions as well as the implications of my own research (Nygaard, 2017, p. 35).

This aspect became particularly evident in one of the first few interviews. While I was aware that some of the participants could have had sensitive experiences in the missions, I was caught quite off-guard when one of the first participants recounted her experience with (physical) sexual harassment during her deployment. I think I was both unprepared for how much the participant opened up to me, the level of detail she gave, and how emotional it was

(for both of us). During the interview, I took extra care to remind her that we could skip questions or end the interview if it was uncomfortable for her, but she expressed that she was okay to continue. Towards the end of the interview, I felt strongly about offering her to read through the final draft. I did this to ensure she still felt comfortable sharing her experiences and how they were presented. I also wanted her to have some ownership and participation in the research. The participant accepted this, and I sent her a draft of the discussion in the middle of May, upon which she decided to make no changes. After the interview in early March, I felt pretty emotional for a few days and thought a lot about the experience. After discussing with my supervisor, I further reflected on my responsibility as a researcher and the power research holds in society. By shedding light on her and other women's experiences, it is my hope that this research can draw further attention to women's realities and offer them further knowledge of gendered power relations, their effects, and possible ways to navigate them.

4.6 Reflections on research quality

In this section, I will discuss aspects of the research's quality. In contrast to quantitative research, a valuable way to assess qualitative research is by considering its trustworthiness and authenticity, as originally proposed by Lincoln & Guba (1985) and Guba & Lincoln (1994) (in Bryman, 2016, p. 384). They suggest measuring a study's *trustworthiness* through its credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Bryman, 2016, p. 384). *Authenticity*, on the other hand, is concerned with the "broader political impact of research", whether the study represents different viewpoints fairly and if the research is valuable to participants to understand their social setting better (Bryman, 2016, p. 386). The following paragraphs assess these aspects of the study and offer reflections on the study's quality.

Credibility concerns that the social world is constituted by different social actors who have unique worldviews and perspectives. It thus considers to what extent the researcher has understood a participant's social world correctly (Bryman, 2016, p. 384). This is particularly relevant to this study since it investigated the participants' experiences and perceptions of gendered power relations in missions. It represents a tension between providing an authentic account of the participants' experiences and my interpretations of these, an aspect frequently discussed with feminist research and its valuing of women's experiences (Bryman, 2016, p. 489). I tried to mitigate (not resolve) this through respondent validation. I repeated my interpretation of the participants' responses during the interviews to ensure my understanding was as correct as possible (Bryman, 2016, p. 385). I also used a research journal during my

interviews, where I wrote down notes about the interviewees' body language and the atmosphere of each interview. The journal helped increase the triangulation of my data and, thereby also, its credibility (Krefting, 1991, p. 217; 219). Finally, I further triangulated my data sources by including the police commissioners, who offered insights from a different standpoint than the policewomen (Krefting, 1991, p. 219). While these measures aided with an increased understanding, it does not remove the fact that the analysis is a product of my interpretation of participants' experiences through the approaches presented in the theoretical framework.

Transferability refers to how the findings apply to other contexts outside the study's own (Krefting, 1991, p. 216). However, because qualitative research is usually concerned with "depth rather than the breadth" and therefore particular contexts, transferability is more commonly ensured by offering rich descriptions, as proposed by Guba and Lincoln (in Bryman, 2016, p. 384). Giving rich descriptions entails providing "sufficient descriptive data" on the study context, so those interested in transferring them to a different context can assess their applicability (Bryman, 2016, p. 384; Krefting, 1991, p. 216). In this study, I have sought to maintain this by offering rich details of the interviewees' responses (often through direct quotes), the situations they reflected on, and my own positionality when interpreting these. However, since I had to consider confidentiality issues, a clear limitation is evident in the limited information about the specific mission context. Nevertheless, I considered the trust of my participants (as regards their anonymity) was more critical, even though it may present as a limitation of the study. I have instead sought to provide as much detail as possible around the study design and analysis.

Dependability concerns the findings' consistency and to what extent one can identify the sources of variabilities (Krefting, 1991, p. 216). It is therefore important to describe "the exact methods of data gathering, analysis and interpretation" (Krefting, 1991, p. 221). I have sought to make the research process transparent by providing detailed descriptions of my data collection and analysis, including how I identified findings through the coding process. I have also consulted my peers, my supervisor, and other academics throughout the research process to increase the dependability of my research (Krefting, 1991, p. 221). This included engaging in discussions with others through thesis seminars, group meetings and privately throughout the research project.

Finally, confirmability focuses on the neutrality of the researcher and their research (Bryman, 2016, p. 386). This aspect is particularly tricky for feminist researchers because of the closeness that can occur between the researcher and the participants when they both "share membership of the same minority group" (Oakley, 1981, p. 55). For instance, I likely identified aspects that resonate with my own experiences as a woman more easily than those I am more unfamiliar with (unless they were explicit). However, awareness of my own positionality and reflecting on its potential influence on the findings offer transparency and show that I have acted in good faith when identifying findings in the analysis. I also included this process in my research log, where I described personal reflections on decisions, which has likely increased my awareness (Krefting, 1991, p. 218). Finally, social desirability may have influenced the research, that is, interviewees' replying "with what they think is the socially preferred response" rather than their exact experiences (Krefting, 1991, p. 218). I often encouraged participants to provide honest responses and details about situations to assess their responses better. Data source bias is an aspect that is hard to mitigate completely. However, I do not believe it presented as a big issue for this study, beyond the mentioned aspect with the police commissioners. In fact, some policewomen were instead concerned that their experiences might not be useful when they had not experienced challenges related to gender in the missions, upon which I repeatedly assured them that I was interested in their experiences regardless of what they were.

Finally, I consider some points regarding the study's authenticity (Bryman, 2016, p. 386). While the sheer amount of collected data and confidentiality issues made it harder to maintain the context of the participants' viewpoints, I have sought to represent their perspectives as fair as possible with the measures in this section. While I would have liked to include more men in the research to present their views better, the study is limited in size, and I am therefore very grateful for the contributions of the three police commissioners. Regarding broader political impact, the study highlights shortcomings in the existing literature and offers insight into the gendered implications of missions' setups and other gendered challenges in mission environments. It thereby provides valuable insight that can improve women's experiences. This makes me confident that the study aligns with the emancipatory aspect of feminist research and that it can have a positive broader impact.

4.7 Method of analysis

I started the analysis of the data by "getting a sense of the whole database" as a way to handle the immense volume of data that qualitative research can produce (Creswell, 2013, p. 183). This included reading the transcripts a few times, generating a general understanding of each, and writing down my initial impressions of ideas or key concepts related to the data.

The further data analysis was guided by (constructivist) grounded theory. Grounded theory was originally developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and is one of the most prominent methods of contemporary qualitative data analysis (Bryman, 2016, p. 572). Some also see it as an approach to qualitative research, but this thesis will use it mainly in the first sense to analyse data. Regardless, grounded theory generally offers a way to understand "the worlds we study" and serves as a method "for developing theories to understand them" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 10). Bryman (2016, p. 577) suggests that grounded theory is often used to "generate grounded concepts rather than grounded theory as such". Similarly, this study did not necessarily aim to create a substantive theory about women's experiences in peace missions but rather to explore their experiences to generate categories that make sense of these and thereby add to existing theory.

Within grounded theory, two approaches have generally been developed. Strauss and Corbin (1990) established the original approach, while Charmaz (2006) has developed the constructivist approach (cited in Bryman, 2016, p. 573). The latter represents a more flexible process and is "squarely situated in the interpretivist tradition of qualitative research" (Creswell, 2013, p. 287). This is because Charmaz's approach (2006, p. 10) "assume[s] that neither data or theories are discovered", but that as a researcher, one cannot be separated from the world one participates in and create research from. It thereby considers the researcher's role in interpreting and creating the data when developing theory. Accordingly, this approach also incorporates more contextual information in the analysis and more readily reveals experiences with "embedded, hidden networks, situations and relationships" and power hierarchies, among others (Creswell, 2013, p. 287). This version's emphasis on experiences and revealing hidden power hierarchies are of particular value to the aims of this study. Consequently, I favoured *constructivist* grounded theory for the data analysis.

Grounded theory offers several tools to analyse data, including coding, theoretical saturation, constant comparison and memoing (Bryman, 2016, p. 573). Coding is used to make sense of the gathered data. It involves labelling parts that appear to be significant to the

theoretical framework and/or the participant's social world (Bryman, 2016, p. 573). Theoretical saturation refers to the point when "new data no longer suggests new theoretical insights…or new dimensions of theoretical categories", indicating that further data collection is not necessary to fully understand a category (Bryman, 2016, p. 412). Constant comparison involves being iteratively conscious of the connections between the coding of data as particular categories and the broader relationship between them to stimulate a theoretical understanding of the material (Bryman, 2016, p. 573). Memoing entails that the researcher writes down ideas regarding the categories and theoretical insights that emerged during the coding process (Bryman, 2016, p. 577; Creswell, 2013, p. 89) Memoing is, therefore, a helpful tool to remain conscious of the context in which categories emerge and their meaning to the data. They are also beneficial in stimulating further reflection on theoretical insights (Bryman, 2016, p. 578). With these tools, grounded theory allows one to generate concepts and categories, establish relationships between these, create hypotheses, and theorise about either a specific empirical area (substantive theory) or, more overarchingly, about processes (formal theory) (Bryman, 2016, pp. 575-576). This study uses the grounded theory approach to theorise gendered power relations and their multiple forms, effects and variations in peace missions in conjunction with the insights developed by feminist IR theory and Allen's (1998) power framework.

Analysing data according to this framework involves several specific steps. To guide this analytical process, I tried to think critically about the data and what I was seeing and generating categories from Charmaz (2006, p. 51). Starting with my general RQ, I sampled and coded data theoretically until there seemed to be no drastic insight that would substantially add to the categories. I coded the data in three stages, using initial coding, focused coding and then theoretical coding (Bryman, 2016, p. 574).

In the first phase of the coding, I quickly examined the material and used simple codes to break up the data (by either lines of text or segments), identify implicit assumptions, compare the data, and give meaning to actions (Charmaz, 2006, p. 50). By "following leads" and remaining focused on the data (Charmaz, 2006, p. 51), I was able to create some initial codes, such as 'need for network', 'importance of leader support', 'being role models for the local population', and many more. These codes were *numerous* but closely aligned to the data, while in the later stages, they became more selective and abstract to explain the interest focus (Bryman, 2016, p. 575).

In the second phase, the coding became more selective, and I attempted to determine which initial codes "make the most analytical sense" to begin forming categories (Charmaz, 2006, pp. 57-58). These were based on the analytical directions previously identified and helped synthesise and explain larger parts of the data, as well as the significance of the codes that had been established (Charmaz, 2006, pp. 57-58). However, I also compared the emerging categories with each other and the rest of the data to see if ideas from other parts could stimulate new analytical insight (Charmaz, 2006, p. 59). As a result, I established the following corresponding categories to understand the participant's experiences in the missions: 'interdependencies', 'leadership support', and 'role modelling'.[7] Importantly, this stage and the overall coding process were in a "constant state of potential revision and fluidity", meaning that the indicators of potential categories and, indeed, the developed categories were always subject to change if new data shifted their meaning and significance (Bryman, 2016, p. 573).

The final stage of theoretical coding was the most "sophisticated level" and focused on developing an understanding of how the categories are situated together as a whole (Charmaz, 2006, p. 63). Importantly, this process provides the analysis with coherence and thus contributes theoretical direction to the analysis (Charmaz, 2006, p. 63). Further, analytical concepts from existing literature and the feminist theoretical framework were also incorporated to illuminate new aspects of the analysis and the emerging understanding of the participants' experiences (Bryman, 2016, p. 574). This part of the coding becomes particularly evident in my choice to situate the categories within the power-framework suggested by Allen (Allen, 1998, 2018).

5 Context: UNPOL Peace Missions

This paragraph offers some contextual background information surrounding UNPOL missions to give an impression of the environment the policewomen take part in. It is important to recognise the institutional framework the participants operate in to fully understand the settings in which their similar and distinct experiences may come about. The chapter first gives an overview of the recruitment process and the training participants' may (or may not) have received before their deployment. It also briefly presents two sections with important

---

[7] These categories correspond with the above codes from the initial coding stage. To increase the transparency of my coding process, I use these examples to demonstrate how I generated some of the categories. While I would like to offer this transparency for every category I generated, this is not possible because of limitations to the thesis' length. As such, they represent only a small selection of the categories I generated from the data, as will be shown in the discussion.

contextual factors surrounding missions generally and then specifically in relation to gender aspects. The final section offers some reflections on the diversity of the participants' experiences and their contemporariness in light of ongoing institutional responses. The chapter draws on both information from the study's participants and supporting literature where applicable.

5.1 Recruitment and pre-mission training

The interviews revealed that every police officer has unique circumstances and motivations to participate in peace missions, ranging from professional to personal ones. To take part in UN peace missions, applicants are either nominated by their country or apply themselves to professional posts in UN peace missions (United Nations Police, n.d.-a). Their potential deployment typically starts with a recruitment process where they must pass specific requirements, including language proficiency, age limits, and a certain level of professional experience (United Nations Police, n.d.-b). When candidates qualify, it is up to each member state to provide pre-deployment training (as mandated by the UN's General Assembly Resolution A/RES/49/37 (1995)) (United Nations Peacekeeping Resource Hub), resulting in varying practices around pre-mission training in different countries. This aspect also became clear from this study's participants, who received different types and amounts of training before their deployment. Some received pre-deployment training from their home country and then received (mission-specific) training from the UN. Others received only the UN's mission-specific training. Some policewomen expressed satisfaction with the training they received, while many wished the training had been longer, and some stressed that one can never be *entirely* prepared for experiences in the missions regardless of the training one receives.

5.2 Context of UN peace operations

Each peace mission is unique in terms of the country it operates in, but some characteristics are common for most missions, as was described by one of the police commissioners. Firstly, peace missions occur in fragile contexts where war is either still ongoing or has just ended. Consequently, there are often high numbers of vulnerable and displaced people, and there is little trust in the host country's state institutions, including the police. Maintaining peace and building trust with the host country's institutions and people are therefore key challenges that influence most missions the policewomen worked in.

5.3 Contextual factors for UNPOL mission environments

5.3.1 General factors

Beyond these factors, each mission's environment is generally influenced and co-produced by the leadership and personnel who make up the team. Participants also emphasised that high levels of teamwork are often necessary during missions to achieve common goals, which often leads to a 'team spirit' and a dependency on others to perform one's job successfully. Further, while missions are technically without official ranks, several participants emphasised that missions are nevertheless 'rank-conscious' and that one may frequently be asked about it if a uniform does not communicate rank. Furthermore, because personnel are deployed from many different UN member states, virtually all participants emphasised the multi-cultural environment in the missions. Finally, many also underlined that one is, in a sense, an 'ambassador' for one's home country while on a mission.

5.3.2 Gendered factors

Some further factors commonly featured related to women's experiences with gender in the missions. I introduce them here mainly as contextual background information on the mission environment, but many of them are later discussed directly in relation to the women's individual experiences. Firstly, as previously mentioned, the number of women in UN peace missions is generally lower than men, even though their percentage has increased in the past few years (United Nations Department of Peace Operations, 2021). Given that many of the women's experiences are from a few years back, the numbers in their missions were even lower than current averages. Finally, all UN missions are subject to regulations around exploitation and abuse, commonly referred to as the UN's zero-tolerance policy (United Nations Peacekeeping, n.d.-b). Sexual and gender-based harassment at the workplace is also regarded as prohibited conduct (see rule 101.2 (d)) (United Nations, 2002). Indeed, official rules, guidelines, and initiatives to better institutional responses to cases of sexual harassment are in place.[8] However, the literature emphasises that such regulations and initiatives need further attention or may not be felt or benefitted from by women in peacekeeping missions (Vermeij, 2020, p. 21), as will also be shown in the analysis.

---

[8] See, for instance, the UN Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy 2018-2028.

5.4 Diversity of experience

Finally, while the analysis can give the impression that the elements from the women's combined experiences are what missions' environments are generally like, this is not the case. The discussion features many women's experiences from different missions and groups them together to give an overview of how gendered power structures *can* take shape in missions. This does not mean that policewomen will experience all these challenges in one mission; at least, that was not the case for this research's participants. Some women did not think they had any challenging experiences during their missions and reflected upon gendered challenges through their impression of other women's experiences during the mission(s). Some also reflected upon it hypothetically and reflected on what would have been helpful if they had such experiences. If an element is not derived from a participant's direct experience, this will be indicated in the discussion.

Finally, it is also important to note that the UN continually works to improve peace missions and that some of the challenges faced by the women are based on experiences years back. Changes may have been made to address a number of these issues since then. However, some of the more harmful gender-related challenges presented in the discussion are of recent nature, indicating that challenges persist despite efforts. With this context in mind, I now turn toward the gendered power dynamics in UN missions, as revealed through the experiences of the policewomen and police leaders.

6 Findings, Analysis, and Discussion

This chapter focuses on three main sections that inform and present the participants' experiences in UN peace missions. It firstly presents the policewomen's various experiences with indirect and direct forms of challenges related to gendered power structures in UNPOL missions. The following section gives insight into their strategies for navigating these experiences and the gendered aspects of the mission environments. Finally, the discussion ends with a section highlighting the policewomen's agency and the empowerment arising from their participation in peace missions. Each section features a discussion of the findings in relation to relevant theory and literature.

6.1 Power-over: Gendered power relations and challenges

Gendered power relations take shape in various forms and at different levels in UN peace missions. This first section focuses on the forms of power that most often correspond to forms of 'power-over' women may face as challenges during deployment. Here, I describe and discuss these kinds of 'power-over' in 1) more tacit forms and 2) more direct types. The more tacit form of domination includes systematic structures and issues that the women experienced as challenging in the missions, while the more direct forms refer to actions taken by actors in the women's working environment. Note that even though I refer to these latter actions as direct forms, it does not mean they are not part of or performed on a systematic and gendered level. This section seeks to answer the first sub-RQ: *What challenges may result from gendered power relations in missions, and how might they create barriers to policewomen's participation during their deployment?*

Many (but certainly not all) of the interviewed women experienced gendered challenges in their missions. The tacit forms were often on a systematic or less tangible level and include experiences such as limited preparedness for the mission tasks/environment, gender-biased equipment and work/living facilities, as well as gendered working expectations and tasks in the mission, as will be explored below.

6.1.1 Challenges in tacit forms

Women's preparedness: Recruitment & pre-mission training

From the interviews, it became clear that the pre-mission training significantly influenced some of the women's experiences. For instance, in the relatively recent experience of participant four, the leadership was particularly supportive of women's participation. The participant explained that they emphasised women's equal participation and visibility in all aspects of the mission to demonstrate their (equal) capabilities to the local population. The participant thus described her experience of gender equality in the mission to generally be a positive one. However, later in the interview, she suggested that this emphasis on women's full participation actually resulted in her being exposed to challenging situations more often: "I didn't want to go there, but I didn't have a choice to avoid [it]". The participant explained she had to go to a smaller and remote field office that was always supposed to have an equal number of staffed men and women. Because missions have fewer women than men, she was asked to go more frequently than her national male colleague. The participant said the experience was the most challenging part of her deployment, as the harsh conditions of local infrastructure and other

dangers of reaching her destination put her in a situation where she feared for her life: "because of the equality, we… maybe sometimes we had to go through more.. well often, difficult time. I don't know if it makes sense to say that, but that's what I felt". The way the interviewee spoke about the incident gave the impression that she was left somewhat traumatised by the experience. The participant also generally stated that if she had known more about her tasks beforehand, then she may not have gone on the mission in the first place. At face value, this suggests that measures for gender equality can put policewomen in vulnerable situations more frequently. However, it also points towards the importance of ensuring women personnel receive adequate support and training to ensure they succeed and are safe in their tasks. It also reveals a danger with recruiting women for missions without adequately considering how their experiences will impact them in the mission.

I observed a similar notion with participant five, who did not feel prepared for the challenging experiences she had with gender dynamics in the mission, even though she expressed satisfaction with the training she had received for her working tasks. She stated, "and the real-life, is… the reality about how women are treated outside in the missions, it's… we don't get prepared for that". The participant explained there was an emphasis on reaching numbers (due to gender quotas for the deployment) and idealised talk of the importance of women's participation and contribution. Yet, there was less consideration for what this would entail for the women themselves, who, in the participant's experience, were often young and inexperienced due to a smaller number of women applying for missions.

These experiences signalise the importance of 1) ensuring women are adequately trained for their tasks in the mission but also 2) sufficiently prepared for the reality that challenging gender dynamics can play out as in the mission. As the literature emphasises that communicating the importance of women's participation is important to encourage them to apply for peace missions (Ghittoni et al., 2018, p. 22), this finding adds complexity to the recommendation. While women should certainly be encouraged, the experiences of these participants indicate this also needs to be complemented with sufficient training and without glamorising the experience. Other literature also notes the importance of ensuring women have the right skills for the missions (Karim & Beardsley, 2017, p. 180). Participant three also emphasised this aspect, stressing that we need to ensure women are not set up to fail by recruiting with the prime purpose of fulfilling gender quotas while not ensuring their sufficient training and preparedness for missions.

Equipment and facilities

Different forms of structural challenges the policewomen face also relate to equipment and facilities. Participant two had the most extensive experience of the participants and explained that the equipment in the missions was not adapted to women when she first started due to their recent inclusion and low numbers. Remembering back to her first missions, she explained she was told, "this is not a fashion show in Paris…" when commenting on the large size of her socks. The participant responded, "But I said 'if I wear my boots with the heel up here, then it will hurt, so it's not about a *fashion* show in Paris'". She also described facilities in the missions to not be adjusted to their participation either:

> When we were staying the first few weeks of the training, we did not have showers in the rooms. So there was just one big shower room with 50 showers, and I was the only female. So, I had to take my showers when the others went for breakfast or lunch or dinner…

The participant explained that the situation is much improved today, with the equipment being more adjusted for women. However, another participant also mentioned that the mission's facilities became a source of insecurity during her deployment. Interviewee seven pointed out that in certain remote places in the mission, there was little infrastructure accounting for hygienic issues and that the toilet was located 50 metres outside of the compound. She explained that large parts of the area were dark, despite some lights. This created fear of living creatures in the dark or any potential negative actions from men if she went at night. She explained, "so either you will try to be patient and keep… you don't do your natural needs until the morning, or you take the risk and go". One police commissioner similarly noted that UN facilities were an area for improvement during his mission, as they were less accommodating towards women. Interviewee three also reflected on structural issues related to women's needs (for instance, adjustments for menopause) and noted that the availability of different sanitary products to ensure comfortable periods for women was lacking. To the participant, this became a stark contrast to the efforts made within the UN to ensure the availability of condoms and increase awareness around HIV/AIDS in peace missions. Indeed, the issue of facilities not being adapted to women and their needs is also noted by other literature (Karim & Beardsley, 2017, p. 126; Pruitt, 2016, pp. 108-109) and therefore seems to be a central issue. However, recent evidence demonstrates that the UN is slowly taking action to address these issues. For instance, recent news reveal that UNIFIL will be "the first UN peacekeeping mission to provide

gender-sensitive housing", including "accommodation buildings, restrooms and a welfare area", from a grant by the Elsie Initiative Fund for Women in Peace Operations (United Nations, 2022).

Expectations and gendered working tasks

Another form of 'power-over' in missions became evident through participant three's experiences with gendered working tasks. She explained how gendered work expectations became particularly evident in a meeting between staff in the mission. It is worth noting that this interviewee held quite a senior position and that she was taking part in the meeting to contribute to its agenda and the discussion. The interviewee was the only woman outside of two external female participants during the monthly meeting. When an important discussion was taking place, it was stated that they needed minutes from the meeting. The subsequent reaction by the meeting's participants left the interviewee in disbelief:

> So there was this really uncomfortable silence, where I could see that everybody was kind of looking around the room at everyone else, and I obviously thought that, well, it's going to be the front office staff… cause surely that's what they're there for and I don't know what else they do during the meeting… and as the eyes went around the room it got to *me*, and the eyes stopped! And he said, "oh, [her name], will you take the notes?" And I was absolutely flabbergasted, cause I was there to uhm.. you know talk about and .. and .. and.. for accountability on what I was delivering for my program and also to contribute to the conversation about, you know, how we should develop the program and *now,* I've been given the job of being *the minute taker*! *Clearly*, because I was a woman!

The participant emphasised it was her assumption she was asked because she is a woman, but also expressed being perplexed about their assumption that she would have the skills to do it in the first place:

> So that was one example. Just an assumption, you know, because I was the woman that it was my job, but also that I would have the skill to do it? Why did they think I had some inherent skill to be… to be a secretary? I'm not *trained*.

The participant laughed humorously about how blatant the experience was and further emphasised that the situation was not unique but happened repeatedly over months. While it is an indirect form of 'power-over', the participant also exercised some agency in resisting the

situation, a point I return to in the next chapter. Aside from this, the participant also noticed a tendency that she and her female colleague were left responsible for other organisational tasks, such as booking meeting rooms and similar, without this being requested as explicitly as with the notetaking. Interviewee three's experience offers a very clear illustration of the gendered challenges women may face in missions, where certain tasks are associated with femininity (and thereby subordination) (Ghittoni et al., 2018). While the literature discusses how one can generally prevent women from being restricted to such roles (Williams & Bellamy, 2021, p. 351), this finding differentiates by indicating that the issue may prevail even when women hold senior roles. This issue may certainly be of interest for future research to investigate further.

High performance

The same participant linked back to these experiences when asked whether she felt women worked harder in the mission than men. She noted that even though these additional tasks were not a part of her job (but someone else's), she was still expected to do them. She also mentioned feeling a self-imposed pressure to perform, given that she and other women in the mission would often act as role models for the women in the host country. Participant eight also felt that women were held to a different standard than men, mentioning that she was expected to work by one of her male superiors despite being ill to the point of hospitalisation. Participant one had the impression that women are tougher on themselves and work harder to be prepared, while men (in her experience) tended to take their tasks lighter with less concern about expectations and consequences. Participant six similarly mentioned that because one is a representative of one's country in the mission, she felt pressure to work hard so as to not 'tarnish' her home country's image (a pressure she did not perceive men to face to the same degree). Throughout the interviews, there generally seemed to be a tendency among many of the participants to aim to perform their tasks to a high standard. This observation was also made by one of the police commissioners. Literature has identified this as a way women try to 'prove themselves' to overcome stigma against female peacekeepers in the military context (Vermeij, 2020, p. 191). This seems consistent with other research findings that female peacekeepers will aim to "live up to expectations created for them by fitting into gender-related roles and/or working harder than their male colleagues" (Wilén, 2020, p. 1586). While some of the women's experiences seem to fit these findings, it should also be noted that other participants believed their high work effort was more related to one's personality and purpose in the mission rather than gender.

6.1.2 Challenges in direct forms

The more direct forms of gendered challenges often took place in the form of explicit actions by other persons in the policewomen's working environment (although not all of them were as tangible). These include various forms of gender-based and sexual harassment, including sexualised comments and jokes, acts of sabotage, (physical) sexual harassment, and finally, experiences at the intersection of sexism and racism.

Gendered jokes and comments

Several participants experienced gendered jokes and/or comments from men in their working environment. Participant four mentioned being proposed to by a local teenager to become his wife. The participant did not seem to be very affected by the comment and saw it mainly as a joke, reasoning with it being normal in the local culture. Participant six experienced gendered comments from local policemen whom she was trying to assist at a local police station. She said the men would ask, "why are you not with your family? why did you come here?... You are wasting your time", and attributed the men's behaviour to their cultural understandings of women's roles. Participant eight also explained being hit on by colleagues and local men from countries with certain traditional and cultural backgrounds. Although she expressed finding this behaviour quite disturbing and strange, this participant likewise assumed it resulted from cultural differences. Participant five similarly indicated she did not feel respected by the local men but stated that in her case, the bigger disappointment came from her Western male colleagues. She said:

> But...the most disappointment I got, I think, was from the Western male colleagues that…that they forget the values they have back home… and think that what happens in the mission, it stays in the mission and yeah.. females are sex objects.

The participant said, "you hear things like, 'okay, I want to sleep with you', ugh.. 'do you want to blow me off'.. Okay, you hear this, so things become *normal*."

The literature suggests the commonalities in the women's experiences with gendered jokes and comments to occur when women take part in male-dominated roles, particularly when they become "isolated as tokens in hypermasculine spaces" (Pruitt, 2016, p. 111). However, the unique context of peace missions, where cultures with different levels of gender equality meet, may also play a role, as seen in the cases of participants four, six, and eight. Karim and Beardsley (2017, p. 130) similarly found that female peacekeepers become subject

to gender stereotypes from local men who approached them to ask them for marriage. Interestingly, however, participant five's experience also highlights that men from countries and cultures with higher gender equality may adapt and participate in demeaning behaviour under certain circumstances. This seems to support the finding of Harris and Goldsmith (2010). The scholars (2010, pp. 301-303) suggest that the context of international deployments might relax men's morals and create groupings with "boys' club" mentalities and thereby generate conditions in which men engage in such behaviour towards women.

Sabotage

Another enactment of 'power-over' featured in one participant's mission in the form of sabotage. Participant seven, who was one of the first few women to participate in peace missions from her country, experienced her national male colleagues spreading false rumours about her to her national police force. She stated that the men tried to sanction her by claiming she would come back to the compound late at night and show up to her shifts far too late. The interviewee explained the psychological stress that followed the incident:

> a part of you is trying to… ehm... to find out what is going on. What is the source of the rumour? What the rumour *is*?... To know what to reply to justify [yourself]. But no one will tell you. They will take a stand against you without asking you. And sometimes they wait, perhaps, until your contract expires.

The participant explained that she only found out about the rumours through her own contacts in her home country. She believed the incident happened due to jealousy arising because she was a woman in a senior position that had been quite successful with her accomplishments in the mission. This participant's experience (and her interpretation of why it happened) is in agreement with broader literature. It maintains that this type of discrimination is commonly performed "[when] women threaten the power relations of men", which can include actions aimed to undermine women's authority or leadership, and sabotage, among others (Heinecken, 2017, p. 205). However, this particular form of gender-based harassment does not seem to have been explicitly mentioned by other literature in the context of women and peacekeeping and is therefore a noteworthy finding. It may indicate that this form of harassment is not as prevalent in peace missions. However, it is also possible it has been grouped as gender-based harassment without being mentioned explicitly. Nevertheless, this type of discrimination is worth investigating further. This is especially so given the detrimental impact it can have on women

in leadership positions in missions, an area in which the UN's gender mainstreaming efforts have sought to increase women's participation (for instance, through UNSC resolution 2538).

Sexual harassment

Perhaps the most direct and explicit form of 'power-over' appeared through participant five's experiences with (physical) sexual harassment during the mission. When the participant told her leader about the sexual harassment, her truthfulness was questioned: "He said 'what's your evidence?'". The participant explained that other female colleagues were sexually harassed as well, and while the leader was informed about this, nothing was done. The participant attributed this to the need for a good network in the mission and to her leader having a good relationship with the individual who sexually harassed her:

> But nothing happened... And one of the reasons is that you need to have good contacts in the missions. It's network… uhh... It's a very important thing. People do things for each other because of the system. The UN system doesn't always work because of.. uh.. bureaucracy, so you need to have good connections. So, my team leader had a good relationship to this other guy that was sexually harassing me. So yeah…

The participant did not experience the sexual harassment as surprising but found the lack of belief and support from the team leader to be most disappointing:

> "No, the disappointment *isn't* the harassment, I'm *used* to that. That is *very* normal. As long as it's not *rape* [nervous laughter]. Everything else is actually normal for me. But when the team leader didn't do anything and.. That was the point where I saw okay.. You're *all* by yourself here."

According to existing literature, participant five's experience with sexual harassment is, unfortunately, not a surprising finding. Indeed, it has been cited as the second most substantial barrier faced by female peacekeepers (Karim & Beardsley, 2017, p. 127) and is suggested to be "pervasive in all security institutions" (Ghittoni et al., 2018, p. 36). The participant's comment about how normalised the behaviour became is also reflected in other literature. For instance, Alchin et al. (2018, p. 11) found that this type of behaviour was expected of male colleagues by female peacekeepers from the South African National Defence Force, further indicating its common occurrence. However, the participant's experience brings interesting insight into why such incidences may occur, indicating that leadership and their own networks can play a significant role in enabling and continuing such behaviour. A tendency to not tell on

one's friends or colleagues has also been described in the research of Harris and Goldsmith (2010, p. 302) by Australian policewomen about 'boys' club' culture in peace missions. Although their research does not refer specifically to male leaders, participant five's experience may indicate the existence of such cultures between leaders and other personnel in peacekeeping missions as well.

Gender and racism

From the experiences of participant eight, it also became clear that acts of domination extend beyond being a woman, which is consistent with the concept of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989). The interviewee spoke of an incident where she had left the UN compound and forgotten her ID card. Upon her return, she was not believed when she stated she was UN personnel but was rather accused of being a prostitute by the security guard at the compound's gate. The policewoman explained it was evident it was about her gender, given that she was accused of being a prostitute. She further emphasised the racial discrimination, noting that the same security guard had let another (white) woman in without her ID card just before her. The above incident demonstrates the additional layer of discrimination that women of colour may face during their deployment. The participant expressed that she had experienced racism from other personnel from several different member states, and several participants mentioned tensions occurring between different nationalities in missions. Participant eight's experience corresponds with those of participants two and three, who observed that women colleagues of colour would more frequently be subjected to traditional gender perspectives than white women during the missions. This aspect of women's experiences is conspicuously absent from some prominent analyses and reports on experiences of and barriers to women's participation in peace operations, including that of Karim and Beardsley (2017) and Ghittoni et al. (2018). However, this is likely the result of neglect in focus rather than the issue not being existent in peace missions and should be explored further by future research.[9]

6.1.3 Discussion

As shown, the women's experiences with forms of 'power-over' in missions are very contextualised and depend heavily on the setting and the actors involved. Regarding the first sub-RQ, the policewomen's experiences have revealed that gendered power dynamics may take shape in both tacit and more direct forms. Their experiences further reveal interesting

---

[9] Vermeij (2020) is a notable exception in the context of military peacekeeping who similarly argues racism is a pervasive issue in missions (see page 18).

dynamics that add to our understanding of how barriers and challenges take place during women's deployment to peace operations.

The tacit forms include lack of preparedness, ill-fitted equipment and facilities, as well as gendered working expectations that put women in challenging situations and impact their ability to perform. The indirect forms relate to different aspects of missions, but all converge as structures or indirect collective actions that may negatively influence policewomen's experiences in missions. As such, it becomes a form of 'power-over' that is not exercised by one person specifically but is rather a systematic issue that makes the environment less welcoming for women and which at times even regulates their behaviour in specific ways.

The more direct forms of 'power-over' have been identified as various gendered jokes and comments, sabotage, (physical) sexual harassment, and intersecting racism. The direct forms were more clearly exercised by specific individuals in the policewomen's environment and reveal very challenging forms of 'power-over' that impact the women's experiences to various degrees. Other studies have also identified some of these barriers as frequent challenges, including equipment and facilities, as well as discrimination and sexual harassment (Karim & Beardsley, 2017, p. 127; Vermeij, 2020). However, one frequent barrier commonly mentioned in the military peacekeeping context did not seem to feature in the participant's experiences (the protection norm, not being able to leave the compound) (Karim & Beardsley, 2017, p. 38; Osland et al., 2020, p. 18). This may indicate that this might not present as large of a challenge to policewomen. However, it is worth noting that other police-specific literature has identified the protection norm in policewomen sometimes being excluded from 'dangerous' work in missions (Harris & Goldsmith, 2010, pp. 300-301).

The findings have nevertheless shown important dynamics like the possibility that the international environment in peace missions can influence men, that jealousy towards women in senior positions may lead to sabotage, that male leaders may protect perpetrators of sexual harassment due to personal networks, and that intersectionality is possibly a prevalent issue in peace missions, that is as of yet noticeably under-examined by the literature.

6.2 Power-to: Navigating challenges and sources of power and resistance

As seen, the presented forms and acts of 'power-over' create challenges to varying degrees for policewomen who take part in peace missions. Particularly cases of direct domination can present a very challenging environment for women. Yet, it would be a grave mistake to assume that the women are without agency to respond to and navigate these challenges (Allen, 1998). Indeed, to properly understand the gendered power dynamics that can play out in UN missions,

it is crucial to investigate the relations at a deeper level that accounts for their responses and agency to navigate these forms of 'power-over'. This section, therefore, seeks to answer the second sub-RQ: *How do policewomen face and navigate gendered power relations in missions?* Analysing the women's experiences with this multidimensional power lens reveals some very interesting dynamics. Specifically, it shows that the women also perform many acts of 'power-to', often in the form of indirect or direct resistance, in order to overcome challenges and perform in the peace missions. These appear through the women's behaviour and decisions, such as making calculations/trade-offs, leaning on male protection, adapting to their environment, finding support in leadership, and the many forms of capital they generate power and agency from.

6.2.1 Interdependencies: Calculations and trade-offs

The interdependencies of actors within the missions became apparent throughout the interviews with several of the participants but were particularly explicit in the experiences of participants three and five. This is an important aspect because it presented as a considerable influence on the choices perceived available to them when they faced forms of 'power-over'.

For instance, in the case of participant three, who was repeatedly confronted with the request to perform secretarial tasks during meetings, the participant navigated the situation particularly carefully. The second time the request happened, she challenged it slightly by asking if it was not more suitable for the secretarial staff to do it, given that it was part of their job. She explained that silence followed, and it became evident from the secretarial staff's body language that they did not know how to do it. The participant explained her subsequent actions:

> And uhm.. so I said, how about if I do it this time, but…then I work with him to like prepare the notes and type them up, and then maybe next time he can do it, and I'll sit next to him.. so I kind of made it like he couldn't argue and say no by providing what seemed to be a very reasonable offer from me, but what I really thought, was 'No! I don't want to do the bloody notes!' [laughs]

Later in the interview, she revealed some interesting insight into the power dynamics within the mission and why she chose not to resist the request more directly. She explained the UN as "the most dysfunctional organisation I've ever come across. It only operates through developing personal relationships" and that there is little accountability when people do not do

their job.[10] She therefore emphasised the importance of developing personal relationships to perform:

> If you know who to go and ask, if you know where to find them and you got a good personal relationship with them, then you can achieve pretty much whatever you want, you know, if you're determined enough. But if you don't know who the person is, who kind of holds the power for that, don't know where to find them because they probably won't be in their office [soft laughter], and haven't got a relationship to kind of go ask them…

Understanding this interdependency between the actors within the mission revealed why the participant did not simply object and shut down the request immediately:

> …Because I did challenge it, but I challenged it in kind of careful, measured [way]. You know, I'm still going to do what you're asking me to do, but I'm going to manoeuvre it, so we move the responsibility somewhere else for the future.

The participant reflected on the incident and explained the importance of maintaining one's network in the mission:

> …Yeah, so I think for some of that stuff… as much as you would hope it wouldn't happen like that, you just got to suck it up… Because the relationships you are building and working to maintain are more important than the personal consideration of, kind of, being put out because I've been given the note-taking.

The participant's experience in this situation demonstrates how the participant would calculate whether it was in her interest to resist the indirect form of 'power-over' that was arguably performed towards her. Studies on policewomen's participation (and generally on women's participation) have seemingly afforded little attention to the ways in which women may navigate and resist patriarchal structures and forms of domination within peacekeeping missions. However, the work of Allen (1998, 2018) and others demonstrates there is significant discussion around this in other areas, including on the topic of peace*building* (O'Reilly, 2019).

A similar pattern appeared in participant five's experience with sexual harassment. She said other women were subjected to it as well and explained the dilemma one faces between

---

[10] A lack of accountability in the missions was also mentioned as a significant factor by participant eight.

maintaining a peaceful working environment and your personal network or resisting the domination:

> It's like… Yeah.. What do you do when you're amongst people? You don't go away, you don't tell him to stop. She [another colleague who was sexually harassed] didn't tell the team leader…uhm.. You just put up with it.. It's easier to put up with it instead of destroying the calm, the good connection, the good vibes, the good atmosphere, the network…

The participant also made a similar calculation around using the formal complaint systems within the UN. She explained she did not see it as a real option, given the consequences reporting could entail:

> The risk if I would have been complaining too much would have been that my boss would have sent me home and found another thing that I'm not delivering 100% on, and would have said she is not doing her work. 'So we're gonna send her off, she doesn't function in the mission'.

The participant emphasised that this was the case even though there are many women in the UN offices. The participant described the situation to be like a terror balance:

> Yeah.. Like a terror balance, if you don't obey, if you complain too much, you can actually lose the mission. You will be sent home. So uhm.. yeah. So that's why I actually kept quiet because this is my first mission, I really had to see how things were.

The above incidents demonstrate that the participant was put in a position where options are carefully calculated when subjected to forms of domination. In the context of sexual exploitation in peace operations, Jennings' (2008, pp. 30-31) notes similar dynamics related to women's willingness to report sexual harassment and misconduct by men against other women. Jennings' notes that women may not report incidences due to concern for and pressure from their work environment, especially when these are male-dominated. Participant five's experience thus suggests that women will also consider the consequences of reporting incidences when it concerns sexual harassment against themselves. However, it also adds complexity by highlighting that women may fear not only pressure from their working environment but also the risk of being sent home. Vermeij (2020, p. 19) similarly emphasises female peacekeepers' reluctance to use official channels because of the risk of backlash.

However, it should be noted that one of the participants did use the official system to complain, and some perceived themselves not to have had challenges due to the UN's strict zero-tolerance policy itself.

6.2.2 Male protection and identity negotiations

When participant five thought back to how she coped with the sexual harassment and other challenging experiences in the mission, she mentioned finding someone who would treat her as a sister and, in a sense, be her bodyguard as the most reliable source of protection. The participant emphasised that the challenges must be fixed on a personal level rather than through the official system:

> I'm.. every day I was thinking down there.. what can I do? To protect myself, to feel safer? To be respected? Uhm.. I couldn't come up with anything except finding someone who would treat me as…a sister and stand as a bodyguard. So.. I .. did that finally. So that was the only saviour I had. You have to fix it on a personal level.. the system, it doesn't work. And I… I don't believe it is possible to fix it."

This experience shows that this participant had to find a personal way to navigate the challenging environment because, for this participant, the official complaint system did not work as intended.[11] This example shows that women sometimes may borrow the power afforded to men through masculinity to protect themselves and reduce the likelihood of being harmed, a strategy feminists have long discussed as a form of bargain.[12] This experience also links to a point brought up by participant two, who emphasised that getting the support of other men in the mission was helpful since she had the impression that men tended to listen more to other men. She also mentioned involving them in women's issues as an important issue and a source of help. This corresponds to Deiana and McDonagh's observation (2018, p. 44) that there is a tendency to treat the WPS agenda and gender as a women's issue, leaving "masculinity and male privilege 'off the hook'", thus indicating that male support is a not only a helpful but necessary resource. It further shows that men must be involved in changing the mission environment for women to feel secure when exercising their jobs. Participant five also

---

[11] A similar notion was emphasised by participant eight, who was reluctant to use the complaint system for smaller issues because she experienced it to be ineffective and drawn out.

[12] See for instance Susan Brownmiller (1975) who, on the topic of rape of women, was one of the key authors introducing the idea of male protection and its intricacies.

made use of a wedding ring and characteristics that would discourage male attraction toward her. This would include not smiling around colleagues, being mindful of her body language and dressing only in ways that would not reveal her body figure. This experience supports Karim and Beardsley's (2017, p. 166) argument that women may change their appearance to be less feminine in missions because they will "constantly have to negotiate their identity in the missions to 'fit in'". It is also similar to Vermeij's finding (2020, p. 20) that military peacekeepers will wear a wedding ring and dress conservatively "to avoid becoming the target of unwanted attention and inappropriate behaviour", drawing parallels to male protection and identity negotiations.

6.2.3 Logic and reason, keeping a low profile, and professionalism

Other participants engaged different ways of navigating challenges in the peace missions. Participant six, who was teased by the local policemen questioning her position as a female police officer, tried to navigate the situation by appealing to logic and reason. The participant would explain to the men that policing was a career she had chosen and, therefore, her job required her to complete all her tasks to be a professional police officer. She would further attempt to maintain a low profile and avoid giving them the impression she was trying to be superior to them: "and "if I can use this word.. keeping a low-profile. Not feeling that you are superior to them... but you are on the same level, you discuss, you... yeah they come to understand you". I link this participant's strategy of maintaining a low profile to the experience of participant seven. This is the policewoman who experienced sabotaging acts by her male colleagues when she did the opposite of maintaining a low profile, having both a high position and being very successful in the mission. Instead, participant seven appealed to staying professional and not engaging with the challenging behaviour. She said she knew her legal matters well and that "if you are professional and a legal person, no one can... get to you, so I did not give them this opportunity". Thus, for this participant, it was a matter of rising above the attempts to exercise power over her, remaining a professional, and in that way 'withstand the storm'. Haarr and Morash (2013) make a similar observation that policewomen may try to disengage with the situation when confronted with gender-based harassment, although participant seven's example differs in that she also emphasised legal matters. Vermeij (2020, p. 19) similarly notes that women may try to "show the best version of themselves" by staying professional, a strategy also mentioned by participant nine.

6.2.4 Leadership support

Finally, leadership support presented as a supportive resource to one participant, but more broadly also as a significant influence on many of the policewomen's experiences. I have therefore chosen to not include it purely as a form of *preventative* capital in the section below. Participant three described a leader's support as a direct form of security and support when a male colleague challenged her request and authority:

> As a woman, are you going to back down, and there may be an expectation that you might, or are you going to kind of stand up to it and stand your ground? And.. then if you decide you're going to stand up to it, where is your support to do that coming from? And because [her direct leader], he was a very supportive boss, a demanding boss, but very supportive. So, when that happened to me, I was able to go to him and felt confident that he would support me. So, I was able to stand my ground with the person that was kind of challenging what I was asking them to do because I knew that if I needed to, I had that backing behind me. But I don't think it would have worked the same if I had been a man…and it wasn't an unreasonable thing I was asking.

That leaders' support (or lack of support) influenced the policewomen's experiences was generally evident as a pattern in the participants' experiences. For instance, some of the women who had positive experiences in the mission also had supportive leaders (participants two and ten). In contrast, those who had challenging experiences either had these as a direct result of their leaders' actions (participant eight) or from their lack of support during a challenging situation (participant five). The importance of a leader's influence on gendered power relations in the mission is also illustrated through one of the police commissioner's experiences. The leader explained that a problematic situation arose where male personnel were the only ones with vehicle keys and that some of them would request sexual favours from the women personnel for access to transport. The participant said the formal complaint system was, in this case, not an option because the women who were being harassed feared repercussions from officially stepping forward.[13] As a police commissioner, the leader chose to use his authority to 'change the rules of the game' and reverse the situation, so the women were the only ones with access to keys and permission to operate the vehicles. Stressing that the women were not to be used as chauffeurs, he explained the dynamics to have changed soon after. He further

---

[13] This observation further supports the experience of participant five who similarly feared backlash from using official reporting systems.

noted that while the men who had engaged with the practice did not seem happy about it, it was clear they knew why it happened and had no other choice than to accept it. The potential influence of leadership roles on women's experiences in missions has been noted in several instances, albeit mainly as part of recommendations on improving women's experiences (Karim & Beardsley, 2017, p. 56; Wilén, 2020, p. 1601). Its significance is also reflected in the 2015 Report of the Independent High-Level Panel on Peace Operations' call for more women in senior mission leadership positions (United Nations, 2015, para. 274).

6.2.5 Capital: Sources of power and preventative tools

Several forms of capital became evident throughout the interviews with the participants. I identified these from aspects/resources that the women appeared to lean on to reduce the occurrences of forms of 'power-over' or that they themselves identified as a reason for not experiencing challenges in the first place. These include capital in the form of age/experience, rank/uniform, exchange of favours, cultural understanding, broader purpose, and personality traits.

Age/experience and rank/uniform

Some of the participants mentioned the power afforded through their age/experience and their rank/uniform. For instance, participant two directly stated the following about why she believed her experience in the mission had been mainly positive: "I think that.. I mean first of all, I'm [her age] now. I don't think there are any men that can walk over me. Uhm. I think that I have too much experience, I'm not afraid to get into discussion, and I've never been". Participant five similarly believed experience was something that would help her in future missions. Participant two also mentioned that because people are quite interested in your rank, she would sometimes find it helpful that her rank was interpreted as higher than it was due to differences between the badges of different countries. Participant five also referred to her uniform as an important source of power and protection. She stated she often felt like it was the only thing that gave her respect from others during the mission.

That age (and commonly, by extension, experience) presents as a form of capital for the women is unsurprising given that age is commonly spoken of as a social and power structure itself that gender intersects with (Williams & Bellamy, 2021, p. 343). Similarly, other studies maintain that "rank brings legitimate and expert power" (French & Raven, 1959, quoted in Haarr & Morash, 2013, p. 396) and that "attaining certain recognised positions" translates into symbolic capital for an individual in a profession (Bourdieu, 1986 in Davis, 2010, p. 205).

Favours

The second form of capital appeared through participant three's reflections on the interdependencies in missions. She explained that one would frequently do favours for others because it would be something one could claim back at a later stage: "and there's a lot of horse-trading as well, about.. of course, I'll help you out with that, because you're thinking I'll bank that one because I'll need that for something else". While none of the other participants directly mentioned this aspect, it is plausible that more of them had similar experiences without recognising it as a form of power exchange, as seen in the following paragraph on language. This is especially so given that other participants did describe interdependencies as a part of the missions. This exchange is consistent with the Bourdieusian idea of 'social capital', which describes how "individuals gain from establishing relations with others in social networks" (Davis, 2010, p. 205).

For another participant, language became a central form of capital in the mission. Participant seven explained that her ability to speak the local language was particularly helpful in generating respect from colleagues. She explained how this would allow her to communicate more efficiently and get approvals for specific issues faster and thereby gain goodwill from her colleagues, an aspect I link to the "horse-trading" mentioned by participant three above. While participant seven did not speak about it in this context, she clearly viewed it as a source of power that could generate respect from her colleagues – something that likely became a preventative form of capital. That language skills present as a source of capital for individuals in a relevant context is unsurprising given that Bourdieu recognised language as a mechanism of power itself (Bourdieu, 1991). Since participant seven nevertheless faced sabotage by her male national colleagues, it may suggest these men were not in a position where they were dependent on the participant's linguistic skills.

Cultural understanding

Virtually all the participants mentioned the influence of cultural differences. Many particularly emphasised the importance of understanding other's cultures (of UNPOL personnel and the host country) to avoid issues in the mission. Further, some participants recognised that *demonstrating* and *signalising* this understanding of and respect for others' religious and cultural gender practices helped avoid gendered challenges in missions. Participant one would, for instance, choose to wear a hijab when deployed in countries where this conformed with the local culture and dominant religion. It is important to note that the participant was Muslim, and

she emphasised that she wore the hijab out of her own free will. While the participant did not give the impression that she used this as a deliberate strategy to avoid gendered challenges in the missions, she did recognise it as one reason she did not experience challenges in her numerous missions. To this participant, the importance of showing respect and understanding for local cultures and religions was central to working successfully in missions. This experience may conform with Bourdieu's conception of 'embodied' cultural capital, where the participant demonstrated her cultural understanding through the hijab and thereby her "understanding of the social relations and rules of [a particular] social space" (Bourdieu, 1984 in Davis, 2010).

Broader purpose

Finally, one participant also seemingly found power from her broader goal and purpose as a police officer, stating that she had to be strong for herself to be able to stand up for others:

> and then… I am a police officer.. and I know one thing very well from the very beginning.. that if I am going to give in to injustice, how am I ever going to give justice to the people I am working for? So I guess having this kind of approach really helped me.

The participant said she had not only found this helpful in the mission but elsewhere in her career and life as well. Participant two similarly mentioned caring mostly about her purpose and what she wanted to achieve in the mission.

Personality

Finally, several believed one's personality and being straightforward was central. Participant one explained she had a strong belief that if you are a woman who is straightforward or clear in her opinion, then one is less likely to experience issues. The interviewee reflected on a challenging experience at the start of her policing career in her home country. She explained that one of her superiors was touching her cheek, to which she responded by hitting him to defend herself. She explained that "the word spread" and that she never had issues with the same person or other men at work again: "the thing is like… uh..your personal attitude plays a big role". Participant nine similarly noted that she had always been a very independent woman who has lived her life according to her own perception, never giving in to pressure from family or society regarding what a woman should or should not do. She believed this was part of why her experience with gender relations in the mission was positive. She stated, "because.. I think once you know that you're meeting a no-nonsense kind of person, you are not [challenged] a

lot" and "they know that you are going to fight if they are going to make trouble for you. So, I think having that kind of personality [helps]". Participant two expressed a similar notion when she spoke of having much experience and not being afraid to get into discussions. The participants related this aspect to their *personality*. However, the finding draws some parallels to Haarr and Morash's observation (2013, p. 401) (in the domestic policing context) that women will use the strategy of "straight talk"- defined as "being direct and standing up to their male co-workers and, when confronted with hostility, 'even giving it right back to them'". While this strategy was used upon confrontation in Haarr and Morash's study (2013), this finding indicates that policewomen's personalities may work as a preventative strategy or a preventative form of capital as well.[14]

6.2.6 Discussion

This section has highlighted the different ways women are impacted by, respond to, and shape their own experiences with gendered power relations in missions. Regarding the second sub-RQ, it has first been shown that the women may calculate their options when challenged with forms of 'power-over' and engage with different strategies to resist partially or wholly, as well as for deterrence purposes. Their calculations and strategies include network interdependencies, leaning on male protection, logic and reason, keeping a low profile, and leaning on leadership. Finally, the women's reflections on why they may not face gendered challenges revealed different forms of capital that afforded them power. These include age/experience and rank/uniforms, exchanging favours, demonstrating cultural understanding, appealing to a broader purpose, and having a straightforward personality. The experiences thus demonstrate different ways of navigating and various levels of agency between the participants, depending on their access to forms of capital. This can indicate that policewomen's experiences in peace missions can be improved if they have access to relevant forms of capital to navigate challenging gender dynamics and perform their jobs safely.

The experiences of the policewomen are highly contextualised, although one can see some commonalities between the participants. This may very well be because - as Johansson and Vinthagen (2016, p. 431) argue in their analytical framework on everyday resistance in the field of critical sociology - acts of everyday resistance are "articulated in contextual ways and organized according to power configurations, time, space and relationships". Similarly, ways

---

[14] One participant did also use this strategy in the confrontational way like in Harr and Morash's study (rather than as preventative) when she was faced with disrespectful behaviour from her male superior (participant eight).

of navigating challenges, preventative acts, and resistance by the policewomen in the missions seem highly contextual. Nevertheless, they present interesting findings of how the women dealt with challenges in their missions. Considering ongoing institutional adjustments for women's inclusion and participation in peace operations, this study presents many areas that help us understand the dynamics and persistence of gendered power relations in UN peace missions on a deeper level. It may therefore offer important insight into how their experiences can be improved further.

Finally, it should be mentioned that several of the participants did not perceive themselves to have had challenges related to gender in the missions. Several factors may influence this, including the policewomen's backgrounds and cultural dynamics in missions.

Firstly, many participants mentioned the cultural dimensions in missions and that this would often influence dynamics between personnel. While some occurrences were by their nature gendered acts, their cultural aspect often made it hard for the women to determine whether they were intended as acts of suppression or not. For instance, participant two experienced not being recognised by a colleague who entered the room, greeting everyone but her as the only woman present. She explained that the person simultaneously was dependent on her to pass on his leave request, which she refused because he had ignored her. She said the man returned after some time to apologise and explained it would have been unpolite for him to shake her hand. While the participant did not appreciate the man's behaviour, she recognised the cultural aspect: "But again, who am I to teach other people about their culture, so uh…". This experience might indicate that some participants could have experienced gendered dynamics but would not necessarily have recognised them as challenging if they saw them as culturally appropriate acts rather than forms of 'power-over'. Participant six also emphasised that being aware of and prepared for the cultural differences between personnel helped reduce challenges in missions.

Secondly, there generally seemed to be a correlation between the level of gender equality in the policewomen's home country and force and how positive their experiences in the missions were. Women whose national's police force was less gender-equal generally seemed to have more positive experiences in the mission. In contrast, those from more gender-equal countries seemed to either have an increased sensitivity towards implicit gender issues or more challenging experiences in the mission. While it is hard to draw conclusions on this

outside of this study's sample, it may have influenced the extent to which the women perceived their experiences with gender relations in the mission as challenging or not.

On the other hand, it is also quite possible that some of the women simply did not have challenging gender-related experiences, as many of them spoke of their deployment as quite a positive experience. This is certainly possible given the increasing numbers of women personnel in peace missions. Indeed, some of the participants' emphasised this point quite clearly and spoke instead of the positive aspects of the missions, especially related to their personal development and its empowering qualities. Karim and Beardsley (2017, p. 131) have made a similar observation, noting that many female peacekeepers from UNMIL had an "overall, positive" experience that developed them as individuals and professionals. This is also supported by Agostino (2000, in Duncanson & Woodward, 2016, p. 6), who (in the military context) draws attention to the fact that "increasing numbers of women have enjoyed successful and fulfilling employment as members of armed forces" despite gendered environments, emphasising that any feminist theorising must also account for these women. On this note, I turn to the final section, which analyses how the experience of participating in a peace missions affected the women in light of 'power-with' (solidarity) and women's empowerment.

6.3 Power-with: Solidarity and women's collective empowerment

This section seeks to answer the third sub-RQ: *How does participation in peace missions affect policewomen?* In this section, I discuss the (collectively) empowering aspects of the women's experiences in the mission and the solidarity they often seemed to perform. This aspect is central to the next form of power – 'power-with' – "the collective ability or capacity to act together so as to attain some common or shared end" (Allen, 1998, p. 36). It covers experiences including: the policewomen's joint support for women's participation in missions and the support they found in and expressed with each other; turning trauma into power and role modelling; as well as learning about rights and how empowering experiences can extend beyond the individual. The section ends with a discussion of this aspect of the mission experience. It covers its implications for how we may view women's participation in peace missions related to broader feminist debates on achieving gender equality and thus how women's participation can be improved even further in the future.

6.3.1 Support for women's (increased) inclusion and power in numbers

From the interviews, it became evident that the policewomen were supportive of higher numbers of women in the mission and that they found support in other women in the missions. On whether there should be a higher number of policewomen in the missions, almost all the participants answered yes.[15] Thus, a feeling of solidarity and collective empowerment seemed central for most participants, regardless of their experiences in the missions. Some also saw (increased numbers and) other women as a direct form of support during challenges in the missions. Others also saw value in this for themselves or others even if they did not have challenging experiences themselves. For instance, participant four stated feeling more comfortable working night shifts if she was on duty with another woman than a man, linking this to both increased confidence from numbers and a feeling of support from women's shared difficulties. Participant two explained how she would actively insist that women were placed together during meetings or conferences because she experienced that women were less excluded in this setting than if they were alone in groups of only men. Most women also spoke of the importance of women's networks as a form of support to themselves directly or for other women in the missions to put forward issues and discuss challenges during deployment. Finally, related to her experience with sexual harassment, participant five also said she found support in other women in the mission. She emphasised this was particularly from older and more experienced women whom she explained to take care of the younger women and, in a sense, mentored them through the gendered challenges they faced. This is consistent with Vermeij's finding (2020, p. 22) that women can find significant support in mentors during missions. Participant five's experience thus illustrates not only the solidarity between women in the face of challenges but also supports the understanding of age and experience as forms of capital.

These results draw parallels to the findings of other scholars on policewomen's experiences working in all-women units in the domestic context. For instance, Natarajan (2008, p. xi) has found that women working together in all-women units in India "greatly enhanced the confidence and professionalism of the women officers". While Natarajan's findings (2008) derive from the domestic context, the findings of this study indicate that policewomen often

---

[15] Participant four thought the increase is already impressive but recognised the value in higher numbers of women. Participant two was supportive of higher numbers of women, but sincerely questioned whether it will ever be possible to reach a 50-50 ratio. Another participant stated there should be a balance of men and women.

find support in each other and can increase each other's confidence during international deployments as well, through numbers, women's networks, or mentoring.

6.3.2 Trauma into power and role modelling

Besides showing solidarity through numbers, it also became clear that participants found ways to turn negative experiences into strength and to use their time in the mission for women's collective empowerment. This was especially evident with participant five when she spoke of how the experience had affected her personally. She stated she would no longer put up with any subtle forms of sexual harassment or gendered jokes in her work after the experience in the mission, indicating she was able to turn her traumatic experience into power:

> I actually tolerated when male colleagues were talking dirty to me or made bad jokes on females etc. But now I am.. it's totally stop. So.. I would rather lose my job than put up with any sexual harassment at work anymore..

Further, the participant also very firmly expressed that she was determined to go out on missions again despite the negative parts of her deployment: "But uhh.. I think if I would go on a mission again, which I *will*. I would put up a fight". Since this participant found some support in older and more experienced women in the mission, she also expressed being motivated by the thought of being able to protect other women from such experiences: "And.. yeah. I think I would be the female that would stand up for younger girls in the next missions.. so uh.. that's.. that's what's keeping me motivated? So.. Mm..". This draws parallels to Vermeij's finding (2020, p. 6) that senior women try to "give back during later stages of their career by mentoring junior female colleagues".

The same participant also specifically stated that while she does not think change is possible through institutional systems, she chose to participate in this research project because she saw it as the only way change can happen:

> …but I was actually thinking at the end.. I actually believe that the only reason why I joined this interview was because I believe that these kind of studies can.. ehm.. bring the attention to ehm.. what's going on… and through this I feel that the change can happen. But through the UN system in New York or through [her national police force]? I don't think that the change will come from there.

Her decision to participate in feminist research can be understood as a simultaneous act of 'power-to' and 'power-with', seeking to spread more awareness of her (and other women's reality) on the ground. Other scholars have also emphasised how participating in feminist research may offer empowerment and agency to individuals who have been through traumatic experiences (Burgess-Proctor, 2015, p. 131). Thus, participant five's active choice of pushing back by participating in this research arguably demonstrates her agency and offers important insight into how sexual harassment may take place in UN peace missions.

Other interviewees also expressed notions of working towards women's collective empowerment through their participation in the mission. Several participants specifically reflected on their participation as a form of role modelling or as a pushback against patriarchal perspectives on women. For instance, both participants one and two emphasised the importance of being role models for the local police and being able to perform certain tasks particularly well *as* women. Participants nine and ten expressed similar notions about role modelling, and the latter participant stated, "it's all about women supporting women". Participant nine noted that local women would, in her experience, gain increased confidence by working with other policewomen. However, she also emphasised it is important that policewomen do not only perform gender-sensitive tasks but all types of jobs in the missions. A similar belief was expressed by participant three, who found the UN's push for gendered policing tasks to be somewhat outdated and reinforcing narrow-minded perceptions of women and their capabilities. She, therefore, actively worked against such perceptions:

> When I was working with, ehm, counterparts in the local police it was very important to me that it was seen that.. you know, I am a senior [her nationality] police officer who happens to be a woman, who is in charge of a team, who is given a lot of responsibility, who is kind of delivering these big projects and.. uhm is in a position to be able to advise their senior officers, who were all men.

Participant three thus perceived her very presence and function in the mission as a form of resistance to patriarchal notions toward women's abilities generally:

> So I felt, showing that example, as a way of influencing and reassuring that, you know, you have very talented women here, give them these opportunities that they can deliver for you. I had to be that everyday, I had to demonstrate that uhm.. and yeah.. and [pause] that was something I encouraged with my colleagues in the team I managed…

These experiences reflect the discussion in the broader literature around women's contribution to peace missions well. That women serve as role models for the local population is consistent with the rhetoric of the UN as well as the perceptions of peacekeepers in the study of Karim and Beardsley (2017, p. 118). There is also some evidence suggesting this may be more than rhetoric and positive perceptions, resulting from the increased number of female applicants to the Liberian National police following the FFPU in UNMIL (Bastick, 2008, p. 10). However, scholars warn that the impact is dependent on the country context, as well as female peacekeepers' local visibility (Heinecken, 2015, p. 239). On the other hand, participants three and nine's emphasis on the problem of gendered tasks coincides with the previously presented argument of Wilén (2020). This finding may thus indicate that the two are not mutually exclusive: policewomen may both perform gendered functions such as role modelling in missions and simultaneously find ways to resist gendered perceptions of their participation.

6.3.3 Learning about rights and empowerment beyond the individual

Finally, participant ten emphasised how taking part in the mission was empowering beyond inspiring the local women. She also explained learning a lot about her rights since women were treated more equally in the UN mission than in her home country. Moreover, the interviewee further explained that she tried to bring ideas about women's empowerment from the mission back home, stating that she hoped it would create a legacy one can look back on for women's empowerment in her own country.

Participant ten's account of the different ways her participation in the mission was empowering was similarly expressed and succinctly summarised by one of the police commissioners who reflected on the importance of women's participation in the missions:

> So, it is quite remarkable, the inclusion of women in UN missions. Because they will impact knowledge, they also gain knowledge, and they pass that knowledge [on], as well, back home. And that improves not only the nation at war but also the member states that are providing personnel and their own nations.

Coupled with the observation that most participants spoke positively about their participation in peace missions (despite gendered challenges), this finding indicates the vast importance of women's participation in peace missions. It further indicates that their participation can have a far-reaching impact on not only the women themselves but also where they go after their missions. It is further clear that the policewomen's participation developed not only their

professional skills in new areas but also their development on a personal level. Indeed, all participants in this study expressed that they achieved high personal development, and most of them looked very fondly back on their time in the missions despite the challenges some may have faced. The policewomen's ability to influence gender equality in their home country (and police force) upon return needs further investigation before conclusions can be drawn. However, it may be sufficient to argue that it nevertheless emphasises the importance of women's participation in peace missions.

6.3.4 Discussion

From these findings, it is clear that the policewomen participating in this study found ways to navigate challenging experiences (if they had some) and empower themselves and other women through their deployment. As shown, the policewomen were largely supportive of increased numbers of women in the missions. Many also saw other women colleagues as direct support in the face of challenges or related to increased confidence. They further valued women's networks and mentoring from other women colleagues, experienced turning trauma into power, and one participant actively decided to participate in feminist research (this study) to draw attention to issues. Other aspects of their work for women's collective empowerment took shape through role-modelling and pushing back against patriarchal understandings. Finally, by participating in peace missions, it was emphasised that women might both empower themselves and contribute to women's collective empowerment in the missions' host country, other member countries, and their own home country after deployment.

Thus, for this study's participants, there largely seemed to be a collectively empowering element to their participation in peace missions, despite gender-related challenges in several cases. While one should be careful not to assume women's shared solidarity simply on the basis that they are women (Pruitt, 2016, p. 20), the participants in this study largely seemed to engage with or support collective actions for women's empowerment in distinct ways. That the policewomen in this study performed actions that contributed towards their and women's broader empowerment and were generally supportive of women's solidarity is, in one sense, not surprising. As Connell (1995, p. 82) has long argued, women's position as subordinated in the gender hierarchy "cannot avoid constituting…women as an interest group concerned with change". However, these results do differ from that of Pruitt (2016, p. 79), whose findings on the FFPU in UNMIL "challenge the assumption that women in the security sector aspire to

change the system or otherwise help women just because they are themselves women" and thus constitutes an interesting finding.[16]

7 Summary and Overall Discussion of Findings

The analysis and discussion of the policewomen's experiences in UN peace operations show that despite the many efforts over the past decades to increase women's participation in all capacities in peace operations, gendered power relations and gender hierarchies persist, and policewomen face pushbacks against their inclusion. The policewomen's experiences with gendered power relations include challenges in both tacit and direct forms. Indeed, these gender challenges are very real and present obstacles to both the recruitment and retention of policewomen to UN peace missions. These findings thus demonstrate that policewomen face many similar challenges to female military personnel during their deployments.[17] However, it offers support to the argument that gender challenges arise from a culture that places greater importance on masculine characteristics and behaviour than feminine ones (Karim & Beardsley, 2017). It demonstrates its existence in police components of UN peace missions (but possibly to a lesser extent than in the military context and in specific contextual ways).

Pruitt (2016, p. 85) suggests that a temporary solution to the issue of gender equality in peace operations is FFPUs, which provide women "an alternative or additional option" to perform as peacekeepers whilst avoiding "the many burdens that seem to come with male-dominant units". Yet, as the author acknowledges, this cannot be the only solution to gender equality, especially given that many women may wish to participate in peacekeeping alongside male colleagues. Karim and Beardsley (2017, p. 55) have suggested that a more transformational approach to gender equality can be achieved by "valuing nondominant forms of masculinity and femininity" and their characteristics, as well as taking steps to ensure gender equality in belief systems and in personnel compositions. With increased attention to the realities of barriers facing (police)women's participation in peace missions, more steps to support women at the institutional level may contribute to such change. In designing such

---

[16] One nuance should be noted in relation to these findings. Participant one explained she does not identify as a feminist (in the popular sense of the concept), stating that she was against measures advantaging women based solely on their identity as women. However, she was nevertheless supportive of increasing women's participation in missions and believed in women's empowerment if one is sensitive toward cultural contexts. Consequently, I nevertheless interpreted her to be for women's collective empowerment.

[17] As mentioned, the 'protection norm' did not seem to feature as part of these participants' experiences, although it has been noted in other police-specific studies.

measures, the policewomen's experiences demonstrate that the following aspects are of importance:[18]

- Ensuring women's adequate pre-mission training and a balance between encouraging their participation without idealising the deployment (particularly regarding the risk of sexual harassment).
- Ensuring gender-sensitive equipment and facilities.
- Considering how women in *senior* positions may also face gendered working expectations (such as secretarial tasks).
- Considering women may feel pressure to prove themselves and work harder.
- Considering how the international environment in UN missions may cause some men to engage in demeaning behaviour against women even if they come from more gender-equal backgrounds.
- Considering how women in high positions who are successful may face sabotage from male colleagues.
- Considering how personal networks between leaders and personnel may exacerbate the issue of sexual harassment.
- Considering how intersecting forms of discrimination (gender and race) may pose additional challenges for some women.
- Considering how interdependencies in missions may partly prevent women from standing up for themselves.
- Considering the efficacy of official reporting systems as well as how the risk of backlash (in various forms) may prevent some women from using these.

This study also provides qualitative evidence that policewomen, through their participation and everyday actions in peace missions, may actively contribute to changing perceptions of policewomen in missions' male-dominated environments and thereby gendered power relations themselves. Indeed, the policewomen find ways to navigate and resist the currently dominant gender hierarchy in peace missions and use various forms of capital to do so. These include age/experience, uniform/rank, exchanging favours and skills, demonstrating cultural awareness, finding power in one's broader purpose and goals, and having a

---

[18] These considerations are named in relation to the policewomen's experiences in peace operations, but some may certainly be applicable to the military context as well. A number of these considerations draw parallels to recommendations suggested by Karim and Beardsley (2017) as well those made by military women in Vermeij's study (2020).

straightforward personality. The ways the policewomen engage with several enactments of 'power-to' and 'power-with' at the individual, yet collective level, further demonstrate various forms of solidarity that contribute to women's collective empowerment.

Some may argue that the policewomen's ways of navigating the challenges do little to change gendered power relations in the missions (in Duncanson & Woodward, 2016, p. 5). This may be true for some strategies (such as leaning on male protection). However, the women's solidarity and willingness to 'fight the system' in the aftermath of challenges, coupled with the observation that some policewomen did not experience gender-related challenges in their mission, suggests a different reality. Rather, this study offers qualitative evidence that policewomen may actively be contributing to the potential disruption of the currently masculine and male-dominant space of peace operations. It thus draws attention to the possibility that a change in the contemporary culture of UN peace operations can take place if policewomen are supported adequately (including men's involvement and support). This observation reflects the argument of Kronsell (2006, p. 109), who argues that individuals and their institutions affect each other mutually, meaning there is "particular potential for institutional change…and hence also of changing gender relations" when women are able to take part in them.

This finally brings us back to Duncanson and Woodward (2016). In the military context, they similarly argue that feminist scholars need to be more open to the opportunity that hypermasculine institutions, such as the military and peace operations, can indeed transform to be more gender equal. The multidimensional framework used to analyse gendered-power relations in this study may thus complement the focus areas suggested by Duncanson and Woodward (2016) and offer a further way to investigate how these changes may be occurring. Thus, while problems remain and must be actively worked on (including in the ways discussed above), it is also important to continue investigating if and how these transformations may occur within UNPOL, as well as military contingents. With continued support, women may be able to take a greater part in matters of peace and security in the future.

8 Conclusion

Based on gaps in current understandings of policewomen's participation in peace missions, this feminist IR study sought to investigate policewomen's experiences with gendered power relations in UN peace missions. It asked, 'How do policewomen experience participating in

UN peace missions?'. More specifically, this study aimed to supplement existing feminist research on women's participation in peace operations and contribute original insights into gendered power relations in UN peace missions. At the outset, this research sought to identify the gendered challenges policewomen may face during deployments in UN peace missions since current literature mainly focuses on military contexts. Later, the ways policewomen navigate such experiences became a central component of the research's aim, to illuminate aspects of their experiences that are as of yet understudied in the context of peace missions.

Given the limited scope of this thesis research and its exploratory nature, the primary objective was to draw on a small sample of relevant individuals to generate new insight into gendered power relations in UN missions and policewomen's experiences of deployment. Therefore, this research built on thirteen original, qualitative interviews with ten policewomen and three male police commissioners from various cultural and national backgrounds and different mission deployments. The investigation was mainly informed by IR feminist theory and a particular emphasis on gender relations and a multidimensional understanding of power (but also additional concepts and theoretical frameworks). The interviews were analysed according to constructivist grounded theory.

This investigation has revealed that policewomen's experiences of participating in UN peace missions are diverse and contextual. However, it also points toward certain commonalities that this research was able to capture. Regarding the first sub-RQ, which sought to answer '*What challenges may result from gendered power relations in missions, and how might they create barriers to policewomen's participation during their deployment?',* the findings have firstly revealed that serious barriers to some policewomen's full participation remain, including at the structural level and in more direct forms. Challenges resulting from gendered power relations in missions featured limited support and preparedness for the mission's everyday tasks and challenges, inadequate facilities and equipment, gendered working expectations, pressure to prove value, and various forms of gender-based and sexual harassment. These challenges all contribute to situations and environments where the women face more disadvantaging circumstances to fully participate in missions than male peacekeepers. These findings indicate many similarities (but some differences) in the environments faced by policewomen and women in the military during deployment to UN peace missions.

Despite these realities, the study's multidimensional investigation also revealed that policewomen's experiences are more nuanced than simply the challenges and barriers they face. By asking '*How do policewomen navigate and respond to challenges resulting from gendered power relations in missions?'*, the study has made it evident that policewomen also find ways to navigate and overcome the gendered challenges, structures, and hostile environments that complicate their equal participation. It has shown that the policewomen exercise agency by calculating their options and making trade-offs in challenging situations that confine them due to interdependencies in the missions. It has also revealed that some policewomen may resort to strategies that rely on male protection instead of official complaint mechanisms. They further employ logic and reason, professionalism, leadership support, and other sources of capital to navigate their experiences in missions.

The study's inquiry into '*How does participation in peace missions affect policewomen?'* has further shown that policewomen also develop unique strategies to empower themselves and others by participating in and navigating peace mission environments. These have been identified in the policewomen's collective support for women's increased numbers in missions, building and utilising female support structures and networks, transforming trauma into courage to protect other women, as well as learning about one's rights, empowering others, and passing on emancipatory knowledge. Thus, their choices and actions during deployments seem to contribute to their and other women's strengthened positions in missions and beyond.

The findings are hence in line with literature suggesting gendered barriers stem from higher value being placed on masculine characteristics than feminine ones and that a change in cultures and fundamental belief systems are required to change current peace mission environments (Karim & Beardsley, 2017). However, the findings also suggest that many policewomen may already be actively contributing to such change through their everyday actions and participation in missions. The study thereby draws attention to the possibility that change may be taking place (as has been argued in the military context as well) and to an even greater extent in the future, if policewomen receive the right institutional support. This thesis' fundamental argument is that more attention should be directed to the ways policewomen (and other women peacekeepers) may be disrupting and changing gendered cultures and hierarchies in UN peace missions. It argues that a multidimensional analysis of power relations may assist researchers in doing so. While this is a small exploratory study that does not aim to generalise its findings, it has offered qualitative evidence that literature will benefit from analysing

(police)women's experiences in missions with a multidimensional framework. This lens will account for women's experiences with not only challenging gender relations but also how they perform agency and acts of collective empowerment.

Policewomen's experiences with gendered power relations in peace operations and their nuances generally need further research. During the study, some specific areas were either of particular interest or could not be fully explored within the scope of this research project. These aspects can be divided into three overarching areas: pre- and post-deployment factors, mission leadership, and peace operations' environments. Future research can explore these to further understand the complexities of gendered power relations in UN peace missions. While I name these areas particularly related to policewomen and peace missions, many may also apply to missions' military context.

Regarding pre- and post-mission factors, it may first be valuable to further investigate the impact of pre-mission training on women's participation in missions. It may also be interesting to examine how gender equality levels in women's home countries might influence their experience of gender dynamics in missions. How women peacekeepers may contribute to gender equality beyond their mission should also be further researched. As regards mission leadership roles, it is central to further investigate women's experiences in senior or leadership positions, given the UN's recent push in this area. The general impact that mission leadership plays in shaping women's experiences will also be of interest in this respect. Lastly, it is important to further understand to what extent women in senior roles are sabotaged or left with gendered working tasks in missions (such as secretarial work) and how this impacts their equal participation. Concerning peace operations' environments, several areas may be of interest. These include further understanding how interdependencies between personnel (and leadership personnel) influence women's experiences and their likeliness to use official channels following harassment. It is also essential to further investigate how the international environment in missions may influence the values and behaviour of male peacekeepers toward women. Lastly, it is of utmost importance that future research considers how intersectional experiences, such as gender *and* racism, may disproportionally affect some women peacekeepers.

9 References

Ackerly, B., & True, J. (2008). An intersectional analysis of International Relations: Recasting the discipline. *Politics & Gender*, *4*(1), 156-173. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1017/S1743923X08000081

Adler, E., & Pouliot, V. (2011). International practices. *International theory*, *3*(1), 1-36. https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S175297191000031X

Alchin, A., Gouws, A., & Heinecken, L. (2018). Making a difference in peacekeeping operations: Voices of South African women peacekeepers. *African Security Review*, *27*(1), 1-19. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/10246029.2017.1406381

Allen, A. (1998). Rethinking power. *Hypatia*, *13*(1), 21-40. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1527-2001.1998.tb01350.x

Allen, A. (2018). *The power of feminist theory: Domination, resistance, solidarity*. Routledge. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429495939 (1999)

Bastick, M. (2008). *Integrating gender in post-conflict security sector reform*. DCAF. https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/pp29.pdf

Bourdieu, P. (1991). *Language and Symbolic Power*. Polity Press.

Brownmiller, S. (1975). *Against our will: Men, women and rape*. Ballatine Books.

Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods* (5th ed.). Oxford university press.

Burgess-Proctor, A. (2015). Methodological and ethical issues in feminist research with abused women: Reflections on participants' vulnerability and empowerment. *Women's Studies International Forum*, *48*, 124-134. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2014.10.014

Carreiras, H. (2010). Gendered culture in peacekeeping operations. *International Peacekeeping*, *17*(4), 471-485. https://doi.org/10.1080/13533312.2010.516655

Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing Grounded Theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. SAGE Publications.

Cohn, C. (1993). Wars, wimps, and women: Talking gender and thinking war. In M. Cooke & A. Wollacott (Eds.), *Gendering war talk* (pp. 227–246). Princeton University Press.

Connell, R. W. (1995). *Masculinities*. University of California Press.

Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 139-168.

Crenshaw, K. (1990). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review*, *43*(6), 1241. https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/1229039

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.

Davies, S. E., & True, J. (2019). Women, Peace, and Security: A transformative agenda? In S. E. Davies & J. True (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of Women, Peace, and Security* (pp. 2-14). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190638276.013.1

Davis, A. (2010). Forms of capital and mobility in the political field: Applying Bourdieu's conceptual framework to UK party politics. *British Politics*, *5*(2), 202-223. https://doi.org/10.1057/bp.2010.2

Deiana, M.-A., & McDonagh, K. (2018). 'It is important, but…': Translating the Women Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda into the planning of EU peacekeeping missions. *Peacebuilding*, *6*(1), 34-48. https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/21647259.2017.1303870

den Heyer, G. (2021). Introduction to international peacekeeping and post-conflict democratic reform. In G. den Heyer & J. F. Albrecht (Eds.), *Police and international peacekeeping missions: Securing peace and post-conflict rule of law* (pp. 3-14). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-77900-9

Dharmapuri, S. (2013). *Not just a numbers game: Increasing women's participation in UN peacekeeping* (Providing for Peacekeeping No. 4). International Peace Institute. https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/publications/ipi_epub_not_just_a_numbers_game.pdf

Duncanson, C., & Woodward, R. (2016). Regendering the military: Theorizing women's military participation. *Security Dialogue*, *47*(1), 3-21. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010615614137

Dwan, R. (2014). The evolution of international peacekeeping. In M. Kaldor & I. Rangelov (Eds.), *The handbook of global security policy* (pp. 247-264). John Wiley & Sons. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118442975.ch14

Enloe, C. (2014). *Bananas, beaches and bases: Making Feminist sense of international politics* (2nd ed.). University of California Press. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520957282

Garcia, V. (2021). *Women in policing around the world: Doing gender and policing in a gendered organization*. Routledge. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315117607

Ghittoni, M., Lehouck, L., & Watson, C. (2018). *Elsie Initiative for women in peace operations: Baseline study*. DCAF. https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/Elsie_GenderReport_2018_Final.pdf

Haarr, R. N., & Morash, M. (2013). The effect of rank on police women coping with discrimination and harassment. *Police Quarterly*, *16*(4), 395-419. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/1098611113489888

Hansen, L. (2010). Ontologies, epistemologies, methodologies. In S. Laura J. (Ed.), *Gender matters in global politics: A Feminist introduction to International Relations* (1st ed., pp. 17-27). Routledge.

Harris, V., & Goldsmith, A. (2010). Gendering transnational policing: Experiences of Australian women in international policing operations. *International Peacekeeping*, *17*(2), 292-306. https://doi.org/10.1080/13533311003625167

Heinecken, L. (2015). Are women 'really' making a unique contribution to peacekeeping? *Journal of International Peacekeeping*, *19*(3-4), 227-248. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1163/18754112-01904002

Heinecken, L. (2017). Conceptualizing the tensions evoked by gender integration in the military: The South African case. *Armed Forces & Society*, *43*(2), 202-220. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327x16670692

Henry, M. G. (2019). Keeping the peace: Gender, geopolitics and global governance interventions. *Conflict, Security & Development*, *19*(3), 263-268. https://doi.org/10.1080/14678802.2019.1608021

Holmes, G. (2020). Feminist institutionalism. In K. Oksamytna & J. Karlsrud (Eds.), *United nations peace operations and International Relations theory* (pp. 214-235). Manchester University Press. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.7765/9781526148889.00014

Holmes, G., Wright, K. A., Basu, S., Hurley, M., Martin de Almagro, M., Guerrina, R., & Cheng, C. (2019). Feminist experiences of 'studying up': Encounters with international institutions. *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, *47*(2), 210-230. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/0305829818806429

Howard, L. M. (2007). *Un peacekeeping in civil wars*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511840593

Jenne, N., & Ulloa Bisshopp, F. (2021). Female peacekeepers: UNSC Resolution 1325 and the persistence of gender stereotypes in the Chilean armed forces. *International Peacekeeping*, *28*(1), 134-159. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/13533312.2020.1827951

Jennings, K. M. (2008). *Protecting whom? Approaches to sexual exploitation and abuse in UN peacekeeping operations*. FAFO. https://www.fafo.no/media/com_netsukii/20078.pdf

Jennings, K. M. (2011). *Women's participation in un peacekeeping operations: Agents of change or stranded symbols?* https://noref.no/content/download/166229/document/Jennings_NOREF_Women%5C%27s%20participation%20PKOs.pdf?inLanguage=eng-US

Johansson, A., & Vinthagen, S. (2016). Dimensions of everyday resistance: An analytical framework. *Critical Sociology*, *42*(3), 417-435. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920514524604

Karim, S. (2018). Gender and peacekeeping. In C. E. Gentry, L. J. Shepherd, & L. Sjoberg (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of gender and security* (pp. 334-345). Routledge. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315525099-29

Karim, S., & Beardsley, K. (2017). *Equal opportunity peacekeeping: Women, peace and security in post-conflict states*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190602420.001.0001

Keohane, R. O. (1989). International Relations theory: Contributions of a Feminist standpoint. *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, *18*(2), 245-253. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/03058298890180021001

Keohane, R. O. (1998). Beyond dichotomy: Conversations between International Relations and Feminist theory. *International Studies Quarterly*, *42*(1), 193-197. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/0020-8833.00076

Kinsella, H. M. (2020). Feminism. In J. Baylis, S. Smith, & P. Owens (Eds.), *The globalization of world politics* (8th ed., pp. 145-159). Oxford University Press.

Kirby, P. (2020). Gender. In J. Baylis, S. Smith, & P. Owens (Eds.), *The globalization of world politics* (8th ed., pp. 271-286). Oxford University Press.

Kirby, P., & Shepherd, L. J. (2016). The futures past of the Women, Peace and Security agenda. *International Affairs*, *92*(2), 373-392. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2346.12549

Koops, J. A., MacQueen, N., Tardy, T., & Williams, P. D. (2015). Introduction: Peacekeeping in the twenty-first century. In J. A. Koops, N. MacQueen, T. Tardy, & P. D. Williams

(Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of United Nations peacekeeping operations*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199686049.013.78

Krefting, L. (1991). Rigor in qualitative research: The assessment of trustworthiness. *The American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, *45*(3), 214-222. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.45.3.214

Kronsell, A. (2005). Gendered practices in institutions of hegemonic masculinity. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, *7*(2), 280-298. https://doi.org/10.1080/14616740500065170

Kronsell, A. (2006). Methods for studying silences: Gender analysis in institutions of hegemonic masculinity. In B. A. Ackerly, M. Stern, & J. True (Eds.), *Feminist Methdologies for International Relations* (pp. 108-128). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511617690.008

Kurebwa, J., & Ndlovu, S. (2020). The contribution of Zimbabwean uniformed women in peacekeeping in Africa: Experiences from Liberia and East Timor. In S. Chhabra (Ed.), *Civic Engagement in Social and Political Constructs* (pp. 220-245). IGI Global. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-7998-2364-3.ch010

Lune, H., & Berg, B. L. (2017). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences* (9th ed.). Pearson Education Limited.

Natarajan, M. (2008). *Women police in a changing society: Back door to equality*. Ashgate.

Newby, V. F., & Sebag, C. (2021). Gender sidestreaming? Analysing gender mainstreaming in national militaries and international peacekeeping. *European Journal of International Security*, *6*(2), 148-170. https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/eis.2020.20

Nygaard, L. P. (2017). *Writing your master's thesis*. Sage Publications.

O'Reilly, M. (2019). *Gendered agency in war and peace: Gender justice and women's activism in post-conflict Bosnia Herzegovina*. Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-352-00145-7

Oakley, A. (1981). Interviewing women: A contradiction in terms. In H. Roberts (Ed.), *Doing Feminist research* (pp. 30-61). Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Osland, K. M., Nortvedt, J., & Røysamb, M. G. (2020). *Unity in goals, diversity in means - and the discourse on female peacekeepers in UN peace operations*. NUPI. https://www.nupi.no/nupi_eng/content/download/21845/955175/version/3/file/NUPI_Working_Paper_893_OslandRoysambNortvedt.pdf

Peterson, V. S. (2007). Thinking through intersectionality and war. *Race, Gender & Class*, *14*(3-4), 10-27.

Pouliot, V., & Mérand, F. (2013). Bourdieu's concepts: Political sociology in International Relations. In R. Adler-Nissen (Ed.), *Bourdieu in International Relations: Rethinking key concepts in IR* (pp. 24-44). Routledge.

Pruitt, L. J. (2016). *The women in blue helmets: Gender, policing, and the UN's first all-female peacekeeping unit*. University of California Press. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1525/california/9780520290600.001.0001

Rupesinghe, N., Stamnes, E., & Karlsrud, J. (2019). WPS and female peacekeepers. In S. E. Davies & J. True (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of Women, Peace, and Security* (pp. 205-221). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190638276.013.13

Sanchez, M. R. (2021a). Challenges and lessons learned in United Nations mentoring of local police in Haiti 2009–2010. In G. den Heyer & J. F. Albrecht (Eds.), *Police and international peacekeeping missions* (pp. 175-200). Springer. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-77900-9_11

Sanchez, M. R. (2021b). Complex acculturation – The hidden cultural challenge in United Nations Police missions. In G. den Heyer & J. F. Albrecht (Eds.), *Police and international peacekeeping missions* (pp. 203-225). Springer. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-77900-9_12

Scott, J. W. (1988). *Gender and the politics of history*. Columbia University Press.

Simić, O. (2010). Does the presence of women really matter? Towards combating male sexual violence in peacekeeping operations. *International Peacekeeping*, *17*(2), 188-199. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/13533311003625084

Sjoberg, L., & Tickner, J. A. (2011). Introduction: International Relations through Feminist lenses. In J. A. Tickner & L. Sjoberg (Eds.), *Feminism and International Relations: Conversations about the past, present and future*. Taylor & Francis.

Smit, T. (2021). *Multilateral Peace Operations 2021*. SIPRI,. https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2021-05/mpo21_final.pdf

Stuvøy, K., & Sinevaara-Niskanen, H. (2009). Agencies of human security in the North. *Journal of Human Security*, *5*(1), 32-48. https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.3316/JHS0501032

Swaine, A. (2018). Women, peace and security. In P. D. Williams & M. McDonald (Eds.), *Security Studies: An Introduction* (3rd ed., pp. 511-525). Routledge.

Thunberg, S., & Arnell, L. (2021). Pioneering the use of technologies in qualitative research – A research review of the use of digital interviews. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 1-12. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2021.1935565

Tickner, J. A. (1992). *Gender in International Relations: Feminist perspectives in achieving global security*. Columbia University Press.

Tickner, J. A. (1997). You just don't understand: Troubled engagements between Feminists and IR theorists. *International Studies Quarterly*, *41*(4), 611-632. https://doi.org/ttps://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2478.00060

Tickner, J. A. (2005). What is your research program? Some Feminist answers to International Relations methodological questions. *International Studies Quarterly*, *49*(1), 1-21. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0020-8833.2005.00332.x

Tickner, J. A., & True, J. (2018). A century of International Relations Feminism: From World War I, women's peace pragmatism to the Women, Peace and Security agenda. *International Studies Quarterly*, *62*(2). https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqx091

United Nations. (2000). *Mainstreaming a gender perspective in multidimensional peace operations*. Department of Peacekeeping Operations. http://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/Resources/UN/dpko_mainstreaminggenderperspective_2000.pdf

United Nations. (2002). *Secretary-General's bulletin: status, basic rights and duties of United Nations staff members*. UN Document: ST/SGB/2002/13. https://undocs.org/ST/SGB/2002/13

United Nations. (2015). *Report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) on uniting our strengths for peace: Politics, partnership and people*. UN Document: A/70/95S/2015/446. https://undocs.org/S/2015/446

United Nations. (2022). UN Lebanon mission becomes pioneer in gender-sensitive peacekeeping. *UN News*. https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/01/1110932

United Nations Department of Peace Operations. (2021). *Contribution of uniformed personnel to UN by mission, personnel type, and gender*. https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/07-gender_report_36_mar2021.pdf

United Nations Peacekeeping. (2021). *Peacekeeping Operations Fact Sheet 30 November 2021*.

https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/peacekeeping_missions_factsheet_246_nov2021_en.pdf

United Nations Peacekeeping. (n.d.-a). *Our history*. United Nations. Retrieved 20.01.2022 from https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/our-history

United Nations Peacekeeping. (n.d.-b). *Standards of conduct*. United Nations. Retrieved 14.05.2022 from https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/standards-of-conduct

United Nations Peacekeeping Resource Hub. (09.05.2022). *Pre-deployment*. Retrieved 14.05.2022 from https://research.un.org/c.php?g=857100&p=6140118&preview=e90a550cde1195b3e7fc9460743d400a

United Nations Police. (2014). *UN Police towards 2020: Serve and protect to build peace and security - a vision and multi-year strategy*. https://police.un.org/sites/default/files/unpol_strategy_2014-2020.pdf

United Nations Police. (n.d.-a). *Information for candidates*. United Nations. Retrieved 14.05.2022 from https://police.un.org/en/information-candidates

United Nations Police. (n.d.-b). *Information for individual police officers*. United Nations. Retrieved 14.05.2022 from https://police.un.org/en/information-individual-police-officers

Vermeij, L. (2020). *Woman first, soldier second: Taboos and stigmas facing military women in UN peace operations*. International Peace Institute. https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/2010_Taboos-and-Stigmas-Facing-Military-Women-in-UN-Peace-Operations.pdf

Wilén, N. (2020). Female peacekeepers' added burden. *International Affairs*, *96*(6), 1585-1602. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiaa132

Williams, P., & Bellamy, A. J. (2021). *Understanding peacekeeping* (3rd ed.). Polity Press.

10 Appendices

10.1 Appendix A – Interview Guide for Policewomen

Introductory Questions

1. Can you talk about yourself and your professional background?
2. What is your age, nationality, rank/position, and what peace operations have you served in and during what time period?
3. What motivated you to work in peace operations?
4. What were your tasks in the mission(s)? Did they differ from mission to mission? If so, how (if applicable)?
5. Can you describe the training for the mission? Did you feel like it prepared you well for your work tasks in the mission?

Gender and mission experience

6. On a general basis, how would you describe your understanding of the role gender plays in and influences peace missions?
7. How do you believe your identity as a woman influenced your interactions with colleagues and superiors?
    - o Was there a difference in how you interacted with male colleagues as compared to women? can you elaborate?
8. Can you talk about one or several experiences you found challenging due to your identity as a woman within the peace mission? How did you navigate the situation?
9. What kind of support do you think would be helpful for you and other women police in the situation(s) you described/if they have challenging experiences?
10. The next question comes out of a recognition that all women are not the same and may have different experiences depending on other parts of their identity
    - o Do you feel that any other parts of your identity beyond being a woman have influenced your working experience in peace missions?
11. Have you ever felt pressure to perform to a higher standard than your male colleagues? If so, explain how you attempted to achieve this and what you think the sources of this pressure were.
12. What was your impression of other women colleagues' experiences with gender dynamics in the mission(s)? How do you think they navigated any challenging experiences?

13. How would you compare your experiences in peace missions with experiences in the context of your national police force?

14. Are there any policy changes you believe are important to implement for policewomen serving in future peace operations?

15. Do you think there should be more women in your work environment in peace missions? Explain why or why not.

16. How has your experience in peace operations affected you and your later career?

10.2 Appendix B – Interview Guide for Male Police Commissioners

Introductory Questions

1. Can you talk about yourself and your professional background?

2. If not already mentioned, please state your age, nationality, rank/position, and what peace missions you have worked in.

3. What is your understanding of gender in UN peace missions generally? What role do you think this plays in the working environment?

Gender and peace operations

4. How did you perceive the gender relations in the specific mission(s) you have worked in?

5. Do you believe gender relations have influenced the participation of policewomen in the mission(s)? If so, how?

6. Have you experienced any gender-related challenges in teams you have been responsible for? If so, can you describe and reflect on the situation?

7. If you have not experienced such situations, what do you generally think are the reasons for why such challenging situations can arise?

8. Why do you think such challenges did not occur in the missions and teams you served with? (if applicable)

9. What do you believe were the sources of these challenges?

10. How did you and your colleagues deal with the situation? What actions successfully resolved the challenges?

11. What impact do you believe the Women, Peace and Security agenda has had on these gender relations and on the mandate of missions you have worked in?

12. Do you think the increased number of policewomen has affected women's experiences of working in peace operations? If so, how?

13. What do you think would improve women's participation in peace missions?