

*“There’s No Crying in Police Work:”  
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Methods*

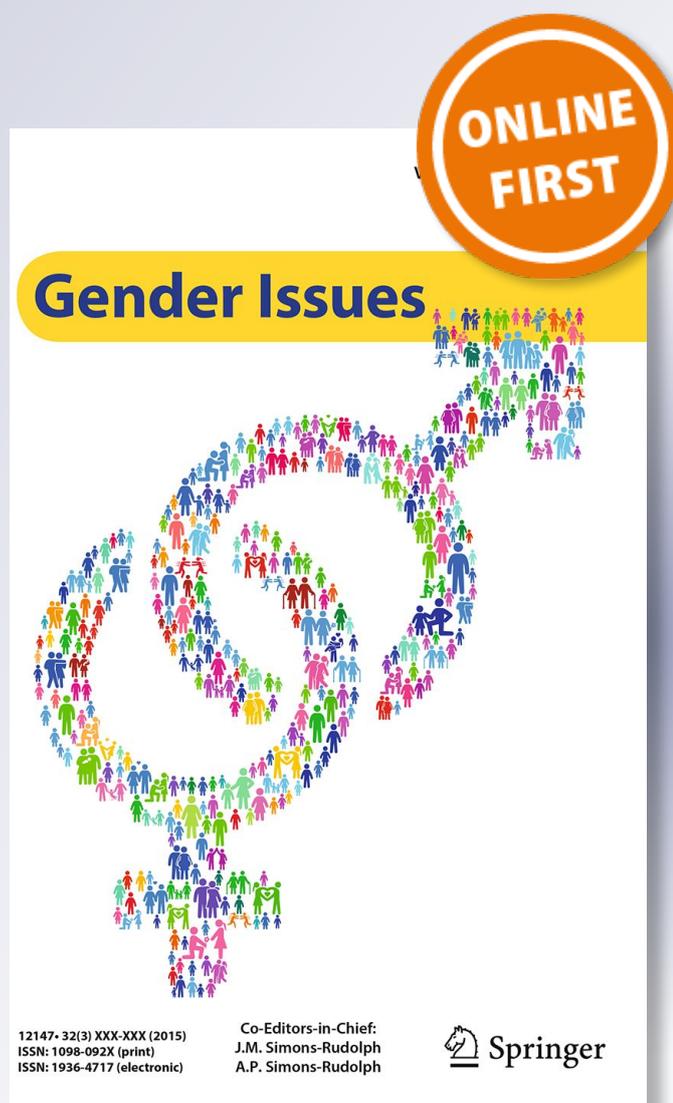
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## “There’s No Crying in Police Work:” Exploring Police Shootings with Feminist Methods

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**Abstract** Police shootings are events that result in psychological trauma to all involved, including police officers. Little work explores how officers and their social and professional networks that are involved in deadly police shootings cope with this event. Utilizing one case study, we hear how an officer involved in a deadly shooting, and those close to him, understand this event. We argue that feminist epistemologies and methods allow a better understanding of these events, which is essential if officers and the broader community are to heal.

**Keywords** Feminist research methods · Qualitative research · Policing · Officer-involved shootings

*Now, the shooting, and I think the weeks following, even the months following the shooting, I probably made an overt effort to suppress everything because there’s that engrained machismo that most Latin guys or Latin culture has that you don’t show a weak side, but at the same time, so Americanized that it’s*

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*like a conflict, like you should. At the same time I'm dealing with law enforcement, the public safety aspect, whether it be the fire department or the police department, you're a tough guy. There's no crying in police work. Which is obviously, it's just insane now that you look back on it, but the shooting didn't change it.*

Police shootings are rare events most frequently committed by male officers against male subjects that receive significant media and community attention and result in wide-ranging psychological trauma; that is, an act rife with masculinity followed by emotions frequently associated with women. The above quote encapsulates many of the issues surrounding an officer-involved shooting that can be made clear when using feminist methodologies to guide a qualitative interview about such a gendered and sensitive topic. What can feminist criminology add to the study of police shootings? Feminist epistemological and methodological insights influence the research in multiple ways: specifying the research question, identifying power disparities, highlighting the role of positionality and embracing reflexivity.

Feminist criminology was originally assumed to be the purview of female researchers in their study of women as subjects. The last 30 years, however, have seen the application of feminist criminological theory and methods to male participants [see 72, 73, 82, 99] and a wide variety of contexts [for examples, see 3–5, 10, 25, 43–45, 74, 80, 85, 88, 90, 92, 104, 105], as well as the identification of the feminist man [26].

A cursory search of the Criminal Justice Abstracts Database indicates that there are numerous articles to be found that detail either what feminist methods are or that somehow specify the use of feminist methods. Notably, only two articles in this search specifically reference the application of feminist methods to the masculine career of policing and male officers [13, 54]. While it is likely that researchers who study policing have employed feminist methodologies, they have not specifically addressed this in published work.<sup>1</sup> In this paper, we discuss epistemological, conceptual, and practical concerns that have come to light during research investigating police shootings, as well as how to continue to build feminist methodologies within that most traditional bastion of masculinity that is policing.

## Applying Feminist Methods to Understanding Officer-Involved Shootings

Contrary to media depictions, the use of physical force, let alone deadly force, is rare in the context of daily police actions [65, 71, 75, 95]. Researchers have sought to understand the determinants that lead to or influence officer behaviors and

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<sup>1</sup> Although other research exists that utilizes feminist perspectives—for example Martin and Jurik [70], for instance, are clear about their use of feminist theory and methods in *Doing Justice, Doing Gender: Women in Legal and Criminal Justice Occupations* and Kurtz and colleagues are clear about the interaction between gender and the police culture in their various works (See Kurtz [62, 63] and Kurtz et al. [64])—we searched for specific references to feminist methods in journal articles.

decisions to use force [see 2, 9, 59, 65, 84, 91, 94, 96, 101]. There has been a noted concentration on the influence of individual officer characteristics, such as age, education, gender and experience [71, 94, 96] and the situational or transactional nature of police-citizen encounters that lead to a use of incident force [71, 95, 101]. In contrast, little research exists on the history of police shootings in the United States [1]. Ho [51] attributed the paucity of research to the scarcity of the opportunity to observe deadly incidents in the field (likely because these events are rare). Technological developments such as dash and body cameras as well as the ubiquity of social media mean that these events may soon be studied in a manner never before possible.

Thus, empirical research into police shootings is lacking. We contend that the research is further limited by traditional mainstream criminological approaches that are bound by assumptions about both gender and the police culture. Thus, feminist methods can and should be applied to one of the most significant situations in one of the most traditionally masculine occupations in the United States which allows us to ask different questions and consider multiple parties that are impacted by a single shooting incident. Feminist methods present a unique opportunity to talk about those topics, which were previously considered to be taboo, while also providing the freedom to consider other parties or victims impacted by a shooting incident who are often ignored in discussions of officer-involved shootings—the officers' family, friends, and colleagues.

The very question at the heart of the current study explores how the most masculine of acts, use of deadly force within the police force, produces a “contradictory” feminine emotional experience. Our work relies on one officer-involved shooting, specifically a single officer-involved shooting that occurred during the spring of 2007 in a mid-size urban city in the south Atlantic region of the United States. The shooting garnered local, state and national attention; the officer involved received numerous awards for his heroic behavior, and the shooting incident was written up in a national police publication. The officer had interrupted an armed robbery in progress of two clerks in a convenience store while he was off duty, was repeatedly fired upon by the suspect, and engaged in a 15 min shootout in the store until the suspect finally collapsed. It was considered to be a “good” shooting in that the officer's actions were deemed to be in accordance with both the law and departmental policies, and that there was no question that the actions taken were necessary to protect the victims and appropriate given the situation.

## Data and Methods

Research data for the current work were triangulated and came from lengthy unstructured interviews with the officer, close friends, and other departmental officers (especially those who had also been involved in a shooting). This work was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Old Dominion University. All participants voluntarily consented to participate in this work and signed written consent forms.

The officer involved in this deadly shooting is male. He also comes from a cultural background that differs from that of many of his fellow officers. He is a Hispanic male who was raised in South America. He was naturalized as a United States citizen. His was raised as a Catholic by his grandmother in South America. He had this experience until he immigrated to the United States, which instilled within him values and beliefs. Such beliefs are, at times, contradictory to those projected by the predominantly white police culture. Such a culture was (and in some places still is) largely Irish Catholic in parts of the north and is largely southern Protestant in his agency. Additionally, this officer spent the rest of his youth in Brooklyn in a very impoverished area and openly jests that English is his third language—Spanish and “Brooklyneese” are his first two. Within the police department, there is an informal, yet rather tangible, divide between officers who are from northern states and those who hail from southern states. Thus, the officer’s ethnicity, background, beliefs and even his willingness to participate in this research and openly discuss that which is usually held as secret or for insiders only, allows him the advantage of the outsider within perspective. Quotes throughout the work come from these interviews and are meant to inform the argument we make that feminist methodologies are crucial in better understanding the impact of officer-involved shooting on all involved.

### **The Influence of Feminist Methodologies in the Current Study**

Feminist methodologies center consideration of power differentials, the outsider within, intersectionality, and reflexivity, in addition to moving gender to the forefront within the research process. This research examined officer-involved shootings holistically, borrowing heavily from both feminist and critical criminologies in an effort to develop a more comprehensive and honest qualitative study. Gender and race/ethnicity become key in any analysis of policing and police culture. Machismo can be seen as an integral component of the police culture, as policing is a way of doing gender in our society [15, 70, 78]. Substantial overlap exists between what is expected of a tough, competent male and what is expected of a tough, competent police officer, including “masculine” characteristics, such as not displaying emotionality. Similarly, Goffman’s [46–48] work on stigma and impression management was reflected in the discussions with participants. Participants noted that there was a positive professional stigma associated with the act of being involved in a shooting incident. Also, there was a negative stigma associated with the emotional responses that occurred in the aftermath, leading those experiencing the more “feminine” emotions to attempt to manage impressions with those around them. Many of the responses found in the analyses on the police culture conducted in the current study displayed such gendered nuances mirroring Goffman’s [46] work on the roles individuals play and the presentation of self in society. The cultural thematic analyses conducted, in particular, highlighted the interrelated nature of many of the themes that emerged from the interviews in the current study. These overlaps included how the role of gender, racial and ethnic

background, and age coalesce to inform both perception and behavior, particularly stigma and impression management.

Respondents in the current study presented a reality where there is not only a very distinct understanding of what it is to be male, suggesting ideals that are very much in line with hegemonic masculinity [26, 77, 83], but also the image of a police officer as masculine in nature. In many ways, they embraced the image of the tough white, working-class male officer of which Martin and Jurik [70] write, whatever their racial or ethnic background or even gender. And yet, officers suggested that what it means to be a tough [male] officer is multifaceted and not universal, but highly individualized and differentially internalized and manifested by different officers, much like the current debate within the literature regarding whether a true hegemonic masculinity even exists [see 20, 21, 36, 39–41, 49, 52, 55]. For example, one participant made the following statement illustrating this vague and ill-defined connection between masculinity and policing:

I mean, some guys handle it easy, some guys don't. I don't think it's really got anything to do with the job just as it does your personal like who you are, what you're made of really because but, yeah, there's definitely like that, you got to be tough.

Additionally, these understandings of the relationship between gender and violence—that being tough is an asset—can further be applied to the relationship between gender, violence and police work and may have been particularly present during the primary respondent's formative years. His life history demonstrated that, although his family operated more along a matrilineal authority structure, there were very clear elements of machismo that were ingrained at a young age. A specific example of machismo was the need to protect girls and women. Another area in which these tenets of hegemonic masculinity can be seen were in his discussions of being involved in numerous fights as a child:

because you kind of — you kind of go into that where — the fights, yes, fights all the time, but you never really — if you got bullied, I played it to like prison. If you fight back you may not always win, but you kind of get — there's a respect. All right. You know, I know if I mess with him, he's going to fight back so let me go pick on somebody else.

Clearly, violence and the willingness to use violence were sources of positive stigma or respect for a young male in his socio-cultural strata. It is quite interesting that he likens school yard fighting to prison, another hypermasculine environment often perceived to being the opposite of law enforcement, but also valuing some of the same hegemonically masculine underpinnings [22]. This apparent value placed on violent action as an expression of gender may also provide an interesting theoretical perspective from which to consider locker room shock, where an officer is conflicted over how to react to comments from colleagues, like “way to go, killer” or “nice shot,” in the aftermath of an officer-involved shooting [56].

While violence, as a male police officer, may be accepted or even encouraged in certain contexts, the expression of “softer” emotional responses are often discouraged. This avoidance of feminine responses in policing is not only

internalized so that officers police their own responses in an effort to manage the impression their coworkers may have and avoid the stigma of being perceived to be weak. It is also achieved through external censure. Malmin [69] discussed how, when officers are at their most vulnerable, they may be subject to ridicule for their emotional response to a given incident or scene. For example, two participants discussed how, at scenes where officers have been seriously injured or killed, they have told other officers to stop crying, that those emotional responses were not acceptable at the crime scene when they had work to do:

...I don't know. For me, I had a police shooting where I got there and two cops had just been involved in a shooting. The guy is dead on the street and one of the officers, he was a young guy. He was crying. I fucking told him, Knock that shit off. We'll do that another day. Right now we got to fucking do what we got to do. Everything is going to be all right. Just you got to knock that — don't do that out here...So it's just one of those things where it's, Hey, man, you know, there's a time and place for it, just like on the battlefield, you know, somebody goes down, I mean, I've seen [a] dead cop['s] blood, you know, pouring out in the gutter, you know, and I went over and told another officer, Man, you got to knock that shit off. Ain't no fucking time out here to be crying. Now's the time to get to work. We'll do the crying later, but I mean, and I'm not trying to say that to be like I'm tough, because I'm not...

In short, these participants had instructed fellow officers to detach and put the job, rather than their emotions, first. These same two officers also suggested that, while critical incident stress and PTSD are real, agencies need to beware of “fakers” or those attempting to use a PTSD diagnosis as a crutch or a means of escaping disciplinary matters. As such, they rejected the emotionality of the work both in the moment and afterwards.

Not only did the idea of male officers following proscribed and normalized emotion absent or neutral behavior patterns get addressed in several interviews, one participant discussed how these expected behaviors are applied to women. Particularly of note, when women embrace and replicate these expected behaviors, male officers may feel even less “manly” if they show emotion:

A. ...Females go out there and overcompensate a lot when they really probably don't have to, but when they get back they really can't because they're already labeled as emotional, you know, emotional individuals, whereas you may have a female and guy go out at the same time. They come back, female is fine, guy is nervous as shit, but then the guy will see the female overcompensating and be like, Oh, she's really fucking scared, you know what I mean? So it's just smoke and mirrors, is all it is

Q. Okay. Do you see that happening though also with like family?

A. Oh, yeah. But it's cultural and the same guy that's a tough guy here, may be a pussy at the house. I mean, the wife may run shit. Tough girl out on the street in uniform may not be a tough girl at home. Maybe very submissive. Hispanic male maybe okay here, but maybe over dominating here. So it's cultural and it's changed. There is no set [role]. Everybody's cool here

However, another participant suggested that women no longer feel the same overwhelming pressure to adopt the mannerisms and traits associated with hegemonic masculine models of policing. This participant instead suggested that women in policing may be a part of the reason some of the stigma surrounding admitting to critical incident stress or other emotional struggles may be lessening. He said,

I think women coming into the organization has played a role in that as well. I remember the first women who came into the department. They tried to be stoic as well, but you know, women I think come into law enforcement, they're much more open and sensitive to things. They're not locked into this macho attitude where they've got to be tough. They're more inclined to be diplomatic, which is something that I think takes some officers on the street years to learn, you know, we want to go out there and be tough guys, and if you make an arrest and you tell the guy to get in the police car and he doesn't get in there, you start thinking, Well, I'm going to put him in that police car if he's not going to get in there. Women come into this organization with a diplomatic skill that it takes us a long time to learn, you know, they know how to talk to people. They know how to diffuse an aggressive situation from the very beginning.

There is no doubt that police work in general offers an important way of doing gender in our society, and that policing itself is a bastion of hegemonic masculinity [15, 62–64, 70, 78]. Thus, officers involved in fatal shootings, in addition to most likely being male, can be difficult to access and quite vulnerable, making feminist research methodologies particularly applicable. Feminist epistemologies are critically important in exploring policing, and specifically officers involved in deadly shooting, because there is an acknowledgement that current knowledge is situated knowledge and incomplete. The current work aims to help reshape our understanding and practices of policing from the perspective of the actors involved [61].

### **Embracing the Outsider Within Perspective and Recognizing Intersectionality**

Collins [17, 18] developed this perspective as a means of acknowledging the voice and the uniquely situated work of black feminists in sociology who were operating at the margins of the discipline but within it. Collins [17] notes that from this position, a particular way of “seeing reality” is developed, as the outsider within is not fully accepted nor embraced by the culture due to membership in a marginalized racial, gender, and/or class group, and yet is afforded the intimate cultural knowledge of an insider. From this vantage point, the outsider within can see through cultural distortions and identify anomalies or problems that those fully immersed within the culture may not be able to perceive.

Similarly, recognizing intersectionality marks as social, systemic, and structural, research into phenomena such as police shootings that may initially appear to be

apolitical, individual, or psychological. Intersectionality, originally coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw [23], recognizes that people possess overlapping and intersecting identities in terms of gender, race/ethnicity, and class (among others), that have multiple and disparate meanings within societal structures of power and privilege, domination and oppression. Potter [81] defines intersectionality as “the concept or conceptualization that each person has an assortment of coalesced socially constructed identities that are ordered into an inequitable social stratum.” The outsider within standpoint and intersectionality are not limited to black feminists within sociology [16, 17, 24, 81, 98], but may apply to any individual occupying marginalized social locations due to a history of unequal power. Indeed, Crenshaw [24] notes that all people exist within “the matrix of power.”

This “matrix of power” is further compounded by the perception of police and police cultures as secretive, violent and dangerous [54, 76]. Miller and Tewksbury [76] explicate this potential barrier in their discussion of restricted research settings inhabited by those who are unlikely to disclose damaging information to outsiders. This resistance and secrecy may also be related to the fact that existing socio-political power arrangements favor these institutions, and they resist scrutiny in order to protect that privilege of power.

### Some Possible Limitations

Qualitative methodologies and their underlying philosophies are not without their limitations, including suggested issues of validity and reliability, as well as errors in the researchers' interpretations of participants' realities [12, 42, 89, 103]. England [32] and Becker [6] both refer to the instability of the real world. Becker [6] writes that social research attempts to obtain meaning for a constantly moving target. Lincoln and Denzin [67] echoed this point in their reference to Seale, who, after critiquing numerous frameworks for qualitative methodology, suggest that “subtle realism,” or acknowledging that the world as we know it is constructed, may be a firm starting ground for approaching research.

Gadd [41] also notes that each of us attempts to present ourselves favorably, managing impressions and minimizing recollections that may be negatively associated with the individual [46, 54]. To state it in colloquial terms, this officer and the other interviewees have a stake, both professionally and personally. While they may relate their memories and experiences, it is critical to remember that these are subjective and may reflect a need to both protect and present a positive self-image. Berg [7] reminds us that personal documents in and of themselves are incredibly subjective, but that this subjectivity can provide insight into the views and perceptions of the authors. We appreciate that idea that if there are multiple realities unfolding concurrently in research focusing on an actor or actors, there is the chance for misinterpretation of the observation [6]. We also point out that multiple realities unfold throughout all life processes, and that they have some impact on quantitative research, as well.

## What Feminist Methods Revealed About Police Shootings

Police shootings have lasting effects on multiple individuals or groups. Without question, the victims, their families and the community at large are dramatically and immediately affected, and these affects are particularly devastating in cases that are not “good” shootings but are rife with bias and/or controversy. It is easy to forget too that many officer-involved shootings involve the officers themselves, their families, friends, and department. Nevertheless, the very personal responses to these events are rarely discussed by either police departments or academics in comprehensive, social scientific terms. The treatment of this topic is often very sterile or process-oriented in the literature, asking questions related to what factors influence shooting behavior in the moment, please see [11, 19, 27–29, 31, 34, 35, 37, 38, 50, 51, 53, 58, 66, 68, 86, 101, 102]. Certainly the insular nature of the police culture is an impediment to this discourse or, as noted by Chan et al. [14], the police culture acts as a defense mechanism, a front or a shell against hostile circumstances or pain and abuse experienced on the job. Yet, the fact that researchers are not talking candidly about the varied impacts on the officers and those closest to them highlights an extreme contradiction that dominates the police culture; namely, the tension between the projected or desired tough masculine ideal police image, and the reality that officers are emotionally vulnerable, flawed and utterly human, as can be seen in the officer’s statement on his feelings post-shooting:

The shooting put me into a place where I got so disgusted with myself that I self-destructed,... self-medicated, whether it be with alcohol initially... just the inability to sleep, and then you know, seeking help, then finding help, then recognizing that the medication I was getting to help me fall asleep worked better if I combined it with the alcohol, which is — I was getting better but at the same time, I immediately saw that ability, Oh, get some sleep. Combine the two and it’s almost comical the way like, Oh, my God, you’re taking Ambien and you take like a 5th of rum and you’re done. You’re golden. You’re getting legitimate sleep and I started feeling like this is — that’s the solution.

Also, not openly discussed is the impact a shooting incident will have on those closest to the officer. In the literature, the focus is understandably placed primarily upon the officer who pulls the trigger. Yet it is important to remember that the officer is situated within his/her familial, professional, and social networks, which means that those connected to this individual may also experience trauma through this relationship.

This need to explicate and explore the emotional vulnerabilities associated with critical incident stress becomes even more pressing when considering the psychological traumas that police officers face. As Kirschman [57] notes, most officers will be exposed to more tragedy in their first three years on the job than most other people experience over their lifetime, often leading to compassion fatigue and cynicism. Further, this is a population recognized for high prevalence

rates of several mental health issues, to include depression, anxiety, anger management problems, substance and/or alcohol misuse and abuse, stress, difficulties in interpersonal relationships, and suicide [100]. The focus of the current study was on the impacts of an officer-involved shooting incident and critical incident-related stressors and reactions. However, it must be noted that post trauma reactions may amplify other job-related psychological and physiological issues plaguing an officer or that chronic stress can be concurrent with critical incident stress. In short, *Dirty Harry* [33] and *RoboCop* [87] are far removed from reality. Reality, in policing in particular, includes exhilarating highs and potentially devastating lows that do have a marked impact on the officer and his perspective.

Killing someone in the line of duty is one of the most stressful experiences in a police officer's career [8, 56, 93]. In the aftermath of a shooting incident most officers involved will experience some form of psychological disturbance [8, 56, 60, 79, 97]. While statistics vary, 50–80 percent of officers who kill someone in the line of duty leave the force within 5 years [100]; one in three will leave the police department within a year [93]. They often leave even after receiving accolades for a “good” shooting. If a “good” shooting is culturally acceptable behavior, behavior that is the ultimate manifestation of the hegemonic masculine ideals that are often associated with law enforcement in the United States, why are officers who have been involved in a shooting leaving this career field at such high rates? What is happening that they are not talking about? What questions are we, as researchers, failing to ask about these incidents? Is it possible that we are afraid that the response below will require us to be public criminologists, calling for change?

So, for a good period of time it was me again and again looking back. I can see it. It was me again using something to suppress it. Then, you know, eventually it doesn't become good enough because you're so focused on not sleeping and just feeling shitty the whole time that once you start getting into that routine of, okay, feel shitty during the day, but I have my relief when I go to sleep or when I take the medicine I can function enough knowing that I'm — but then it doesn't become enough. Then that part doesn't so much bother you as parts not involved in sleeping, the day-to-day stuff, the interaction with people, the hair trigger, the just being completely miserable and just completely having just a horrible outlook and on top of that there was a — you feel so sad, like emotionally drained, but you suppress that. So now it becomes a battle of it was the sleep, but it was feeling like crap and now it's like you don't want to show weakness. So then it's like, well, you know what, [maybe] I'll self-medicate some more. [Maybe] I'll try to even go further or just kind of separate myself from everybody. So it's an extreme kind of behavior and eventually gets tiring.

## Uncovering the Paradox Feminist Methods Presents in Officer-Involved Shootings

A paradox of sorts came to light during this research. While the idea of using feminist methods to study a patriarchal institution, like policing, and the experiences of its male members may have been inconceivable a relatively short time ago, we are by no means at the point of an open dialogue, let alone routine application of feminist methods. Officers still discuss the stereotypes that hinder their ability to express vulnerability, particularly the fear of being perceived as weak and the notion that “cops don’t cry.” Some officers are more frank and aware of their emotional needs, which are often not even addressed, let alone met in the current occupational and institutional culture. For example, one officer in a casual discussion told the researcher: “[we need] something for families...we’re killing our families and no one tells us how to make that side of things work, how to help them...” Others are still afraid to acknowledge negative emotions and coping mechanisms, suggesting that the researcher should stop trying to explore those things that should not be talked about, further entrenching the “cops don’t cry” mentality that leads to situations like the one detailed by the officer in one interview:

Officer: Inability to express feelings. I don’t know that it was so much an inability maybe than it was a decision, like internal decision.

Interviewer: How so?

O: Again, the police officer machismo thing. You don’t want to — like on several occasions I was sitting...either at work or someplace while I was working and you’d start getting emotional and then you’d quickly have to like — so it wasn’t that I was unable, but I forced myself not to.

I: Okay. What do you mean when you were getting emotional? What would happen?

O: You’re like, Oh, I’m going to cry.

I: So what would you do?

O: Immediately try to think of something else. I’d start walking somewhere, just physical — oh, I used to pinch the inside of my hand, kind of like the pain kind of thing. Oh, okay. But, yeah, that’s more than inability. It’s a decision not to...because at the doc’s office with [Psychologist], that was no problem. All day long that was good.

This contradiction was highlighted in participant observations and field notes that document multiple instances of officers in crises. When one officer who had been involved in multiple shootings announced his intention to resign during a PTSD crisis, the response of administrators and supervisors was to speed through the process without acknowledging that irrational thoughts may be fueling his actions. Another officer who had multiple compounded traumas went to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for help and was promptly told to “take a Benadryl and

come back in a few days.” This particular agency had no policies in place to address the complications of PTSD that resulted from traumas experienced on the job.

I wonder if the [police department] would rather treat this as an issue of broken people, rather than a broken system or process. Then it is a problem with the individual, not the department, and there is no perceived obligation to act/intervene/change. If this is the case, it is likely short-sighted and disheartening.

At this point the stark reality of the situation is almost overwhelming: feminist methods have not been commonly used to explore policing and a culture persists that exalts machismo and strength even while officers are clearly suffering, feeling that they do not measure up to the ideal image of a police officer and that they are somehow defective. Until the broader issues that restrict open and candid discussions are addressed, officers will continue to be lost in a variety of ways, through emotional and spiritual numbing, resignation, alcoholism, or even suicide in the most extreme cases. Yes, we have come a long way and there are many applications for feminist theory and methods in policing that have yet to be explored. However, gendered fear and organizational inertia have colluded to stymie the research suggesting that the resulting policy implications may be ignored. The stark reality remains that policing is ultimately about the power of the state to control the population using force [30], which likely contributes to and reinforces ideals of hegemonic masculinity. At their core, these ideals reject any and everything feminine, including (perhaps especially) emotions, since emotions are equated with weakness—the exact opposite of the common assumption that power is about strength and the entire *raison d'être* of policing. In this view, there really is no place for “*crying in police work*.”

Policing is laden with emotions. Although frequently only appropriately “male” emotions, such as anger, may be safely demonstrated, the reality is that the frequency of traumatic events leads to much “*crying in police work*,” even if some of the internal crying is acted out as substance abuse, interpersonal violence or suicide. The hope is that the results of this research can be used to aid other officers, police departments, and individuals who experience similar events. Best practices and training should provide the appropriate response and support in these cases and emphasize not just officer survivability but officer resilience. This is achievable when approaching the issues involved with police shootings holistically, looking at precipitating factors/influences, the event itself and post-event factors, across several dimensions, as opposed to a narrow approach only examining one dimension in regard to one stage of the event. Feminist methods allowed us to explicate a traditionally macho event. The event was situated within a particularly patriarchal occupational culture. Therefore, there were different research questions that could consider the emotional and psychological vulnerabilities experienced by not only the officers immediately involved in the shooting incident, but also in the individuals surrounding those officers. Future work utilizing feminist methods in the most masculine of acts in the most masculine of spaces, a space sometimes filled with crying, will better inform continued work in this area.

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