

HUMOR AT THE WORKPLACE OF THE DUTCH NATIONAL POLICE

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Humor at the workplace of the Dutch national police

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In collaboration with

The Dutch national police



Own photo: Noortje in front of the Nieuwe Uitleg office in Den Haag

PREFACE

Dear reader,

This is a graduation report of the faculty of Industrial Design Engineering at the TU Delft, for the master Design for Interaction.

I am eager to know who you are and what has brought you to my graduation report. I hope it provides you with the information you seek. Curiosity has been the driving force behind this project. Without it, this project would not have been possible. My curiosity led me to the following initial question: What is it like to be a woman in the police force with regard to gender equality?

Whilst shaping this project and finding connections, my focus converged further and further. Starting with research on gender equity in the workplace of the national Dutch police. An open project at the start, no indication where it would end up. Eventually it led me to the path of police humor. Though conceptual, I am proud of the final result and I am super curious what will happen to it if it gets released into the system.

It took considerable effort to get this project started. The collaboration between a cautious faculty, a cautious police organization, and the constraints of a confidentiality agreement presented a greater challenge than I had anticipated.

I hope this gets easier for future students, as the project and cooperation with the police were highly rewarding for me. Additionally, I believe that the challenges faced by the police, such as working with staff shortages, complex communication structures and viscosity to change, could further benefit from designers' creative way of thinking. The same goes for other public authorities and societal organizations.

For any future IDE students that are interested in doing a project like mine, there are generally two partners within the TU Delft who helped me find the right connections with the police. I first got into contact with the 'Delft Design Innovation and Impact' team, who are in charge of IDE collaborations. I specifically spoke to the external partnerships responsible.

They forwarded me to the 'Delft Safety & Security Institute', who in turn connected me to someone within the police who's familiar working with students of the TU Delft. From there I spoke to several police employees until the match with 'Politie Voor Iedereen' was made. It takes some steps, but you will get there if you just keep asking. If you ever get stuck, feel free to contact me.

The references in this report are APA style 7th edition. EditGPT was used for paraphrasing throughout the whole document (EditGPT, 2024).

I hope you enjoy reading!

Best,
Noortje



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To the national Dutch police and to the police program Politie Voor Iedereen: Thank you for your trust and the freedom that you've given me. I feel so lucky to have gotten this opportunity. I have always felt welcome. Perhaps because I was the odd one out, being a student from such a different discipline, I got to join and take a peek... Everywhere! I have joined numerous events and training activities, and got to join meetings that were secret to the rest of a police base team. I thoroughly enjoyed joining in police cars; when the sirens are on it feels like you are in a fairground attraction. I even briefly considered becoming a police officer myself. Who knows, maybe I'll switch careers when I'm 30.

To Siham, my client mentor on behalf of the national Dutch police and Politie Voor Iedereen: Thank you for all your time, your advice and connections, but also for the comfort, ease and fun that you brought to our meetings. Our train rides together were special, as you have said before: the travel time flies by when we are traveling together. I would almost give you my 'dummy' sketchbook with all my notes and drawings, as you were always mesmerized by it. But it means a great deal to me too, so I hope a copy of this graduation report suffices. I dearly hope we stay in touch when this adventure ends.

To Annemiek and Sofie, my chair and mentor from the TU Delft: Thank you for your time, your feedback and your honesty. There were times where you threw me off during our meetings by going into detail about things I did not want to go into detail about, or going in a completely different direction than where I'd imagined our meeting to go. Yet there were also times where I felt insecure and you were able to give me confidence and confirmation with the steps that I was taking. I feel lucky to have had your areas of expertise in my team.

To my friends & family: Thank you for listening to my stories, enduring my enthusiasm, my thoughts, my irritations. You allowed me to relax, to process, and to vent. You made it a lot more bearable.



ABSTRACT

This report provides a concept for the Dutch national police, in the form of a card game to reflect on humor within police base teams.

The graduation project was a collaboration with the Dutch national police, specifically the 'Politie Voor Iedereen' team, which focuses on improving diversity and inclusivity within the police force.

There is a recognized need for a diverse and inclusive police force, which requires effort as it is not naturally achieved. This project started with the specific focus on gender equity within the police culture; The current work culture within the police force does not fully support women. The primary objective of this project is to transform the work culture to promote diversity and inclusivity.

Two design lenses were utilized for this project. Cultural sensitive design was applied to research and to instigate change in the organization's culture. The feminist lens was used to examine the existing power dynamics within the organization and to ensure fair outcomes.

Literature research was conducted to understand the experiences of policewomen, which was then compared to research conducted within two police base teams.

The presence of working women in the Netherlands, including within the police force, is a relatively recent development since the mid-20th century. Addressing disparities and achieving equal treatment for women within the police force required time and effort. Police culture is undeniably masculine. The research highlights various themes indicating that individuals who do not conform to the prevailing masculine norm face exclusion and must adapt.

Eight interviews were conducted with police employees, and the insights, along with observation notes, were used for thematic data analysis. The research findings revealed subtle difficulties related to gender equity, which were evident in the thematic analysis. Four themes were identified that could improve inclusivity and diversity, thereby providing better support for women within the organization.

The theme of humor was chosen as the focus. Although humor is an integral part of police work culture, it had not been extensively explored. Humor serves to discharge and process heavy incidents, as well as foster bonding between colleagues. However, humor can cross boundaries, as it is often dark and rough. Speaking up about humor that is experienced as offensive is not common. While workplace humor extends beyond gender inclusion, this theme presented opportunities for meaningful contributions.

The relationship between humor, gender, and the police was investigated through literature. Additionally, police humor was explored through a 'probe cards' test conducted at base teams. This activity revealed that there is little common ground when it comes to jokes and funny situations. What is considered offensive or funny is not determined by a norm within either of these base teams; humor is subjective and reactions vary greatly.

This led to the development of the 'Politie humor kwartet', a game for groups of police officers to reflect on humor within the police work environment. The concept has the potential to bring about structural change in the work culture surrounding humor, particularly in terms of behavior and speaking up about jokes that are experienced as offensive.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Stakeholders, problem statement & design process

In this first chapter the stakeholders are introduced: the Dutch national police and the team 'Politie voor Iedereen', who are patrons for inclusivity and diversity within the police force. The specific target group of this project, police officers working in base teams, is also introduced. Next, the initial problem statement is explored, highlighting that the current work culture within the police force does not fully support women. To address this issue, the focus of this project is on changing the work culture to promote diversity and inclusivity. This concludes the final part of this chapter, where the project approach and design activities are outlined.

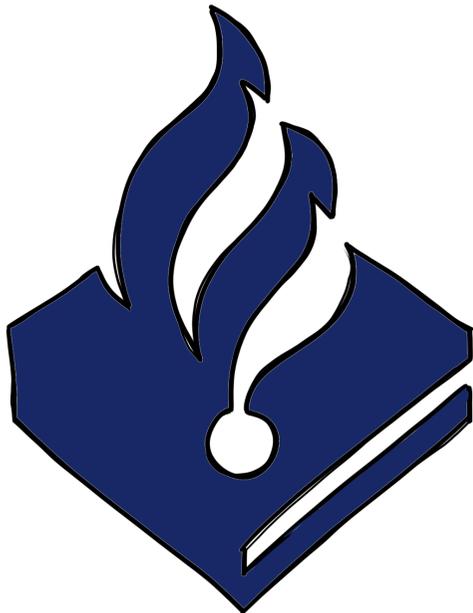
This chapter includes:

- 1.1 Stakeholders
- 1.2 Problem statement
- 1.3 Project approach and design activities

1.1 STAKEHOLDERS

Two stakeholders are introduced: the Dutch police and the 'Politie Voor Iedereen' team. The organization structure of the Dutch police are elaborated on first, as it helps understand the hierarchy in the organization and the exact target group in this project: the officers in a base team. Second, the 'Politie Voor Iedereen' team's organization structure, policy and history are introduced.

Figure 1.1
Logo of the Dutch national police, illustrated



DUTCH NATIONAL POLICE

The Dutch National Police has the mission to guard and maintain the safety of all inhabitants of the Netherlands. It is a big and complex organization with over 65.000 employees. See Figure 1.1 for the logo of the Dutch national police.

The police works with hierarchy, rules and regulations. The Dutch police can be divided into three levels: the national, regional and local management levels (Politie, n.d.). This project focuses on police officers who are part of the base teams, specifically those who work in emergency help and neighborhood care. In police terms this group is commonly referred to as 'colleagues in blue' (collega's in blauw). Other positions within the police, such as detectives and office workers, are not included in this project. The decision to narrow the scope to this particular group was made in order to clearly define the project. These officers have direct interaction with civilians and were seen as the best target group for setting a positive example both within the police organization and to the outside world.

Figure 1.2 shows a visual representation of the full organization structure. The boundaries between units, districts and base teams can sometimes be more fluid than the figure illustrates. All titles have been translated into English for readability, and have the original Dutch titles underneath or next to them in a smaller font size.

CORPS MANAGEMENT & STAFF

Starting from the top, at the national operating level is the corps management (Korpsleiding). Highest in rank is the chief of police (korpchef), also known as the

first head commissioner (Eerste hoofdcommissaris). Dutch readers may recognise the chief of police from newspapers and news reporting channels.

To support the Corps Management, there is Corps staff (Staf Korpsleiding). The program of 'Politie Voor Iedereen' is part of this staff. The staff works on a national level.

NATIONAL SERVICES

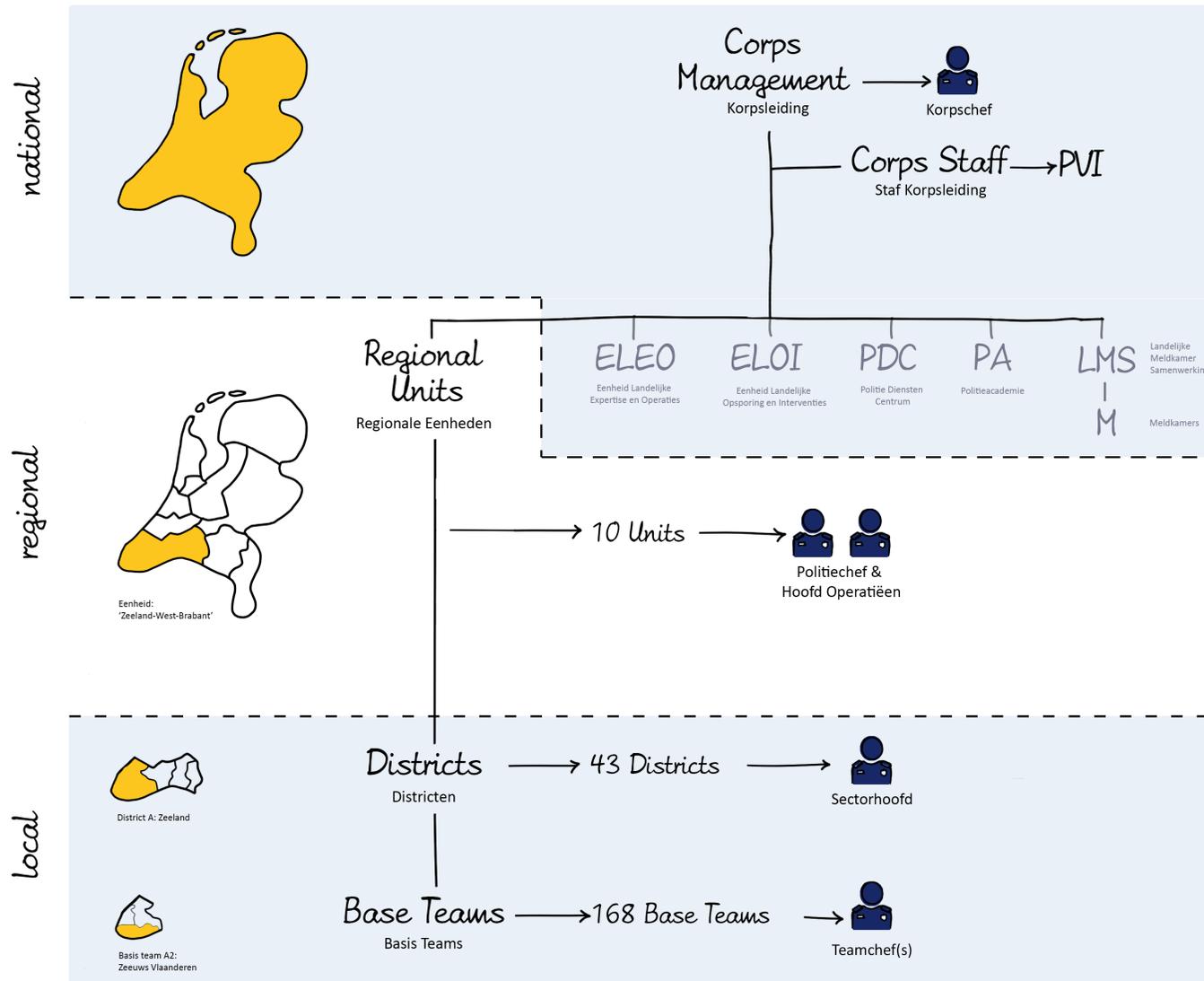
There are 5 so-called services that also work nationally. These services are: the unit national expertise and operations (ELEO), the unit national investigation and interventions (ELOI), police service center (PDC), Police Academy (PA), national emergency room cooperation (LMS). These services are not included in the project and therefore they will not be explained further.

REGIONAL UNITS & DISTRICTS

On the same hierarchical level as the 5 services are the Regional Units. There are 10 operational regional units in the country. As can be seen in Figure 1.2, these units are not similar in size. Rather, they are focussed on the amount of people per area and the amount of police force that is required. At the top of the Regional Unit are the police chief (politiechef) and the head operations (hoofd operatiën). An example of a regional unit is 'Eenheid Zeeland-West-Brabant', which is coloured yellow in Figure 1.2.

Within the Regional Units, are the districts (districten). In total there are 43 districts in the country. At the top of a district is a head of sector (sectorhoofd). An example of a district within the just listed regional unit, is 'District A: Zeeland', which is coloured yellow in Figure 1.2.

Figure 1.2
 Visual representation of the organization structure of the Dutch police



BASE TEAMS

The last level of Figure 1.2 consists of the base teams (basisteams). The project focus will be on the police officers on the street, these officers work in the base teams. In total there are 168 base teams in the country. At the top of a base team is the team chief (teamchef). An example of a base team within the just listed district is 'Base team A2: Zeeuws Vlaanderen', which is coloured yellow in Figure 1.2.

Larger base teams have a lot of employees, and therefore often work with multiple smaller squads (ploegen). These squads are usually composed of officers within the same task group, for instance neighborhood care (wijkzorg), Intake & Service, and emergency help (noodhulp). The exact arrangement differs per station, depending on size, location and preference. Not all stations work with squads, some are too small for that.

When a station works with squads, it tries to group officers from the same squad together in their planning, which would result in working familiar colleagues more often. In reality this is deemed a difficult task to realize due to shortages.

POLITIE VOOR IEDEREEN

'Politie Voor Iedereen', in short PVI, translates to 'Police for everyone'. It is a team that works on the assignment of improving diversity and inclusivity within the police within a certain time period. It is temporary and not embedded into other organs of the organization. The team has existed since 2020 and will be finished in 2025.

The PVI program was created after a turbulent period in the autumn of 2019, after police colleagues publicly expressed their feelings of unsafety, discrimination, and intimidation within the police force. Management was accused of looking away and not taking sufficient action. This sparked extensive internal discussions and exposed errors within the organization.

PVI functions on a national level within the police organization. As depicted in Figure 1.2, PVI is positioned within the Corps Staff. Their primary responsibility is to provide advice, support, and facilitate communication with various segments of the organization, for example with regional units. Essentially, PVI sets the direction for what needs to be achieved, while leaving the implementation details up to the individual teams. Each district and base team has the autonomy to determine how they will integrate the PVI policy into their operations.

PVI's policy is based on five pillars, together called the 'Schijf van vijf', which roughly translates to 'five piece pie' (Politie, 2023a), see Figure 1.3. The pillars are:

1. Safe and inclusive teams (*Veilige en inclusieve teams*)
2. Diverse influx (*Diverse instroom*)
3. Approach discrimination (*Aanpak discriminatie*)
4. Professional checking (*Professioneel controleren*)
5. Network Diverse Craftsmanship & Allies (*Netwerk Divers Vakmanschap & Bondgenoten*)

Figure 1.3
'Schijf van vijf' (five piece pie) of the PVI policy



Note. From *Politie Voor Iedereen Samenvatting Realisatieplan*, by Politie, 2023a.

The client mentor, Siham Maatoug, is the project leader on the pillar Safe and inclusive teams. This pillar comes with one compulsory instrument for all teams, the Employee Monitor (*Medewerkersmonitor*). All other instruments are voluntary, for example the Teamscan, with the aim of identifying risks and devising appropriate improvements. The results help team leaders and employees identify risks, agree on measures, and record them in a simplified action plan, which can be updated with new priorities as needed.

HISTORY OF POLICE PROGRAMS AROUND INCLUSIVITY AND DIVERSITY

There have been policies and programs around inclusion and diversity, similar to PVI, for more than 40 years at the police (Çelik & Westering, 2023). The topic of inclusion and diversity is deep-rooted with resistance. People's positive and negative experiences frequently prevail with this type of social issue, as for some the changes come too early and for others way too late. This causes opposition, frustration and suffering.

On the one hand, some employees view the changes as an attack on their craftsmanship or as a threat to their next career step. On the other hand, there are police officers for whom the negative experiences of exclusion and discrimination have piled up and who have lost confidence in a positive outcome. On top of that the political climate influences the policy, impacting the very existence of the word 'diversity' in all policy plans (Çelik & Westering, 2023).

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The initial problem statement is explored, highlighting that the current work culture within the police force does not fully support women. This shows through the low numerical representation of women at the police, and behavior issues of officers related to gender. To address these issues, this project focuses on implementing an intervention that aims to change a specific aspect of the work culture. The goal is to create a work culture that is inclusive and supportive for both women and men.

NUMERICAL REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN AT THE POLICE

The numerical representation of women at the police is lower than men's, and historically speaking it has been low. In 1995 the percentage of women working at the police was only 12%. In 2022, 39% of police employees consisted of women. In the operational strength (police officers on the street), this percentage was 32% in 2021 (Çelik & Westering, 2023). For

diversity in migration background the numbers are lower, Table 1 shows these percentages together (Çelik & Westering). The focus of this project is on improving the work situation for women at the police, but it is possible that other minorities, such as people with migration backgrounds, will also benefit from the final outcome.

BEHAVIOR ISSUES AROUND GENDER WITHIN THE POLICE

In some police stations and within work culture, there can be behavior related to toxic masculinity or being macho. Macho behavior, also called 'Machismo': "encompasses positive and negative aspects of masculinity, including bravery, honor, dominance, aggression, sexism, sexual prowess, and reserved emotions, among others" (Núñez et al., 2016). According to Kupers (2005), toxic masculinity is the constellation of socially regressive male traits that serve to foster domination, the devaluation of women, homophobia, and wanton violence. The police

themselves acknowledge that there are mentionings of macho behavior and discrimination (Politie, 2022). Both these phenomena have characteristics that can have a negative impact on the work culture and especially on minorities, such as women, within an organization.

In extension, there is a link with sexual harassment/intimidation and the police. Results from a study by De Haas and Timmerman (2010) done with police women, suggest that: "normative male dominance indeed mediates the relation between numerical male dominance and sexual harassment". Çelik & Westering also say that the police are susceptible to sexual intimidation (2023). This is concerning because the dominant male norm will not disappear soon. In the meantime, there may be female police colleagues who suffer as a result.

LIKELIHOOD OF INEQUITY

The issues around gender in work culture in combination with the percentage of women, make room for inequity based on gender. In this project, the definition by D'Ignazio & Klein is used to describe equity: to take into account present power differentials and distributing (or redistributing) resources accordingly (2020). In simpler terms, this means treating people in a way that allows them to achieve the same goals while taking into account their initial differences. It requires providing equal opportunities. See Figure 1.4 for a visual explanation of the difference between equity and equality (Maguire & Interaction Institute for Social Change, 2016). In this case, gender inequity at the police refers to the lack of power held by women, which is not actively being acknowledged.

Table 1
Percentages of women and migration background police 2022-1995

Diversiteit in	2022	2021	2017	2016	2011	1999	1995
Vrouwen	39%	39%	33%		35%		12%
Migratieachtergrond	15%	14%	13%			<5%	
Strategische top							
Vrouwen	46%	49%	40%	33%	22%		
Migratieachtergrond							
Leidinggevende functies							
Vrouwen	35%	34%	26%				
Migratieachtergrond	13%	10%	9%				

One could argue if the term equity is needed. For some, the term equality suffices; it already holds the notion of being able to reach the same goals. As this project follows terms from black feminism, the term equity is chosen.

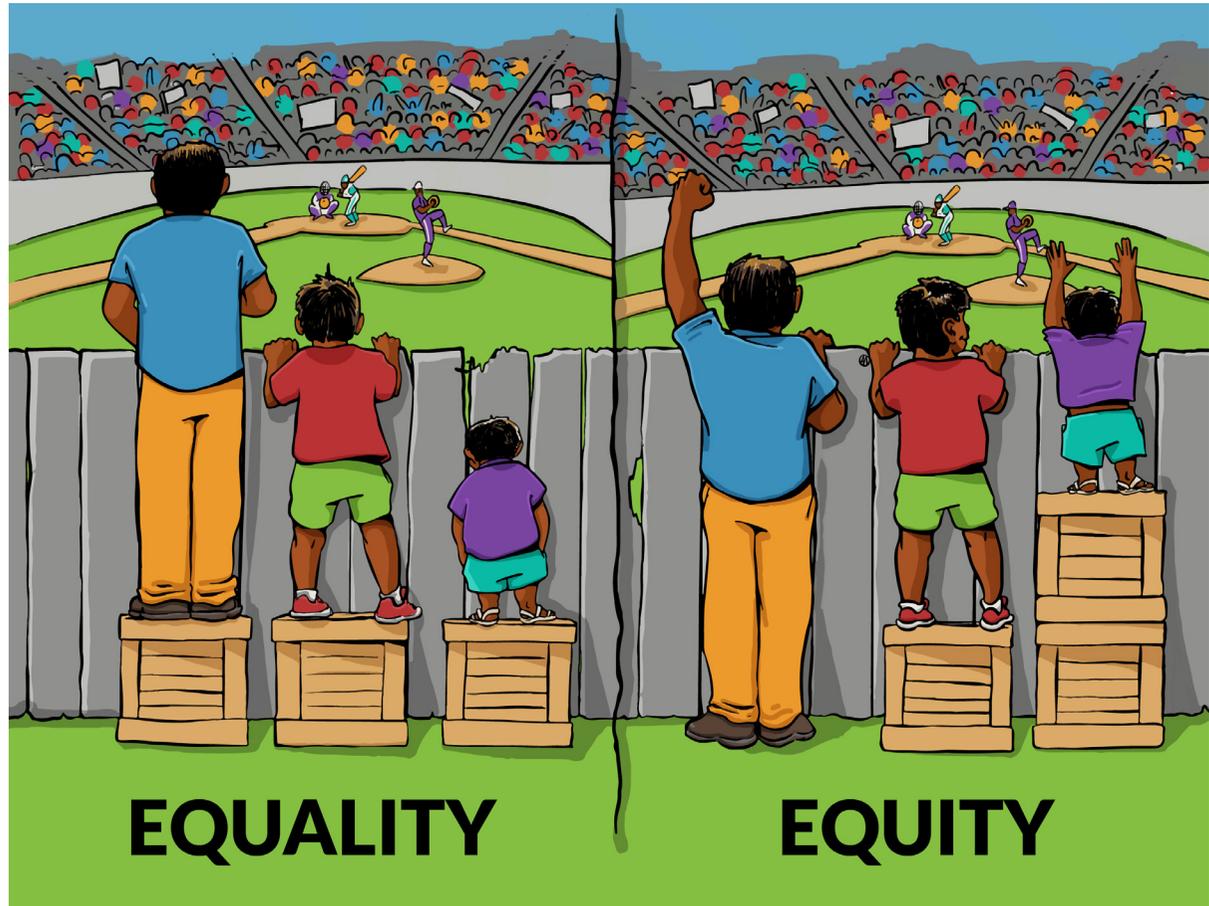
Besides the percentages and issues around gender, Dutch culture may also be of influence on gender inequity. Only halfway through the 20th century, legal changes were made so women could work legally. So the difference based on gender and sex was something that people were used to. This will be explored further in Chapter 2.1.

CONCLUSION

Based on this problem statement, the following starting point was formulated:

To investigate the relationships within teams in police culture in respect to gender roles in two base teams, and to design intervention(s) to improve gender equity within police work culture. That involves studying police culture with respect to gender equity. To be able to observe and talk to people in the context where inequity occurs, a commitment was made to two base teams. One in a city center and one in a rural area. More about this research approach and the further project structure is described in Chapter 1.3. The initial project brief can be found in Appendix 1.

Figure 1.4
Illustration of the difference between equality and equity



Note. From *Equality vs. Equity* [Illustration], by Maguire & Interaction Institute for Social Change, 2016, Made With Angus (<http://madewithangus.com/portfolio/equality-vs-equity/>).

1.3 PROJECT STRUCTURE AND DESIGN ACTIVITIES

In this subchapter the project structure is explained by means of the four project phases with the related activities, and the chosen lenses of culture sensitive design and feminism.

PROJECT PHASES AND ACTIVITIES

The initial design goal of this project was 'to improve gender equity within police base teams by changing a part of their work culture by means of an intervention'. See the starting point as described in the conclusion of Chapter 1.2 for more elaboration.

A bottom-up approach was chosen for this project. Meaning that the focus was on the role of the base teams in executing policy, not on the policy makers. Therefore, research and user testing were conducted within these base teams.

This project approach was also characterized by its openness, as little direction was determined at the start, ensuring that the project would address the actual challenges that were present.

The project consisted of four phases, based on the double diamond model by the Design Council (2004). This design method consists of four design stages within two 'diamonds': 1. Discover, 2. Define, 3. Develop, and 4. Deliver. In both diamonds, there is a divergence phase at the beginning (exploring, discovering) and a convergence phase afterwards (making choices, taking action).

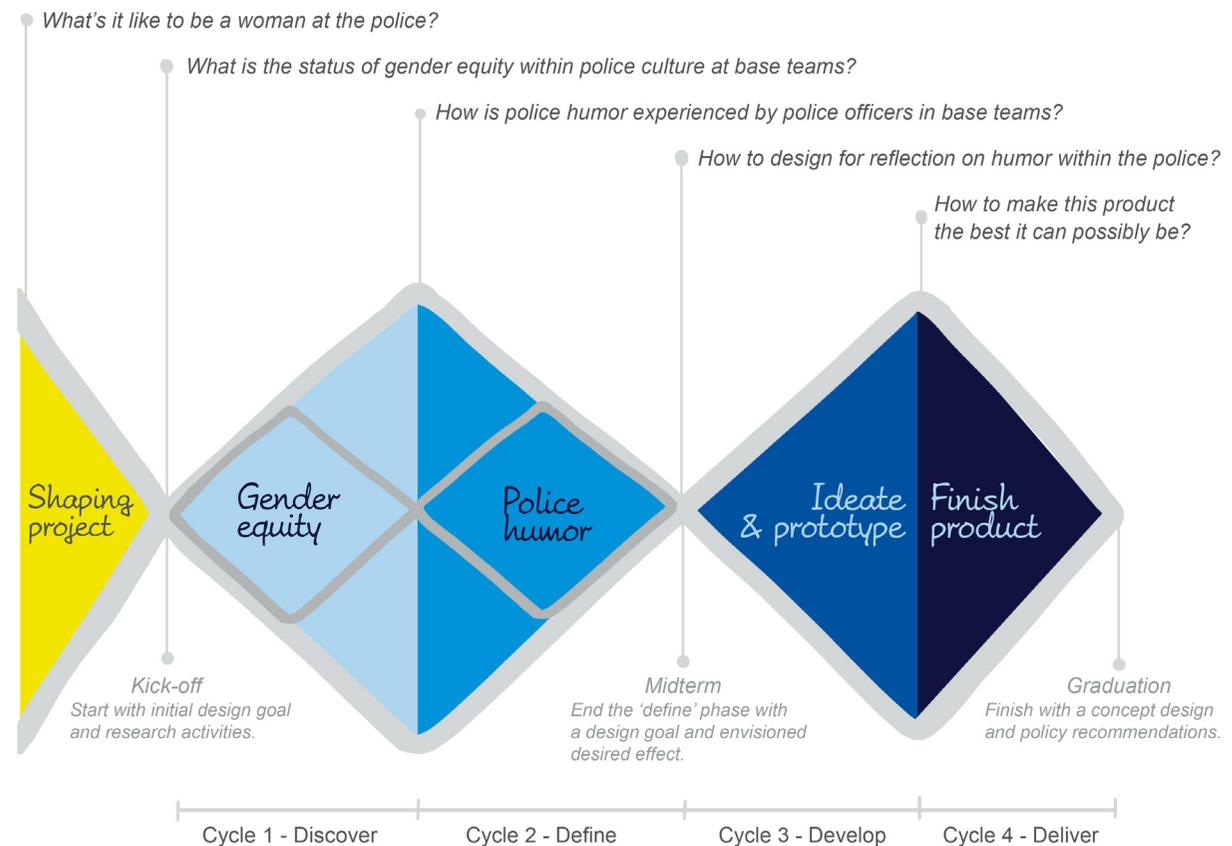
An important distinction from the double diamond approach is that the first and second phases in this project are longer, with a ratio of 60 to 40. This essentially meant that the research phase was extended. The reason for this was that conducting

research in this organization required extra time for setup, due to its size and finding the right connections.

Figure 1.5 shows a visual of the full project structure, which contains the four phases, important deadlines and the primary focus of each phase. The initial planning with its phases in time, including important milestones, can be found in Appendix 2.

When looking closely at Figure 1.5, two small diamonds can be noticed within the larger diamond of 'gender equity' and 'police humor'. This is because, within the topic of gender equity, a converging step had already occurred by focusing on the impact of humor on gender equity. Furthermore, police humor was also diverged and subsequently converged upon.

Figure 1.5
Full project structure visualized



LENS OF CULTURE SENSITIVE DESIGN

To thoroughly study gender equity within police culture, it is necessary to understand how to investigate organizational culture, and its components. A valuable resource for deepening knowledge about this topic is the book 'Culture Sensitive Design' by Van Boeijen et al. (2020), which delves into the concept of culture-sensitive design.

According to Van Boeijen et al., culture is defined as a term that refers to the collective norms and guidelines that govern social behavior, language use, and manners within a society. Culture also lives through material, for example in technology, architecture, and art.

These various aspects of culture will be observed and examined in the two police stations during the research phase. The authors of the book also state that a dominant culture is the main culture, in which the majority of values and practices are shared, and referred to as normal. An advantage of having a main culture is that it serves as a social glue that ties different groups together. However, a disadvantage is that those who don't share those values and practices can feel (or worse, be) excluded. The expectation is that the national Dutch police has a dominant masculine culture, making a feminine culture a minority culture as a result.

Finally, two activities related to culture sensitive design from Van Boeijen and Zijlstra (2020) that will be carried out are:

1. Conducting historical research. Historical knowledge can provide insights into the reasons behind the current situation. It will also help determine whether people will understand a new design.
2. Clearly describing the context to avoid making generalizations; Specifying the users, location, and timeframe.

LENS OF FEMINISM

A lens of feminism was explored throughout the project. Feminism is a broad concept and it has many definitions.

A general definition by the European Institute for Gender Equality (2016):
The "political stance and commitment to change the political position of women and promote gender equality, based on the thesis that women are subjugated because of their gendered body, i.e. sex"

Feminism can be used to consider the current power dynamics in an organization. Therefore, it can ensure that the results from this research are more likely to be just. A feminist lens was explored throughout the design process by incorporating two terms from the realm of black feminism: 'intersectionality' and the 'matrix of domination'.

Intersectionality is a body of thought that emphasizes that a combination of different forms of oppression can affect each other. These could be combinations of gender, sexuality, race, or nationality (Patricia Hill Collins, 2002). For instance, being not only a woman but also black and lesbian can result in an even greater amount of oppression. Intersectionality emphasizes the need for continuous self-reflection throughout a project, as declared by Erete et al. (2023). This self-reflection is important for identifying power dynamics within the chosen context, understanding who holds power in the research project, and ensuring that the research is conducted in a way that avoids causing harm.

The matrix of domination is a framework by Collins (1990) to show how these intersecting oppressions are organized, for example within an organization. It highlights how intersecting forms of oppression function and reveals how the historical consequences of these systems have led to some of the current social inequalities (Erete et al., 2023). In this project the matrix is only used for storytelling, as it provides a visual overview of current power dynamics. The matrix will be further explained in Chapter 2.3, where it is used for the first time.

SELF-REFLECTION

Positionality and reflexivity are two terms that are connected to personal reflection on a researcher's background and identity, and the effect that this has on conducting research. Both are used in this project.

Positionality is a methodology described by Duarte (2017) that involves researchers identifying their own levels of privilege in relation to factors such as race, class, educational attainment, income, ability, gender, and citizenship, among others.

Reflexivity, on the other hand, refers to the ongoing process of reflecting on the role of the researcher, including their biases, values, and relationships. Not only the interactions with the research subject are taken into account, but also with the collection and analysis of data (ATLAS.ti, 2024).

The exploration of reflection in this project begins with a positionality statement, which can be found at the end of this chapter. Furthermore a moment of reflection was taken in each project phase to determine if my vision was 'coloured'. Additionally, each activity was weighed: is this activity fair? Does it have a specific agenda? Are there any groups of people who will be excluded if this activity is carried out as planned? Snippets of each reflection are shared at the conclusion of each cycle and activity-specific reflections are in the limitation sections.

Personal reflections are written in italics with black text and are in a light blue frame, like the positionality statement on the right. They are written in first person.

POSITIONALITY STATEMENT

I am aware that I'm quite privileged. I grew up in the Netherlands in an upper-middle class household. I'm highly educated, finishing up my Masters degree right now. I am young, able bodied, healthy and I identify as a cis-gender woman. I'm not religious. I'm white and my social circle is predominantly white. I have friends and I am able to spend time on my hobbies.

I am a woman and I do carry experiences with me where I felt like I was treated unfairly because of my gender. To give a small example:

This summer when I was on holiday in Slovakia, I vividly remember the guide who was giving me and my boyfriend the safety instructions for our hiking trip. He was only talking to my boyfriend, no eye-contact with me. The only time he looked at me was whilst smiling and saying: "On the third day you will sleep in a hotel, which has a spa!". I was super offended and wanted to speak up about it, but I felt like I couldn't because this man was also our lifeline if we got lost in the mountains.

These experiences in combination with the recent reading of a book about sex segregation in research data - 'Invisible women' by Caroline Criado Pérez (2019) - got me interested in gender equality. When it comes to the police, my initial thought was that it must be uncomfortable for a woman to work in this male dominated industry of a base team. And that female police officers must adapt their femininity in order to survive at work. These two examples show that I'm biased. This should be taken into account in the research activities. One way of doing this is by asking open questions. I should reflect critically on whether I'm pushing for a certain direction through the formulation or for example the order of asking questions.

The people that I will be working with at the police will surely have their own biases towards me as well. Perhaps: An outsider, who doesn't know what she's talking about? A creative person who can only make some drawings on silly Post-It notes? A know-it-all from a university who's going to tell everyone how to do their job? Whatever their biases, I'll be my curious self and we'll see how far I get.

CHAPTER 2: DISCOVER

Gender equity within police culture

The intention of this chapter is to discover the status of gender equity at the police. This is done by executing literature research to understand a police woman's experience, and comparing that to research in the context of two police teams.

This chapter contains:

2.1 A police woman's experience as depicted in literature

2.2 Exploring police culture at two base teams

- Observation
- Interviews
- Thematic analysis

2.3 Conclusions about gender equity in police work culture

2.1 A POLICE WOMAN'S EXPERIENCE AS DEPICTED IN LITERATURE

As mentioned in Chapter 1.3, in culture sensitive design research it helps to take into account the history of a culture and where relevant also its context. Therefore this chapter provides historical background of Dutch working (police) women, and some background on police culture and its context as of now. The chapter closes with first insights on the matter of gender equity at the police.

HISTORY OF DUTCH WORKING WOMEN

Until well into the 1960s, Dutch women were expected to take care of the family at home (Keijzer et al., 2011). This was partly because of the christian norms and values that were dominant in Dutch culture at that time, where women had to serve their husband and family. But it was also a matter of prosperity; if the husband did not earn enough money, the woman also had to work, which was the case for the working class. So women not working was a status symbol.

In 1956, the Dutch 'Wet handelingsonbekwaamheid' (Incapacity Act) was repealed (Nationaal Historisch Museum & Redactie Historiek, 2024). Before this time, married women were not allowed to work, open a bank account or travel without their husband's permission once they were married. Women were seen as 'handelingsonbekwaam' (incapacitated).

From the 1970s more and more women entered the job market and more women kept working whilst having children (Keijzer et al., 2011).

HISTORY OF POLICE WOMEN

An article in the magazine for Dutch police, opens by saying that the history of women at the police is also a history of hostility, (sexually) undesired behavior, bullying, intimidation and exclusion (Neven & Ramautarsing, 2020).

The first woman with investigative powers at the police, Dina Sanson, was hired in 1911 in the police unit of Rotterdam (Manneke, 1998). From that point onwards, some women started to get hired in other places in the country. These female officers were exclusively operative in youth and sexual offense cases.

In the 1950s, the first female police officers started to become visible on the street in uniform. It was however still the norm that these police officers only took on 'partial tasks', such as youth and traffic surveillance. In general, the working women did not mind that. It was noted that it was hard for women to make a career within the police (Manneke, 1998).

One of these first women in uniform was Trees Keultjes (Verduijn, 2023). It is said that the only reason that she was able to join the force was because her father was a commissioner at the police. At the time, Keultjes had to enter the police station through a side-entrance to go to work, purely because she was a woman. See Figure 2.1 for a photo of Trees Keultjes at work.

At least until the Second World War, female police officers were not armed, they were sometimes given a whistle or alarm trumpet. The view prevailed that carrying a weapon was not feminine. Policewomen in the youth and sexual offense squad worked in civilian clothes and were also not given a uniform for official occasions (Manneke, 1998).

It wasn't until the late 1960s and early 1970s that the first female officers were given a service weapon that they had to keep in their shoulder bag; it would be too dangerous for the 'girls' ("Interview Marieken Westerink - Flevum," 2022).

For a long time, the uniforms for men and women were different in appearance. As can be seen in Figure 2.1, Keultjes worked in a skirt, something that's unthinkable now (Verduijn, 2023). Only from 2014 the uniforms for men and women look entirely similar (Politie, 2014), see Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.1

Photo of Trees Keultjes [left], the first Dutch female police officer to work in uniform on the street, with a group of children and a male colleague [right]



Note. From BN De Stem [Photograph], by Stadsarchief Oss, 2023, (<https://www.bndestem.nl/brabant/zoenen-achter-het-fietsenhok-dat-ging-oss-eerste-vrouwelijke-politieagent-trees-keultjes-te-ver-ab1f3c61/>).

POLICE CULTURE NOW

Police culture varies significantly across different units, police stations, and departments (such as detectives versus police officers in emergency help). Nevertheless certain general themes are widely observed. Some of these themes relate to gender and are therefore explored in this subchapter.

Two reports shed light on police culture. Firstly, the report 'Omgaan met verschillen' (Dealing with Differences) by Keijzer et al. (2011), commissioned by the police academy, describes a number of cultural aspects of the police organization. Two of their key views are: "us-them thinking," and "being physically fit and strong."

Secondly, the report 'Politiecultuur in beweging' (Police Culture in Motion) (Koetsveld et al., 2016), commissioned by the Dutch Ministry of Security and Justice, explores police culture as well. Two of their views are "family" and "hierarchical relationships." The themes are discussed in the following paragraphs.

"Us-them thinking" refers to the strong identification police officers have with each other, viewing outsiders as potential threats. This mindset means that outsiders are not readily accepted; they must adapt to the police culture to be considered insiders. As the prevailing norm is masculine, any norms that are different from that - for example a feminine norm - have to adapt to the masculine.

"Being physically fit and strong" is a self-explanatory ideal that primarily applies to men. Women are also expected to be fit, but most of all they are expected to excel in de-escalation and listening skills. Mental resilience is also expected, as officers must be able to handle both the stressful events outside and the rough

Figure 2.2
The current Dutch police uniform



Note. From AD [Photograph], by Guus Schooneville, 2014, (<https://www.ad.nl/bizar/nieuw-uniform-van-politie-lijkt-sprekend-op-outfit-koor-abad0bfe/>).

humor from colleagues. According to the authors of the report, the physical demands of police work inherently foster a masculine culture.

The theme of "family" refers to the solidarity and loyalty within the police force. The term is often used to describe this bond between police colleagues. However, this strong in-group safety can lead to exclusion of others, as seen in the documentary "De Blauwe familie" (The Blue Family). Curiosity, independence, and hospitality can therewith become weaker. Again, this can mean that anyone outside of the prevailing masculine norm, could be excluded.

"Hierarchical relationships" describe the interactions between managers and subordinates. Decisions often consider the highest-ranking officer, and stories circulate about higher-ranked individuals overriding decisions or not tolerating dissent from lower ranks. Combining this aspect with the fact that there are little women in the first managerial role in the operating layer of the police, implies that women have less influence on the main work culture.

Two additional phenomena identified by Keijzer et al. (2011) in relation to gender equity within police culture are 'positive discrimination' and 'education and development'. Positive discrimination has previously been employed by the police to address the underrepresentation of minorities: both women and individuals with an immigrant background were prioritized for higher positions. However, this approach has raised concerns that these individuals were hired based solely on their minority status rather than their qualifications for the job. This bad image of minorities who try for higher positions still lives now.

Organizations often invest in the education and professional development of young, highly educated full-time employees. Consequently, older individuals, those with lower levels of education, and part-time workers have fewer opportunities for self-improvement. In particular, women frequently work part-time, and individuals with an immigrant background often have lower levels of education.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The presence of working women in the Netherlands, including within the police force, is a relatively recent development from the mid 20th century. Addressing the disparities and achieving equal treatment for women in the police required time and effort (limited tasks, not carrying a weapon, different uniform, having to enter through a side-entrance). While women now have the same rights as men within the organization, this does not immediately balance the masculine norms that have developed over the years.

Police culture is undeniably a masculine culture. Various discussed themes reveal that individuals who do not conform to the prevailing masculine norm face the risk of exclusion. Consequently, they have to adapt. The current system is sustained by three factors. Firstly, the presence of hierarchy where the operational managers, typically men, possess decision-making power. Secondly, pushing minorities to higher positions in the past has caused a bad image for minorities who try for higher positions now.

Thirdly, as long as traditional gender roles persist within families, with women responsible for family care and often working part-time, men will continue to have greater opportunities for personal growth.

In Chapter 2.3, these literary findings will be compared to the findings from exploring the context of two police base teams.

The report 'Omgaan met verschillen' does not mention whether the masculine culture it discusses is similar to the masculine culture described by Hofstede et al. (2010). According to Hofstede et al., the degree of masculinity or femininity indicates the extent to which traditional male and female qualities are valued. Masculine qualities include competitiveness, assertiveness, ambition, and the pursuit of wealth and luxury. Feminine qualities, on the other hand, encompass modest behavior, service, and solidarity. Additionally, in "masculine" countries, there is a clear division of roles between men and women. Although Hofstede et al. (2010) labeled the Netherlands as a feminine country, the Dutch police culture seems to align more with a masculine culture.

2.2 EXPLORING POLICE CULTURE AT TWO BASE TEAMS

In this chapter, the exploration of police culture at two base teams is described. First, the activities of observation at the two police teams, as well as interviews with experts and police employees, are discussed. Then, this chapter presents a thematic analysis of the findings, resulting in four themes related to the goal of achieving a diverse and inclusive work environment.

As mentioned in Chapter 1.2, the starting point in this project was to investigate the relationships within teams in police culture in respect to gender roles in two base teams, and to design intervention(s) to improve gender equity within police work culture. Building on this foundation, the research focused on the following topics:

- Gender equity issues and best practices in police work culture
- Macho behavior and toxic masculine behavior at police stations
- Manifestation of gender roles within the police work culture

OBSERVATION

One of the first research activities that was done in order to gain familiarity in the context, was observation. As the name suggests, observation involves going into context and observing what is happening.

Observation was done at two police stations. The focus was on the context and interplay between police officers; what do the spaces look like, what objects are there, where are people, what are they doing, what are they talking about?

There were also specific locations and settings that were aimed to be observed: the general workspace, the canteen, near a coffee spot, during a (de)briefing, and with a police officer (duo) in a police car. The limits of what was allowed and possible were not quite clear at the start, so the approach was taken with an open mindset.

During observation, the intention is to interfere as little as possible, to be a fly on the wall, encouraging officers to act naturally. However, positionality plays a role here. My presence was noticeable for several reasons: I was not in uniform, unfamiliar with the stations initially, and unsure of the organizational layout and social norms. Additionally, all employees were informed of my presence. To ensure that my presence did not provoke any sense of threat, the strategy was to present as a friendly, unassuming, and curious design student. At times, engaging in work on my laptop to avoid appearing constantly observant.

INTRODUCTIONS AT STATIONS X AND Y

It has been agreed upon that no individual involved in this project should be traceable, therefore the locations of the stations are not shared. Instead, the anonymous names station X and station Y will be used to refer to the stations from this point onwards.

Station X is located in a densely populated urban area, whereas station Y is located in a more sparsely populated rural area, each presenting unique challenges and typical cases. Station X has nearly three times the number of employees compared to station Y, which is reflected in the size of their respective buildings and the number of rooms available.

Observation was done at both police stations, but the starting time differs by about a month due to unforeseen obstacles in communication. Station X was the first to be observed. My presence and exact research topic was confirmed with all the managers of the team. However, the rest of the team was only informed through email that a student would join to do research about police work culture. The mail included a picture, some information on my education and some personal hobbies. The goal was to come across as friendly and to give some personal information, even though the project was cryptic. See the full email in Appendix 3.

At station Y, it was strongly recommended to be transparent about the research topic, as the team had undergone some reorganizing in the year prior (switching of jobs). The team management were afraid that the team would speculate about an informant or doing quality checks and such. Therefore this team received an email similar to station X, but including the exact research topic. See the full email in Appendix 4.

RESULTS

At both locations, initial observations were conducted over approximately three full days. During this period, building tours were provided, and several briefings and debriefings were joined. Most time was spent in the general office space, besides lunch in the canteen, both providing opportunities to chat with officers present, particularly with those who initiated conversation themselves. Additionally, several rides in police cars were taken, including instances involving emergency notifications where sirens and hazard lights were activated. All observations were documented by taking notes. In the following paragraphs, the results are summarized by categories.

WORKPLACE AND DAY IN THE LIFE OF POLICE OFFICERS

The workplace of police officers and the daily activities of officers are described, as they determine the possibilities for designing later.

All police stations are unique, but they share some common features. A general workspace, resembling an office space with computer screens, desks, and office chairs, is present in each station. In one corner of the workspace, an area is equipped with multiple screens displaying camera footage of the station and various communication resources. Private rooms are available for briefings and meetings. The stations also include changing rooms and showers. Depending on the size of the station, there may be separate areas for detectives and higher managers. Additionally, all stations have interrogation rooms, cells, a service desk for the public, and a courtyard for police vehicles.

Days of police officers are never the same. There are usually three shifts per day, one in the morning/afternoon, one in the afternoon/evening, and one in the evening/night. Especially officers in the emergency help get assigned wherever and whenever they are needed. Neighborhood officers often have more meetings planned and tasks already scheduled, for example to teach about the job of police officers at a school. Appendix 5 shows a rough illustration of a day in the life of a police officer duo in emergency help.

An aspect that ties the workplace and the daily activities of police officers together, is that the atmosphere at a police station is highly **dynamic**. There is constant movement with people coming and going, particularly officers responding to emergency notifications. The workspace can shift from bustling with activity one moment to completely quiet and empty the next. Numerous calls are made from both within and outside designated phone booths. The station frequently hosts various guests, including internal staff and external visitors such as municipality employees. The ambiance sound alternates between peaceful radio broadcasts and the urgent chatter of notifications over walkie-talkies.

Many similar educational products lay around in stations, that are often ignored. For example post cards that were handed out to ask attention for a certain topic.

A PEEK AT A TRAINING FACILITY (IBT)

Besides observation at the two stations, the ability occurred to join a half-day session at a training facility. Police officers undergo annual training and testing at this facility to maintain their authorization to use weapons. It is called IBT, short for 'Integrale Beroepsvaardigheden Training', which translates to 'Integrated Professional Skills Training'. Alongside other young interns, there was an opportunity to observe and participate in an activity: training and testing for an 'arrest with resistance'. The role of 'girlfriend' was assigned to me, while the 'boyfriend' – another intern – was the subject of the arrest.

Reflecting upon me playing 'the girlfriend', got me thinking about gender equity in this roleplay scenario that was initiated. It could be considered 'typical in the real world' and therefore important to practice, but it could also be a false truth of maintaining typical gender roles.

It struck me that there were no women amongst the teachers for the IBT. When asking our contact person about it he said: "No, there are definitely women working here!", but he looked uncertain. It seems safe to say that there is at least a strong majority of male teachers.

Attending this training day revealed the **violence**, **weapons**, and **physical demands** inherent in the role of a police officer. It is important to remember this serious aspect of the job, particularly when focusing on the social dimension. Figure 2.3 illustrates all the means of violence available to police officers.

Figure 2.3

Illustration of means of violence available to police officers

(translation from left to right: conversation, physical violence, extendable baton, pepperspray, stun gun, service dog, service gun)



Note. From Welke geweldsmiddelen heeft een politieagent? [Illustration], by Politie, n.d., (<https://www.politie.nl/informatie/geweldsmiddelen-van-een-politieagent.html#:~:text=Een%20politieagent%20beschikt%20de%20volgende,voorwaarden%20of%20omstandigheden%20mogen%20inzetten.>).

LANGUAGE

The initial observation was the extensive use of **job-specific jargon**. This provided difficulty in understanding conversations, as it included terms, job functions, and numerous abbreviations. The police use abbreviations for everything, some having double or triple meanings. Additionally, it was noted that **words were often taken literally**. A freely translated example is:

Whilst introducing myself, I said 'Je mag mij altijd aanschietsen', and they replied 'Dat is een gevaarlijk woord, hé!'. This translates to "You can always hit me up", to which they replied "That's a dangerous word to use!".

The third observation was the **roughness of the language**. While swearing is not uncommon for the Dutch, the language used in this work environment was particularly striking. Two small examples illustrate this point:

"Hysterisch wijf was dat" - MY1, which translates to "That was a hysterical bitch".

"Ja Jezus man, hoeveel zijn het er wel niet" - MY2, which translates to "Jesus man, how many are there?"

The fourth observation around language was the prevalence of **jokes**. Both simple, cheesy jokes, as well as more rough work-related jokes were commonplace. During one of the attended briefings, officers started vulgarly joking about a familiar criminal.

CHARACTERISTICS OF OFFICERS

Officers are **attentive** and make direct eye contact, which can be challenging when trying to observe discreetly. They are **willing to help**; when approached with questions, they make every effort to provide answers, explain or even show. However, there is a noticeable generational difference: younger officers appear less curious compared to their older counterparts, who actively engage. Officers value **directness and clarity**, preferring actionable points. For instance, upon meeting my contact person at Station X, she promptly asked: "What do you need from me today?"

Hierarchy is clearly present. It appears that the higher the rank, the more vocal individuals are. In one instance, a senior officer provided loud and public feedback to their superior in the workplace. It became evident that hierarchy is strictly adhered to:

A head officer discusses with their manager right before a briefing, and the manager emphasizes: 'Ik zeg wat, jij zegt hoe', which translates to "I say what, you say how".

Stories of successes and gossip, both within their own station and from others, spread quickly. For example, at one station there was a proud recounting of thieves being caught in the act, which was repeated multiple times.

Lastly, officers can be **stubborn**. This was notably observed in their reluctance to adopt new solutions that come from higher ranks. Police stations seem to prefer discovering their own solutions rather than adopting ready-made ones, as highlighted in stories from programs like PVI.

This stubbornness is also evident in more trivial examples, such as this one:

The cafeteria of an office that was being visited, included a coffee corner. To the dismay of three police employees present, this coffee corner was closed. They proceeded to try making coffee themselves, essentially attempting to break in. Ironically these officers, tasked with upholding the law, were trying to circumvent it. Their efforts were unsuccessful as everything in the coffee corner was securely locked.

MENTIONED PROBLEMS

Without actively asking for it, some problems were already mentioned by officers. One of the issues that is most prominently mentioned are the **staff shortages** in all departments. Somebody said about this:

"Gaten worden gevuld met gaten", which translates to "Gaps are being filled by gaps"

Another thing that was mentioned several times was that giving direct **feedback** is a problem.

A conversation between 2 male officers was overheard, about remarks they made to female officers that were perceived as over-the-line by the women in dispute. They were saying to each other that their intention was friendly, so they did not understand. One of them said: "Elkaar in de ogen kijken en zeggen 'dat is niet leuk', dat kunnen we niet", which translates to "Looking each other in the eyes and saying 'this is not nice', is something we cannot do".

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) was also brought up a lot. Officers worry for their colleagues, some say they can see them slowly slipping away. One of the causes that is mentioned for PTSD, is not talking about trauma and emotions enough, despite the growth in knowledge about PTSD in the organization over the years.

GENDER EQUITY

Whilst observing, casual conversation also took place. Officers were curious about this project, thus there were conversations about that, specifically on the topic of gender equity.

From these casual conversations, the opinions on this project's topic show to be **divided**. One person reacted very defensively on the first day of observation, it took 10 minutes to partly convince him, and about two hours before he fully let down his guard. Whereas another person said 'what a beautiful topic'.

When mentioning the subject to women, multiple reactions were along the lines of 'Oh, well you don't need me for that', at both X and Y. Some women actively **distanced** themselves from the topic. Reflecting upon this with the team, an explanation could be that the women don't want to be **victimized**. That they would rather appear self reliant and keep things the way they are.

Also worth mentioning is that about **a third** of the total employees in both stations X and Y are women.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN X AND Y

In terms of social dynamics, officers at station Y showed more curiosity and interest towards me compared to those at station X. They also appeared to be a closer-knit group, this showed in their proactive greetings and farewells to everyone. In contrast, station X appeared more formal; interactions were predominantly limited to close friends within the team and to direct colleagues. This difference could be attributed to the rural versus urban setting and the disparity in size between the stations.

At station Y, I shook hands with everybody present in the station to say hello. This felt natural to do during the building tour that was given to me at my first visit. But also because in the meantime, at station X I had figured out that it is customary for new employees to take the initiative to shake hands with everybody when you first see them. I kept doing this every time I met somebody new at Station Y. Even though I knew this at some point, it never got to feel natural to go give everyone a hand at Station X, only when I actively approached them for a question or a user test.

LIMITATIONS

Maintaining a low profile during observation proved challenging, as everyone noticed my gaze. Entering a team through the team chef inevitably influenced interactions at the start, possibly causing more reservation from the officers towards me.

Navigating this unfamiliar environment involved processing a great deal of impressions. It took some time before feeling at ease and confident in conducting effective research. This adjustment period was compounded by the unfamiliarity with job-specific jargon and varied job roles. Initially, about 60% of conversations went over my head.

INTERVIEWS

The next step in the research process involved conducting interviews to gain a deeper understanding of police culture in relation to gender equity. Two types of interviews were conducted during this phase: open interviews with experts and semi-structured interviews with team members at station X. Both types of interviews were subsequently used as input for the thematic analysis.

EXPERT INTERVIEWS

Four individuals with different areas of expertise were interviewed in an open, non-structured way. This approach allows the experts to emphasize what they consider important, though it results in a diverse range of interview content. Four expert interviews are highlighted: Arnoud, a creative leader within the police; Jantien, a researcher and PVI team member; Vanessa, an ambassador for the international police women's network; and the PVI ambassador of station X.

ARNOUD GROOTENBOER

Arnoud Grootenboer and Marjon van Gelderen are creative leaders within the police. They lead the program Social Design Politie, which has the intention to stimulate a learning space for (self)reflection and experiment (Social Design Politie, 2022). Together they are involved in many projects, all related to social issues, they also collaborate with PVI regularly. Arnoud primarily advised to balance the creation of a safe environment when addressing this topic, with pushing boundaries and exploring areas of tension.

According to him, it's crucial to establish a safe environment to gain officers' trust and willingness to engage in conversation. However, he also emphasized that officers can handle a great deal, so boundaries can be pushed and unconventional approaches can be tried. Tension brings underlying issues to the surface, so it is something to aim for.

JANTIEN REIJRINK

Jantien Reijrink conducted research within the police force on the impact of humor on women in managerial positions. She is also a PVI team member. Her research has not yet been published, but she was still able to provide me with substantial insights. Her research showed that women often assimilate into the prevailing male norm to advance in their careers, to become one of the guys. Humor holds a strong presence and high status within the police culture. Her participants described the humor as black, harsh, gallows humor—blunt, clumsy, and direct—stemming from a dominant white male culture. They also indicated that humor is often used to put serious matters into perspective and to release tension, frequently targeting criminals or serious work cases.

VANESSA VAN DEN BERG

Vanessa represents the Dutch police at the International Association for Women Police (IAWP), which organizes an annual multi-day conference. Additionally, she participates in the European Network of Policewomen meetings each year. Vanessa shared her views on the international women's network. In her experience, the Dutch police provide little support and understanding for active participation in this network. Although the Netherlands performs relatively well compared to other countries,

Vanessa attributes this to luck rather than intentional efforts. She provided numerous examples illustrating how women in the police force are treated differently from men due to their gender.

PVI AMBASSADOR STATION X

To gain an understanding of the role of a PVI ambassador and how PVI influences the base teams, a discussion was held with the PVI ambassador from station X, whom we shall refer to as MXP. MXP describes himself as an ambassador for the theme of discrimination, which falls under the PVI policy pillar UDR: 'Uitsluiting, Discriminatie, Racisme' which translates to exclusion, discrimination, and racism. He views his role as only focussed on that topic. According to MXP, station X is performing well in being a 'police for everyone.' He observes that officers at station X act impartially, regardless of appearances, and this behavior is evident both in their interactions with the public and among themselves.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS AT STATION X

Four semi-structured interviews were held with police officers from station X. Participants were asked to discuss their key experiences around work culture and gender equity, where the themes of feedback, jokes and hierarchy were touched upon.

Semi-structured interviews were chosen to leave room to the participants to tell what was most important to them, within the topic of gender equity in work culture at the police.

METHOD

Participants were invited through email and addressed in person at the station. The email also included the exact topic of this project, with the emphasis on it being a design project, to avoid the impression of being a researcher who would solely write a critical report. The term gender equity was avoided, as some people have strong negative associations with it. To avoid this it was phrased differently: research about work culture in the perspective of a woman. See the email in Appendix 6. The aim was to have a balance of $\frac{2}{3}$ women and $\frac{1}{3}$ men, $\frac{2}{3}$ 'noodhulp' and $\frac{1}{3}$ 'wijkagent', $\frac{1}{3}$ manager function within the participant group.

The location of the interviews was up to each participant to choose; Either somewhere at the station in a private area/room, at the faculty of IDE in a private room, or at their house.

The location had to be determined beforehand and if needed reserved. A charged voice recorder, consent forms, the interview setup and chocolate bars as a small gift for the participants were brought to the interview. No preparation was asked of participants beforehand.

The interview setup was made with a round of feedback from the mentor team. The questions stated in the setup are a red thread throughout the interviews, but the conversation was allowed to stray. Asking 'why', 'how do/did you feel about that' or 'do you have an example' were important. Priority questions and time marks were included in the interview setup, so there would be time for the most important questions.

The full interview setup can be found in Appendix 7. This is a summary of the interview setup only including the priority questions:

Part 0: Introduction & consent form

- The research purpose and the course of the interview is explained for expectation/time management for the participant.
- Then the consent form is explained and asked to sign by the participant.

Part 1: You and your team

- How long have you worked at the police? And at this station?
- Do you think your role is typically male or female?

Part 2: Feedback

- How would you describe the feedback culture within the police?

Part 3: Concrete examples

- How do you feel about jokes at the workplace?
- Have you ever heard a joke that made you feel uncomfortable?

Part 4: Gender within police work

- Are there female tasks within the police work? And male tasks?

Part 5: Issues

- Have you ever experienced something unpleasant within your team?
- Is there ever behavior from you or your colleagues that you disapprove of?
- What motivated you to have this conversation? Were there things that popped up when you thought about the topic?

Part 6: Gender equity (future)

- What does gender equity within the police mean to you?
- Could you name an example that weakens gender equity within the police?
- Could you name an example that strengthens gender equity within the police?

Part 7: PVI

- Are you familiar with Politie Voor Iedereen?

Part 8: Closing

- This is the end of the interview, is there anything we missed?

The interview was scheduled to last one hour in total. Part 0 and 1 together were scheduled to last about 10 minutes, part 2 to 5 last about 35 minutes, and part 6 to 8 last about 15 minutes.

Four interviews were held with officers from station X, of which 3 were women and 1 was a man. One was in neighborhood care, two in emergency help. One was a head officer, one was a senior, and two were O.E. The results of these semi-structured interviews are further explained the next subchapter, as they were used as input for the thematic analysis.

LIMITATIONS

It has been learned that police officers have a strong sense of collegiality towards each other in the prior research on exploring police culture (Chapter 2.1). This could mean that police officers refrain from saying negative things about each other during interviews. Therefore there are possibly potential problems that don't come to light, there is no way to check that. Also, there wasn't enough time to address most of the non-prioritized questions.



Note. From ACP [Photograph], n.d., (<https://www.acp.nl/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/steun-de-politie-scaled.jpg>).

THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS & OBSERVATION

Both the interviews and the observation notes were thematically analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase approach. This thematic analysis approach is a method to identify, analyze and report themes within collected data.

METHOD

The approach was used inductively, so bottom-up. Meaning the data was not put into specific preconceived directions, but it formed its own directions. The emphasis was to find latent themes; looking to identify underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualizations and ideologies within the data. As the interviews were in Dutch, and the author is Dutch, the analysis was done in Dutch. Only in the final stage of drawing conclusions, theme names and quotes were translated to English.

The six phases consist of:

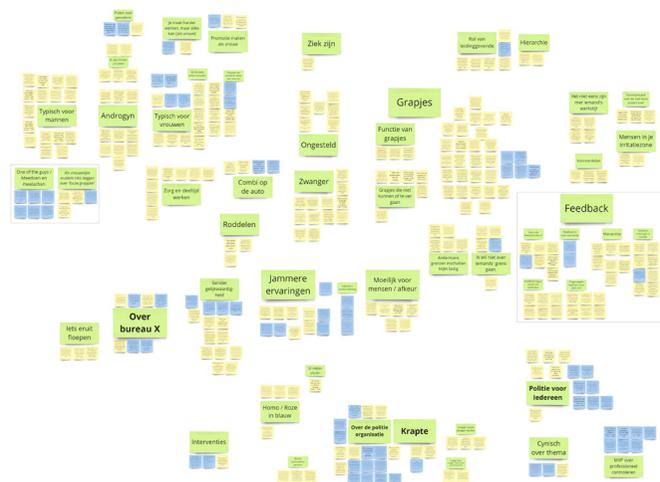
1. Familiarizing with the data
2. Generating initial codes
3. Searching for themes
4. Reviewing themes
5. Defining and naming themes
6. Reporting

Familiarizing with the data was done by listening to the interviews, transcribing them and reviewing them together with the observation notes. The generation of initial codes was done by coding all transcripts and observation notes by using ATLAS.ti software.

Searching for themes was done by using Post-its in the digital Miro environment, see Figure 2.4 for an impression of this process. Reviewing, defining and naming of themes was done in several rounds by the author, leaving time in between rounds to avoid tunnel vision and to remain focussed in this process. Finally, the results were documented and reviewed with the mentor team, and reported.

The transcriptions were written as closely as possible to what was actually being said. Only when a participant changed their sentence three times before expressing what they actually meant, the incomplete sentences were removed. When a participant made a small grammar error, this was corrected (for example, someone said: 'hij heb', which translates to 'he have'). Furthermore, when a participant sighed deeply, started laughing or did something else in body language that stood out, this was added to the quote in square hooks.

Figure 2.4
Screenshot of thematic analysis process in Miro



RESULTS

A total of 359 codes were used in the thematic analysis, which resulted into 4 main themes and 16 subthemes. 25 of the codes were not used as they were deemed too different. The four main themes are:

1. Giving and receiving feedback
2. Boundaries of jokes
3. Change in the organization
4. Being a woman in the Dutch police

There is also a fifth theme about the specific experiences of station X. Although this theme is smaller than the others, it is too distinctive to be overlooked. Figure 2.5 gives a visual representation of the themes and also shows the overlap between them, in Dutch.

Figure 2.5
Visual overview of themes and subthemes (in Dutch)

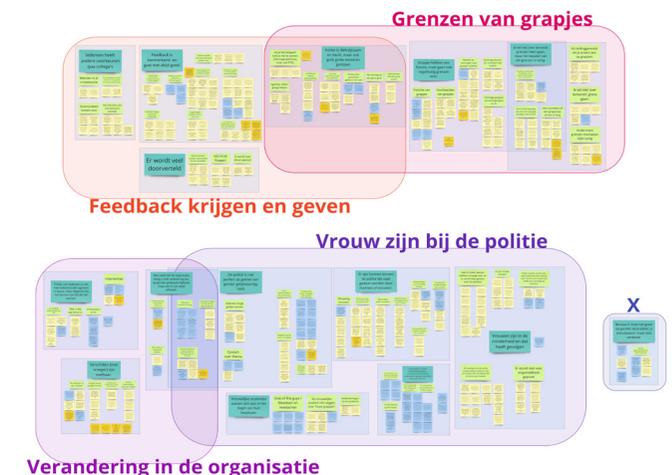


Table 2 provides an overview of the themes and the sub themes. It is important to note that theme 1 and 2 overlap with each other, as well as theme 3 and 4. They both contain a copy of a subtheme (D&E and J&K, indicated by asterisks). The reason being that the content of the subtheme contributes importantly to both themes.

The five themes are clarified in the following pages.

Table 2
Overview of themes and subthemes

1. Giving and receiving feedback		4. Being a woman in the Dutch police	
A.	Everyone has different preferences when it comes to colleagues	K.	**Police officers feel that the organization is changing, but that the change is not always efficient.
B.	Feedback is distinctive and does not always go well.	L.	The police are not perfect when it comes to gender equity.
C.	A lot is passed on.	M.	Female students adapt at the start of their career.
D.	*The police are helpful and close, but also coarse, big mouthed and closed.	N.	There are functions within the police that are often done by either men or women.
2. Boundaries of jokes		O.	Being a minority, experiences that only women have, are treated as different.
E.	*The police are helpful and close, but also coarse, big mouthed and closed.	P.	Women at the police as a topic does not get attention, nobody 'owns' it.
F.	Jokes have a function, but also go over people's boundaries regularly.	5. X	
G.	There is no intention of going beyond boundaries, but determining the boundaries is hard.	Q.	Station X is perceived positively when it comes to gender equity and helpfulness, but is also divided.
3. Change in the organization			
H.	Police officers are not very familiar with Politie Voor Iedereen, but those who are are happy with their existence.		
I.	Differences [in comparison with former times] are sensible.		
J.	**Police officers feel that the organization is changing, but that the change is not always efficient.		

1. GIVING AND RECEIVING FEEDBACK

Lots of aspects of police work circle back to giving and receiving feedback. It was mentioned in casual conversations during observation, without me asking or directing a conversation towards it. In the interviews the participants had a lot to say about it as well.

A. EVERYONE HAS DIFFERENT PREFERENCES WHEN IT COMES TO COLLEAGUES

According to the participants, when it comes to the job as a police officer, there are different ways of approaching and dealing with situations. As an officer, you have the freedom to decide how you want to handle things. Different officers have different preferences, so it regularly happens that as an officer you disagree with the work style of your colleague, but it is not necessarily wrong.

Participants also indicated that there can always be colleagues that are in your irritation zone. And there are colleagues that have a preference for one gender stronger than the other, when it comes to asking for help for example. Prejudice, especially with new colleagues, also takes place and is seen as a pitfall.

"You think something about everyone and you don't say what you think or want to say to everyone's face."- MXH

B. FEEDBACK IS DISTINCTIVE AND DOES NOT ALWAYS GO WELL

Giving feedback operationally, is something that is taught at the police academy according to the participants. Indicating when a recent work situation

was too dangerous, is important and happens regularly. The police officers in blue have a standard moment to reflect after each shift, during the debriefing. Feedback is also given unsolicited, and when it comes from well-known colleagues, it is brought casually, through jokes or remarks. Giving feedback is not always experienced as ideal, possibly because of the unsolicitedness or casualness.

Hierarchy has an influence on the type of feedback that is given and received, but can also be a threshold. According to the participants, the feedback that you get from a superior is often more serious. This also comes with their managing role, and structurally is part of the evaluation meetings for every officer. A superior is not always counting on feedback from officers that are lower in rank. MXH for example mentions:

"Sometimes you get a little tap on the fingers because you may have done something wrong. Or sometimes you are straightened out."

In general, according to the participants, receiving feedback is difficult and depends heavily on the person. Some colleagues are always open towards feedback, whereas others don't have the intention to take action with the feedback that they get.

C. A LOT IS PASSED ON

WXS believes that most colleagues can have difficulty when you give feedback. According to participant MXH, the 'good stories' are always passed on within the police. These could be stories from different police stations, about exciting arrests, sometimes referred to as cowboy stories. But they could also be rumors about [direct] colleagues.

Accidentally commenting on colleagues also happens frequently according to some participants.

For example:

"I blurt out. I sometimes say something of which later I think, oh, you really should have kept your mouth shut." -WXOb

D. *THE POLICE ARE HELPFUL AND CLOSE, BUT THEY ARE ALSO COARSE, BIG MOUTHED AND CLOSED.

WXOa finds the feedback culture difficult. "We talk more about each other than with each other"

The use of language with the police is coarse. Being a loudmouth and being tough are considered normal for police officers. Besides that, police officers have a tight cooperation and always have each other's back. Talking about your feelings is something that rarely happens. This can result in not expressing some forms of feedback.

"Why do we do it like that? Because apparently it is culture, we adopt it from each other. It looks cool when you say that or something." - WXOa

2. BOUNDARIES OF JOKES

Another topic that stood out is jokes and their boundaries. During observation, one of the first things that I noticed was the amount of jokes and their specific nature. Strikingly, during the interviews when being asked about the jokes in the workplace, participants' first remark was that lots of jokes go 'too far'. But jokes have important functions and are without a doubt indispensable.

E. *THE POLICE ARE HELPFUL AND CLOSE, BUT THEY ARE ALSO COARSE, BIG MOUTHED AND CLOSED.

As with the theme of giving and receiving feedback, the coarse and big mouthed nature of the language used probably has its effect on the type of jokes that are made: Jokes are rough and coarse as well. The roughness can be defended by the jokers with the statement 'it is only a joke'. The telling of 'cowboy stories', in which stories of successes are being shared proudly, is something related to this.

"Used language is rude. Women and sex are often topics of conversation." - J

F. JOKES HAVE A FUNCTION, BUT ALSO GO OVER PEOPLE'S BOUNDARIES REGULARLY.

Jokes have a function of processing difficult events or accidents, as well as a way of discharge or blowing of steam for police officers. According to participants, jokes are important and have a high status. But some jokes and remarks go too far. There are topics that are considered sensitive and not to be joked about, but these differ per person, per squad or even per team. The response to jokes and remarks that are not considered funny, also differ per person and per topic. Officer WXS for example usually speaks up when there's a joke about burnouts, as she experienced one herself.

"You also have to keep smiling in our work, and jokes are often made about reports that are intense or unpleasant, but that is often also a matter for colleagues to process" - WXS

G. THERE IS NO INTENTION OF GOING BEYOND BOUNDARIES, BUT DETERMINING THE BOUNDARIES IS HARD.

Participants indicate that the intention is never to go over people's boundaries, but figuring out where people's boundaries lie is hard.

"And it also depends a bit on how much someone can take. And that is of course very difficult, because someone does not always indicate that. But you sense it a bit like, oh, this is okay, that is not okay." -WXOb

More direct and well-known colleagues are a lot easier to read than colleagues that you hardly ever speak to. For example:

"I know what kind of colleagues I have around me, what kind of jokes you can make and what kind of jokes you can expect." - MXH

There were also multiple examples of participants where the group considered something funny, but participants did not, especially when they were part of the joke. Officers in managing function indicate they deal differently with jokes, when lines are crossed they will address the people in question.

3. CHANGE IN THE ORGANIZATION

Another notable topic is change in the organization. Roughly two types of changes are relevant here, the first being changes where the current situation is compared to 'the old days'. The second being the changes around the subject of inclusion and equity.

H. POLICE OFFICERS ARE NOT VERY FAMILIAR WITH POLITIE VOOR IEDEREEN, BUT THOSE WHO ARE ARE HAPPY WITH THEIR EXISTENCE.

When asked, most participants were either unfamiliar or vaguely familiar with PVI. The participants that know of the existence are happy that they are there. For example:

"It's actually a shame that it has to be there, because it should be self-evident, but I am happy with it." [WXOb on PVI]

MXH has heard of PVI, but has no idea what it is. "Whether it's a program or an instruction book, I really don't know"

I. DIFFERENCES [IN COMPARISON WITH FORMER TIMES] ARE SENSIBLE.

Casual remarks are made related to how things used to be. Both in observation as well as in the interviews: about shortages in staff, teams that used to be more close-knitted and stable, and students that were more experienced when they entered.

Everyone is struggling with shortages in the police "Gaps are filled with gaps" - VX1

J. ****POLICE OFFICERS FEEL THAT THE ORGANIZATION IS CHANGING, BUT THAT THE CHANGE IS NOT ALWAYS EFFICIENT.**

Participants feel that the organization is changing or trying to. Opinions about the efficiency and the core of the changes differ greatly per person. Some feel that the changes are not happening fast enough, or that the end goal is not even in sight. Whereas others doubt the very existence of these changes. For example:

“Do we want to be the best boy in the class? As the police? We are so busy with that? Why do we say that we are in such a bad position?”

[WXOa on gender equality in the police]
“I don’t think [the police] have developed as quickly as society has developed.” -J

“We apparently consider ourselves more special as women when we go somewhere. Because you notice that you are an exception. You have to mention it” - WXOa

L. **THE POLICE ARE NOT PERFECT WHEN IT COMES TO GENDER EQUITY.**

Everyone at the police gets equal opportunities; There are no jobs that are limited to one gender. However, according to participants, to differ from the norm whilst working at the police, is challenging. Lots of seemingly small examples show that women are not equal to men at the police [yet]. Two participants are particularly pessimistic about gender equity at the police this day.

“But I just don’t think we’re doing that well” [when it comes to gender equity] -WXOb

M. **FEMALE STUDENTS ADAPT AT THE START OF THEIR CAREER**

According to J and V, young girls that start their career at the police will first become one of the guys, meaning they will laugh along with jokes and talk tough. Speaking up about remarks or jokes when you are young and just starting, is something most girls don’t have the confidence for, according to multiple participants.

As a student, WXOa didn’t say anything if she didn’t find something funny. She just hoped they wouldn’t pick her.

N. **THERE ARE FUNCTIONS WITHIN THE POLICE THAT ARE OFTEN DONE BY EITHER MEN OR WOMEN.**

When asking for differences between women and men in the police, participants mostly answer by pointing towards different functions that are done more often by either women or men. Men are said to often go for the ‘tough, heavy and violent’ functions, such as motorcycling, the arrest team and dog police. Women are said to go for the social functions, such as family officer or animal police.

“That’s a miracle, when you’re a man sitting behind the counter. He doesn’t really belong there” - WXOa

O. **EXPERIENCES THAT WOMEN HAVE BUT MEN DON’T, ARE TREATED AS DIFFERENT (BECAUSE THE NORM IS MASCULINE)**

Women are a minority at the police and that gets noticed by the participants. Lots of women work part time to take care of their family, and people get nasty over working part time. Menstruation is a topic that is never talked about according to the participants. Pregnant officers have to work inside, instead of on the streets, and there are colleagues that don’t know how to deal with that.

“If we [women] are free, we are not free, because my entire household also has to keep going. And apparently the men are less bothered by that.” - WXOa

4. **BEING A WOMAN IN THE DUTCH POLICE**

Logically through the focus of the interview setup, a final large theme can be made about being a woman at the police.

K. ****POLICE OFFICERS FEEL THAT THE ORGANIZATION IS CHANGING, BUT THAT THE CHANGE IS NOT ALWAYS EFFICIENT.**

Sometimes women are used as window dressing/ tokenism, according to V. And women in higher functions are explicitly celebrated for being a woman. Employees can feel the police organization pulling on amongst others, gender equity. The opinions on this differ.

P. WOMEN AT THE POLICE AS A TOPIC DOES NOT GET ATTENTION, NOBODY 'OWNS' IT.

According to V, the topic of women at the police does not get validated as a topic that deserves attention. It is not considered a problem. V thinks it should get more attention and that this topic should be incorporated into PVI, or be given a spot in some other program or section of the police organization.

“You can see in the Netherlands that we are resigned to this. We have 37% [women at the police], which is quite good. So there is actually no one who stands for it. Or supports it. (...) It's not seen as an issue.” -V

5. X

As the interviews were held with officers that work at station X, a separate theme could be made about this station specifically. Station X is perceived positively when it comes to gender equity and helpfulness. But it is also divided, described by one participant as little islands within the station.

“I see that men and women are treated equally in all areas here. And I think this is going very well. At least what I see” - MXH

LIMITATIONS

Ideally, there would have been more rounds in every step of the analysis (specifically step 2, 3 and 4), and these steps would have been done by more than one person (the author). This reduces bias and makes for consistent results.

The making of the titles of themes, sub themes and sub-sub themes, holds a level of interpretation of the researcher. This also applies to the combining of clusters. There are lots of different possible outcomes with this type of research, that is part of the method. To ensure fairness despite the level of interpretation by the researcher, the following measures are taken: The methodology is clearly explained, the researcher's positionality is stated at the beginning of the project, and there is ongoing reflection throughout the entire project.

During interviews, but also in small talk within the police stations, most of the people that were spoken to were in a manager role and have been working at the police for some time now. So there is proportionally little representation of young police officers.

These research activities were focussed on two base teams, yet mostly on station X. The intention was to do interviews with both team X and team Y, but due to time constraints this was not possible. It cannot be ruled out that these two base teams are doing better or worse than other base teams, when it comes to gender equity. This analysis gives an impression of how gender inequity is interwoven in the work culture of the Dutch national police, but it cannot represent the whole of the Netherlands.

REFLECTION CYCLE 1

It took some getting used to the environment of police stations, there were many new things and unfamiliar jargon. It overwhelmed me a little bit, so I think at the start there have been things that I missed.

I find the police environment quite peaceful, nearly all officers I have met are kind. No matter how strong, big or stern-looking. I did not necessarily expect that. I can feel that police officers have a strong sense of suspicion towards strangers, but once I got through that I really felt like I was part of this 'blue family' for a short while. This made my overall experience more positive than I thought it would be.

I suppose I also expected to be more shocked by the violence, or the type of work that comes up. Reality is that so many of the cases that require police are not violent, it's just when people need help, or don't know who else to call. For example, when I joined a police duo in the car for the first time, they were called to pick up a knife that was laying in the street. It was only a broken moldy kitchen knife that had been laying there for ages. But neighborhood residents wanted it removed, so we drove past it and picked it up.

2.3 CONCLUSIONS ON GENDER EQUITY IN POLICE WORK CULTURE

There is a difference between the findings of literature and the findings of the exploring activities at the two base teams (observation & interviewing). Looking at the results of the literature study in cycle 0 and cycle 1, the expectation was to spot some macho behavior or toxic masculinity. And inequalities between women and men. Or at least clear differences between men and women. Barely any of this was spotted. Women working at these two base teams don't seem to be uncomfortable in their jobs. Perhaps these two base teams are exemplary.

However, some issues rose to the surface when it comes to gender equity in the work culture of the police. More subtle difficulties arose, underlying issues instead of issues that are visible on the surface. These difficulties show up in the thematic analysis, with four themes that are all fit to improve inclusivity and diversity. Therewith improving support of women within the organization. Choosing one of the themes provides the chance to make an impact.

x

By selecting one theme, it does not imply that the other themes are completely lost. In fact, they are intertwined. Therefore, by working on one theme, there is a strong possibility that the others will also improve.

The final conclusions on the themes are:

'Change in the organization' is a theme that is not the root cause, but rather the result of various developments over time. This theme presents a challenge in determining a design direction. The fact that not everyone in the police force shares the same opinion on this subject increases the difficulty. Additionally, the smaller aspects of this theme do not lend themselves well to design. Therefore, it is not suitable to pursue this theme further.

'Being a woman in the Dutch police' is a theme that directly relates to gender equity, highlighting the imperfections within the police force. However, it is challenging to establish a design direction for this broad theme. It would be necessary to focus on a smaller, more specific aspect. Moreover, there are significant differences in opinion among police officers regarding this theme. The lack of attention or recognition within the police force suggests that gaining acceptance for an intervention may be challenging. Therefore, this theme was not selected.

'Giving and receiving feedback' was a recurring theme in observations and interviews. The findings clearly indicate that it is not always going well. This theme is suitable for design. However, it was not chosen because the organization emphasized that a lot is already happening with feedback within base teams.

Ultimately, the theme 'Boundaries of jokes' was chosen. Both the organization and the mentor team expressed a preference for this theme. Humor is an integral part of police culture, serving to discharge and process heavy incidents, as well as foster bonding between colleagues. Despite its prominence, the organization had not extensively explored this theme. There was also a clear connection to the theme of jokes related to gender (in)equity, and its potential for an enjoyable and feasible design approach. While workplace humor extends beyond gender inclusion, this theme presents opportunities for making meaningful contributions. In the next chapter, the theme 'Boundaries of jokes', simply put 'police humor' is further investigated.

MATRIX OF DOMINATION 1

A tool used to structure thoughts and explore connections between different research insights is the Matrix of Domination. The Matrix describes how power is configured and experienced within a system. It consists of four domains: structural, disciplinary, hegemonic, and interpersonal. The structural domain encompasses how oppression is organized, such as through laws and policies. The disciplinary domain involves how oppression is managed and administered, for example, through the implementation of laws and policies. The hegemonic domain involves the circulation of oppressive ideas, such as through culture and media. The interpersonal domain focuses on the individual experiences of oppression. Together, these four domains provide a comprehensive understanding of the power dynamics within a system.

In this particular context, the Matrix of Domination is applied to the position of female officers in a police base team, by using all findings that were gathered so far. See Figure 2.6 for the filled out Matrix.

At a structural level, there are no specific gender-based policies in place, although this was not the case in the (recent) past. Officers are required to maintain a professional appearance and refrain from expressing personal beliefs while in uniform.

On a disciplinary level, the majority of power and decision-making authority regarding executive tasks and strategy lie with men, as the managerial layer is predominantly composed of men. Consequently, decisions regarding personal expressions, such as makeup, jewelry, tattoos, and hairstyle, are determined by this managerial layer. They have the final say on

what is permitted and what is not.

Moreover, most of the instructors in police training programs (IBT) are men, and instructors often prize women's more traditionally "male" characteristics. Due to the hierarchical nature of the profession, young officers have minimal influence on these dynamics.

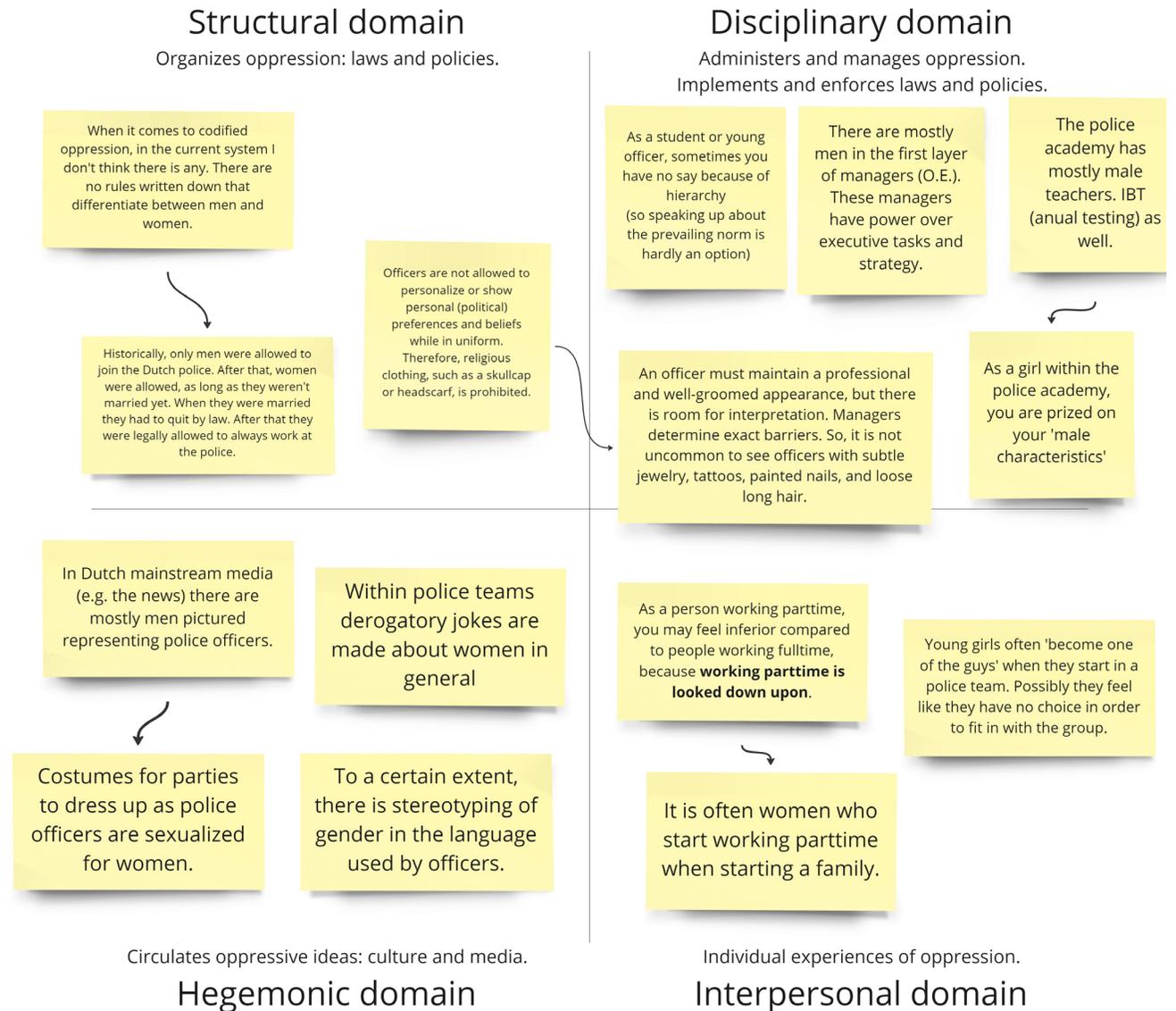
On the hegemonic level, women are significantly underrepresented in the Dutch mainstream media as representatives of the police force. On top of that, female party costumes to dress up as a police officer are often sexualized. Within the police organization itself, derogatory jokes about women are common, although they are typically not directed at specific individuals within police teams but rather at women in general. Furthermore, there is a certain degree of gender stereotyping in the language used by officers.

At the interpersonal level, officers who work part-time may feel inferior compared to their full-time working colleagues due to the stigma associated with part-time work. Unfortunately, it is often women who choose to work part-time when starting a family, rather than men. As a result, women experience a greater burden from this phenomenon. Lastly, young female officers often feel the need to conform to male norms to fit into their teams. They may feel that they have no other choice but to do this.

While no direct conclusions are drawn from the Matrix, the fact that all four quadrants are filled indicates that the issue of women's position in a base team is a structural problem that is spread across all levels of power. Consequently, in order to successfully make a change, all four domains should be addressed.

Figure 2.6

Matrix of domination 1: the position of female officers in a police base team



CHAPTER 3:

DEFINE

police humor and its boundaries

The purpose of this chapter is to explore and then narrow down the theme of police humor, and to shape it into a workable problem to design for. This chapter starts with a brief literature review on the relationship between humor, gender, and the police. Then, it discusses the further exploration of police humor by an interview with a central guidance counselor and a 'probe cards' test conducted in stations X and Y. The chapter ends with some first design criteria that result from these activities.

This chapter contains:

- 3.1 Understanding humor related to police and gender
- 3.2 Exploring humor in police base teams
- 3.3 Design criteria arise

3.1 UNDERSTANDING HUMOR RELATED TO POLICE AND GENDER

To get some different views and ways of looking at humor from an academic perspective, a small dive into literature has been made. Both police humor and gender-related jokes have been briefly touched upon. In this subchapter, the most remarkable findings are summarized.

Theories of humor

There are multiple theories on humor that aim to explain its nature, social benefits, and what makes something funny. Three theories will be introduced to gain a deeper understanding of humor: arousal-relief, incongruity-resolution, and disparagement (superiority). These three theories are distinguished by Graesser et al. (1989) and they are widely accepted, although there is no consensus on which theory is considered to be the best.

1. Arousal-relief humor associates with the tension that comes with hostility, anxiety, conflict or sexuality. Humor or laughter are relief mechanisms to dispel that tension. This also relates to for example tickling.
2. Incongruity-resolution humor has two stages. It starts with the building stage, building the joke, and introduces the incongruity: a discrepancy between the expected outcome and the actual outcome (the punchline). During the second stage, the audience tries to find the solution to the incongruity, this experience of 'solving-the-puzzle' is pleasurable. The more surprising the punchline, the more humorous the joke.
3. Disparagement humor, or also called superiority humor, makes the attacker (the one who makes the joke) feel superior compared to the target of the joke. This comes from the notion that misfortune of others is found amusing, and that feeling superior is satisfying.

Usefulness of jokes

There are lots of useful social traits that come with humor. Humor for example plays a role in building relationships and group bonding. Jokes allow a joke teller to express an attitude towards a target (for example the self, a social institution, a group or an ideal), yet at the same time get approval from the audience (Graesser et al.).

Likewise, those in the audience who understand a joke can gain 'status points', because they are perceived as smart enough to comprehend the joke or because they identify with the joker (Graesser et al.). Conversely, those who fail to grasp the joke may lose status points.

Furthermore, Crawford (2003) highlights that 'socially unspeakable topics are easier to talk about in the ambiguous form of humor, because this allows them to be talked about in disguised and deniable form'. In other words, a joke teller can express their opinion whilst simultaneously distancing themselves from it (Graesser et al., 1989). This is something that police officers deal with regularly; to talk about a heavy work case in the form of humor.

Finally, according to Anders et al. (2022), humor is also a coping strategy that helps prevent PTSD. Prior research of this project found that PTSD is a serious issue for Dutch police teams and comes with a lot of emotional reactions.

Rough language

Sausdal (2020) offers a different perspective on the 'brutal and transgressive language' of (Danish) police officers. Namely the concept of bullshitting. In his words: 'saying stupid things for the sake of saying stupid things – bullshitting for the sake of bullshitting'. He argues that this rough language is often overestimated and overinterpreted in police

research, as the language often means very little. "The intention behind what is said is to make it appear like hot air – as remarkably fiery and scorching, as something for peers to notice and feel, but not to act on." Therefore, he proposes to take brutal police language less seriously, from time to time. Police humor can be grouped under this umbrella of bullshitting sometimes.

Gender differentiation

There are differences in behavior between men and women when it comes to humor. The type of humor that is used can differ, but also the reason behind using humor and how humor is received. An example to illustrate this, is that women are more inclined to use humor that promotes familiarity with people in conversation, while men are more prone to using humor to assert status (Evans, 2023). Some scientific sources contradict each other, or even themselves when it comes to this subject. So, it is acknowledged that there are differences between genders when it comes to humor. However, science is unable to pinpoint the exact nature of these differences, so this report will also refrain from doing so.

Sexual harassment

Lastly, according to Kotthoff (2006), boundaries between 'acceptable behavior' and sexual harassment are fluid when it comes to jokes in general. Related to this, Ford et al. (2013) found that 'sexist humor aids in the establishment of gender imbalances'. Following this statement from the European Institute for Gender Equality: 'Inappropriate jokes can constitute sexual harassment' (What is sexual harassment?, 2024). These arguments indicate a clear boundary, sexist jokes should have no place within a (work) culture that aims to be diverse and inclusive.

While searching for examples of gallows humor within the police force, plenty of derogative examples about the police pop up (from non-police people). However, no online example from inside the police could be found. There are numerous references to the existence of gallows humor in the organization, but no actual inside examples are provided anywhere. Nonetheless, to provide an illustration of what gallows humor entails, a Dutch cartoon featuring a well-known criminal named 'Moebarak,' who received a life sentence, has been included in Figure 3.1. In the cartoon, Moebarak asks his doctor for some good news, to which the doctor responds that in his case, this prison sentence only lasts 3 to 6 months.

Conclusion

Jokes have strong social functions, they have both useful and harmful traits. The useful traits vouch for the existence of humor within an organization. Humor can help bond colleagues, and to prevent PTSD. Yet the most familiar reason for the author to use humor in the context of the police, has to be that socially unspeakable topics are easier to talk about. This explains why police officers joke about gruesome things they encounter during their work.

Unfortunately the harmful traits of humor are not bound to one type, it depends on the exact context of the joke and the intention of the joker. Learning about humor increases the understanding of why someone uses humor the way they do.

The one hard conclusion that can be drawn from this literature research, is that sexist humor should not have a place within a work culture that intends to be inclusive and diverse. Because it gives way for sexual harassment and aids in gender imbalance.

Figure 3.1

Cartoon to illustrate gallows humor (Lectrr, 2012)



Note. From *Cartoon van de dag - juni 2012* [Cartoon], by Lectrr, 2012, De Standaard (https://www.standaard.be/cnt/dmf20120601_015).

3.2 EXPLORING HUMOR IN POLICE BASE TEAMS

To investigate humor within the context of the police, a 'probe card' test was conducted at stations X and Y. But before delving into the details of that test, it is important to highlight the insights obtained from an interview with a central guidance counselor regarding the point at which jokes transform into more serious internal conflicts at the police.

INTERVIEW WITH A CENTRAL GUIDANCE COUNSELOR

An interview with a central guidance counselor was arranged, to figure out to what extent jokes contribute to more serious internal conflicts. A central guidance counselor overlooks and guides a team of counselors within a police unit. Guidance counselors use around 25% of their time for this additional task, besides their normal job as police officer, whereas the central guidance counselor uses 100% of their time on this task.

Important insights from this talk are:

- Guidance counselor reports about jokes are almost always classified as bullying, as a misplaced joke can be experienced as hurtful. A reporter can for example feel left out and because they regularly experience certain comments about their hair color. Additionally, jokes can be well-intentioned by the joker, but received badly when someone has been bullied many times in the past.
- The jokes that are known from reports of the guidance counselor sometimes fall under **sexual harassment**, because they are sexually explicit.

- It is not customary for someone to go to their manager to discuss these types of comments or jokes, as people do not want to be seen as a **snitch** or as not **self-reliant**.
- Jokes are part of team culture. The central guidance counselors can provide workshops to teams on request, focussing on how to interact with each other. This could be where team managers indicate that jokes are on the verge of going too far.
- It is often the **manager** who notices unwanted behavior in the form of jokes that will take action on it.

PROBE CARD TEST

Probe cards were developed to learn more about police humor, through a test at stations X and Y. This test was also a first step into the realm of designing around humor at the police, as it involves prototypes and therewith employs Research through Design.

The prototypes in this test are the so-called probe cards. Following the definition from the Delft Design Guide, cultural probes are a tool to learn about users through self-documentation, looking for new insights in the cultural context. Probes usually have a generative aspect and are meant to be used on their own, with no interference from the designer (Van Boeijen et al., 2020). In this test the probe cards contain jokes and funny situations that have been collected through this projects' research so far. The test also contained a generative aspect; The officers that participated all got a booklet in which they were asked to answer questions and to make drawings related to the situations on the probe cards.

The goals for this activity were:

- To get to know how representative this collection of jokes is
- To learn about other examples of jokes and funny situations
- To get an impression of people's boundaries (is there a common ground?)
- To get a sense of the reactions to these examples
- To see how officers will respond to writing and drawing

METHOD

Participants each received a small booklet in which they filled out some questions about the probe cards. On the frontpage of the booklet participants were asked for their gender, rank and years of experience, in the form of cross-ticking questions. See Figure 3.2 for the front page of the booklet, and Figure 3.3 for a page for a card, both in Dutch. For each probe card there is one page in the booklet, each page contains the following five questions (translated from Dutch to English):

- What is the name of the card that you're looking at right now?
- What do you think of the sketched situation?
- How would you react to this if you were there?
- Are you familiar with the situation that is sketched on the card?
- Does this situation make you think of something similar that you experienced? Would you be willing to draw that in a simple way? (*Panicking? Grab the drawing guide*)

Figure 3.2

Front page of booklet for probe card activity (Dutch)

Hallo!

Vink het passende vakje aan. Ik ben:

- Man
- Vrouw
- Anders:.....

Vink het passende vakje aan. Ik ben:

- Surveillant
- Agent
- Hoofdagent
- Brigadier
- Inspecteur

Vink het passende vakje aan. Ik werk al zoveel jaar bij de politie:

- 0- 5 jaar
- 5- 10 jaar
- 10- 20 jaar
- 20 - 30 jaar
- 30- 40 jaar
- 40 + jaar

Fijn dat je mee wil doen aan deze korte test! Het doel van deze test is om meer te leren over **humor** binnen de politie cultuur. Alle vragen en situaties gaan over je werk bij de politie en vooral over de interacties van jou met collega's. Ik ben benieuwd naar jouw ervaringen en mening, je antwoorden zijn dus hoe dan ook niet goed of fout. Je antwoorden worden ook **anoniem** verwerkt.

Voor je liggen een aantal kaarten en daarop zijn verschillende situaties geschetst. Op de achterkant van de kaart [de kant die jij nu ziet] staat een woord, dat is de naam van de kaart. Elke kaart heeft zijn eigen pagina in dit boekje.

Als je er klaar voor bent mag je nu de eerste kaart omdraaien en naar de volgende pagina van dit boekje gaan.

Figure 3.3

Page for a card of booklet for probe card activity (Dutch)

Vul hier de naam in van de kaart die je nu bekijkt: _____

Wat vind je van de geschetste situatie?

Hoe zou jij reageren als je hier bij was?

Herken je de situatie die geschetst is op de kaart? Als je wil, mag je meerdere vinkjes zetten.

- Ja, ik heb zo iets weleens meegemaakt
- Ja, ik heb zo iets weleens gehoord van anderen
- Nee, ik heb zo iets nog nooit meegemaakt
- Nee, ik heb zo iets nog nooit gehoord

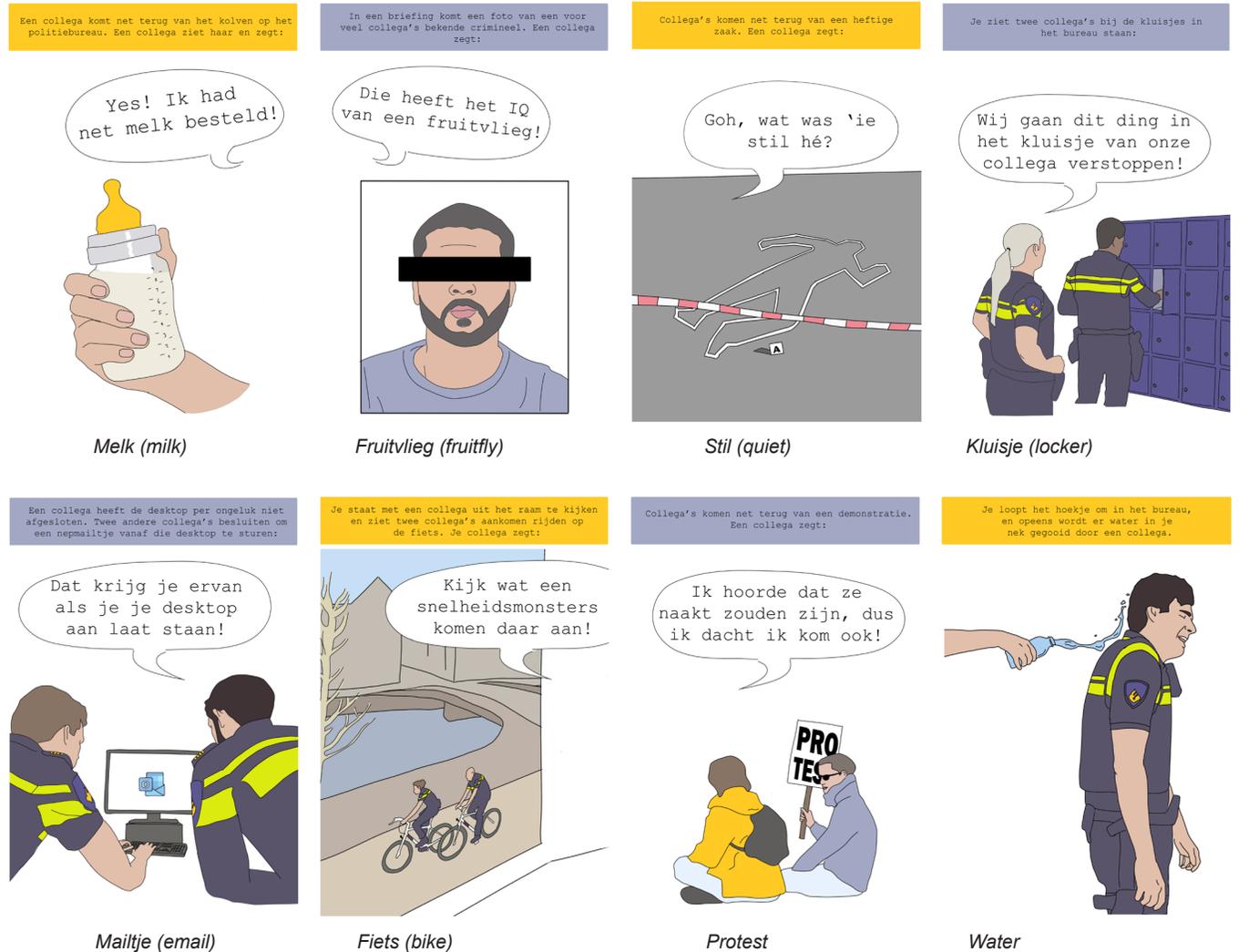
Doet deze situatie je denken aan iets vergelijkbaars? Zou je dat simpel willen tekenen hieronder? *(Paniek? Geen zorgen, pak de tekenhulp erbij)*

The activity timeline was as follows:

1. This test was introduced during the briefings in police stations X and Y, aiming to get volunteers that want to join the test. If there were not enough volunteers, officers would also be approached in the workspace and asked if they'd be interested to join.
2. A space was prepared where the probe cards were stacked upside down on a table, as well as a pen and the drawing guide.
3. The test was expected to take 15 minutes per participant, including the signing of a consent form up front.
4. Participants got a short introduction to the activity and an explanation of the consent form before starting. After that the activity ran by itself. Participants filled out the booklet and looked at the cards. If desired, they could check out the drawing help.
5. When participants were done, they were asked about their thoughts of the activity and the topic of humor. Depending on the willingness and available time of the participant, there was a more elaborate reflection together.

Figure 3.4 shows the probe cards. The cards are sized A5 and are laminated. Each card has their own Dutch name that is written on the back of the card.

Figure 3.4
Probe cards with their names underneath



People who don't consider themselves creative, can be hesitant to draw. To support and encourage the officers to draw, a drawing guide was included in the activity. This guide shows a step by step explanation of how to draw a simple figure. Figure 3.5 shows the drawing guide.

RESULTS

This test was done by ten participants, five from station X and five from station Y. Participant characteristics like years of experience and rank were divided evenly over the group. In Appendix 8, the probe card test results are summarized in a table per card for each question asked. In the following paragraphs, the goals of this activity are measured against the results.

WILLINGNESS TO WRITE AND DRAW

The probe cards were used as expected and **required** close to **no interference**, they worked by themselves. Only one person was confused by the content of a card, in which some clarification was necessary.

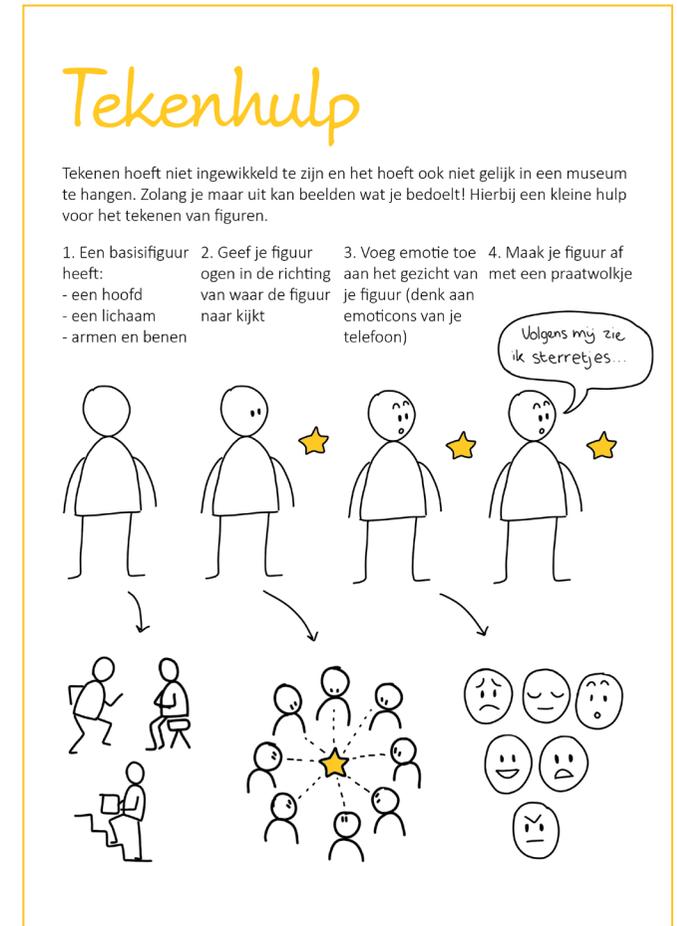
The drawing guide helped to encourage participants to draw, as lots of drawings were made (31 in total) and the style of drawing matches with the drawing guide (stick figures with text balloons). Besides drawings, there were also some text comments in the blank box, mostly by two participants who drew little. One person only drew smiley faces with different facial expressions, showing his emotion towards the situation and not the sought-after related experiences. Only one participant did not draw or write in the blank box at all.

In the cases that the probe cards were used simultaneously by two or three colleagues at the time, it **sparked conversation** about the topic. In the case where three colleagues tested together, they shared stories extensively and even went on to show videos of practical jokes that they played on each other. When the probe cards were used by one participant at the time, in two cases it sparked an extensive conversation with me afterwards. Three other participants shared a short reflection on the topic with me. The two remaining participants rushed back to their work as soon as the test was done.

Two participants expressed - separately from each other - that doing this test was difficult to them, as they were **missing context and details**. Many other participants also expressed that their reactions depend on context and details. Many elements were indicated to play a role here: The relationship between colleagues, specifications about things that happened prior to the illustrated situations, facial expressions and tone of voice. These things were all not legible from the cards, even though they define the exact reactions according to the participants.

Take for example the probe card 'water': when a colleague who just recently joined a team is the target of getting water thrown on them as a joke, this counts as bullying for some participants and is absolutely not acceptable. Whereas when colleagues that have known each other for years are having a practical joke war, this situation is considered as funny.

Figure 3.5
Drawing guide for the probe card activity



FAMILIARITY WITH THE SCENARIOS

The answers to the familiarity question in the booklets, showed that all scenarios on the probe cards were familiar to at least half of the participant group. The one exception was the card 'Melk'.

Many examples were provided of participants' related funny stories, which again shows the familiarity with the situations. All of the given examples were unique, except for one example that was mentioned by the three participants that were doing the test simultaneously.

To name some examples:

- Related to the card 'mailtje': Someone's desktop was left unlocked in the general workspace, so their colleagues sent an email from their account asking 'who would like to babysit my hamster?'. See Figure 3.6 for an impression of the drawing that was made.
- Related to the card 'kluisje': Showing an officer near the lockers saying 'where is my locker?', in the scenario that colleagues had switched entire rows of lockers with the intent to cause confusion for fun. See Figure 3.7 for an impression of the drawing that was made.
- Related to the card 'Fiets': Showing an officer who is measuring the speed of fellow officers on bikes with a laser speedometer, as if they are exceeding the speed limit. See Figure 3.8 for an impression of the drawing that was made.

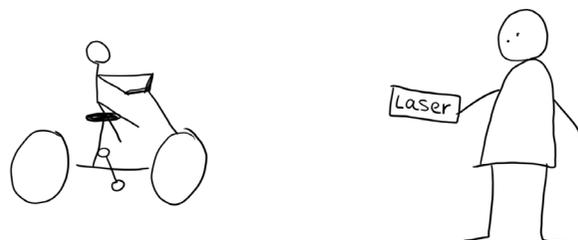
Figure 3.6
Participants' drawing based on probe card 'Mailtje'



Figure 3.7
Participants' drawing based on probe card 'Kluisje'



Figure 3.8
Participants' drawing based on probe card 'Fiets'



The opinions and reactions of participants to the scenarios vary. There is **little common ground** on jokes and funny situations. Every officer has their own boundaries and their own way of reacting to these situations. One remarkable difference is that participants who have a higher rank (*senior* or *OE*), are more prone to speaking up and to addressing the person who's joking.

CONCLUSION

This activity showed that there is little common ground when it comes to jokes and funny situations. Whether something offends, or is funny, is not defined normatively within either of these base teams. An intervention cannot define what is funny or what is not for a whole group; humor is too personal and the reactions vary immensely. Therefore, the intervention that comes from this project should be neutral in whether something is funny or not.

LIMITATIONS

Open questions give open answers, not all participants understood questions the same way. Whether there are other types of jokes or funny situations that are missing, has not become clear from this activity.

Not all participants decided to join this test purely from their own incentive. Five participants took initiative themselves, and the remaining five participants were actively asked to join. Two of the actively asked participants seemed to be in a hurry to be done. This could have had an influence on the results.

3.3 DESIGN CRITERIA ARISE

Based on the 'Research through Design' approach with the probe card test, the following design requirements were found:

- The intervention should be considered funny in use.

The intervention shouldn't discourage humor, it is an important part of police culture. By incorporating humor, it can lower the threat of serious/scary matters (e.g. reflecting on one's own actions). Humor also makes an activity fun and catchy.

- The intervention should be open to different interpretations and opinions towards humorous situations.

There are no clear boundaries on what's funny, or line-crossing.

- The intervention should appeal especially to all officers that are not in a managing function (anything below OE and preferably below senior)

Officers in managing functions already pay attention and speak up about jokes that cross boundaries. So, they are not the main target of this intervention, that's everyone else in the base team.

The full overview of design requirements, including these three, can be found in Chapter 4.2.

MATRIX OF DOMINATION 2

The Matrix of Domination was once again used to analyze the findings and establish connections between different insights from the research results. In this case, the Matrix was applied to examine the role of police humor within police base teams, as shown in Figure 3.9.

At a structural level, there are few rules regarding humor within the police organization. There is also little emphasis on humor in a structural sense, except when something goes wrong. The profession code does not specifically mention humor; the closest it comes is requiring officers to contribute to a safe work environment. This leaves room for interpretation. The profession code is based on the four core values of the police, as well as the first constitutional law of the Netherlands. It is possible to connect humor to these values and the law, but it would require significant effort and consideration.

At a disciplinary level, as demonstrated in the initial version of the Matrix in this report, the managerial layer within base teams sets the rules and establishes the tone, including when it comes to humor. They determine what is acceptable and what is not. While there are numerous workshops and guidelines available for managerial roles, few of them are mandatory.

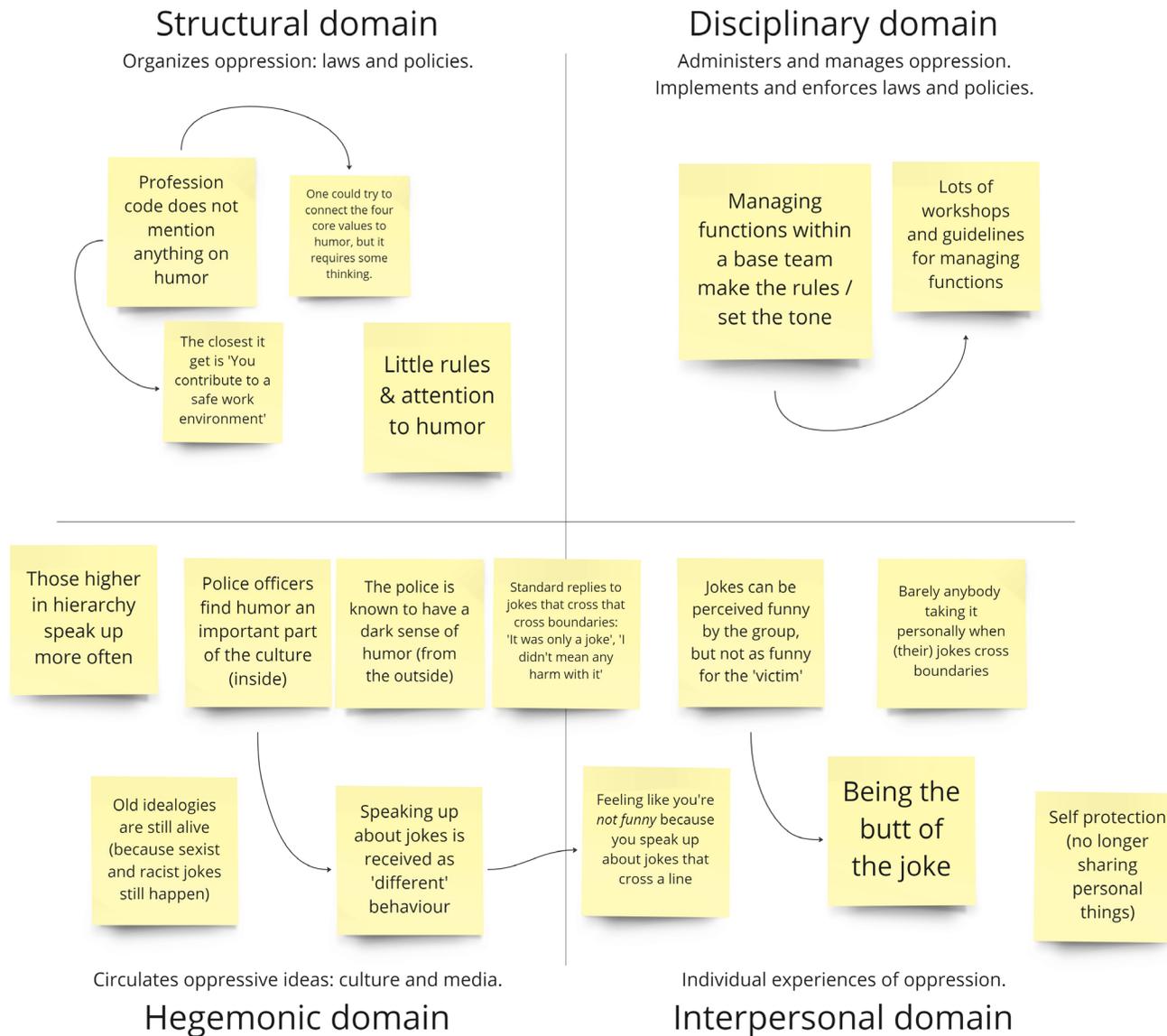
At a hegemonic level, it becomes evident that humor is regarded as an important aspect of police culture internally, while the police is known to have a dark sense of humor externally. Speaking up about jokes that cross boundaries is often seen as 'different' behavior. Higher-ranking individuals are more likely to speak up. Such comments are often met with the

standard response of "it was only a joke" or "I didn't mean any harm by it." Outdated ideologies still persist within the police organization, as sexist and racist jokes continue to occur (frequently).

At an interpersonal level, individuals may feel that they are not considered 'funny' because they speak up about jokes that they find offensive. Few people take it personally when jokes cross boundaries. The stigma of "it is only a joke" is strong. Jokes may be perceived as funny by some groups but not by the victim. Some individuals choose to withhold sharing personal information to protect themselves from becoming the target of jokes.

Once again, no direct conclusions were drawn from the matrix. However, as with the initial version of the Matrix in Chapter 2.3, all quadrants are filled. This indicates that the issues surrounding communication and humor are structural and exist at all levels of power. To effect meaningful change, all four domains must be addressed.

Figure 3.9
 Matrix of domination 2: the position of humor within police culture of base teams



REFLECTION CYCLE 2

I recognise the rough humor at the police from the rowing environment that I'm used to. I react similarly to the rough jokes, when I find something funny I laugh and when I don't find something funny I ignore it. My friend pointed out that the jokes within this rowing environment, could not leave the rowing environment and be received similarly. That is also how humor within the police organization is described, once it leaves the safe environment of work, it's no longer as funny or as acceptable. I recognise the importance and strength of humor in a community, it's a bonding agent and it can defrost tense situations.

CHAPTER 4:

DEVELOP

a reflective tool for humor

This fourth chapter is all about idea generation and testing. The chapter starts by setting the criteria of the design, which includes a design goal and a list of requirements. Then, the ideation phase is described, in which the parameters are used to think of ideas. Two ideas are presented, through a user test at stations X and Y. Next, the most promising idea was tested once more in a group setting. The chapter ends with insights that lead to the final iteration of the idea, which is presented in Chapter 5.

This chapter contains:

- 4.1 Setting design criteria
- 4.2 Ideation, prototyping & testing
- 4.3 Testing in a group

4.1 SETTING DESIGN CRITERIA

Criteria for the design were set by means of a design goal and a list of requirements. These criteria were used for brainstorming and evaluating ideas in Chapter 4.2.

DESIGN GOAL

A design goal was used to define the scope and therewith form barriers to the project. In order to form a design goal, first a proper problem definition is helpful. This problem definition is made through findings both in literature (see Chapter 3.1), as in the research activities of this project (see Chapter 3.2).

Problem Definition

Regularly, jokes are being told by police officers at work that 'go too far' and cross people's boundaries. This is problematic, because some negative effects of jokes can be to:

- Exclude people
- Make people feel uncomfortable
- Promote or sustain unwanted ideas [e.g. sexism]
- Trigger PTSD

That being said, some important positive effects of jokes can be to:

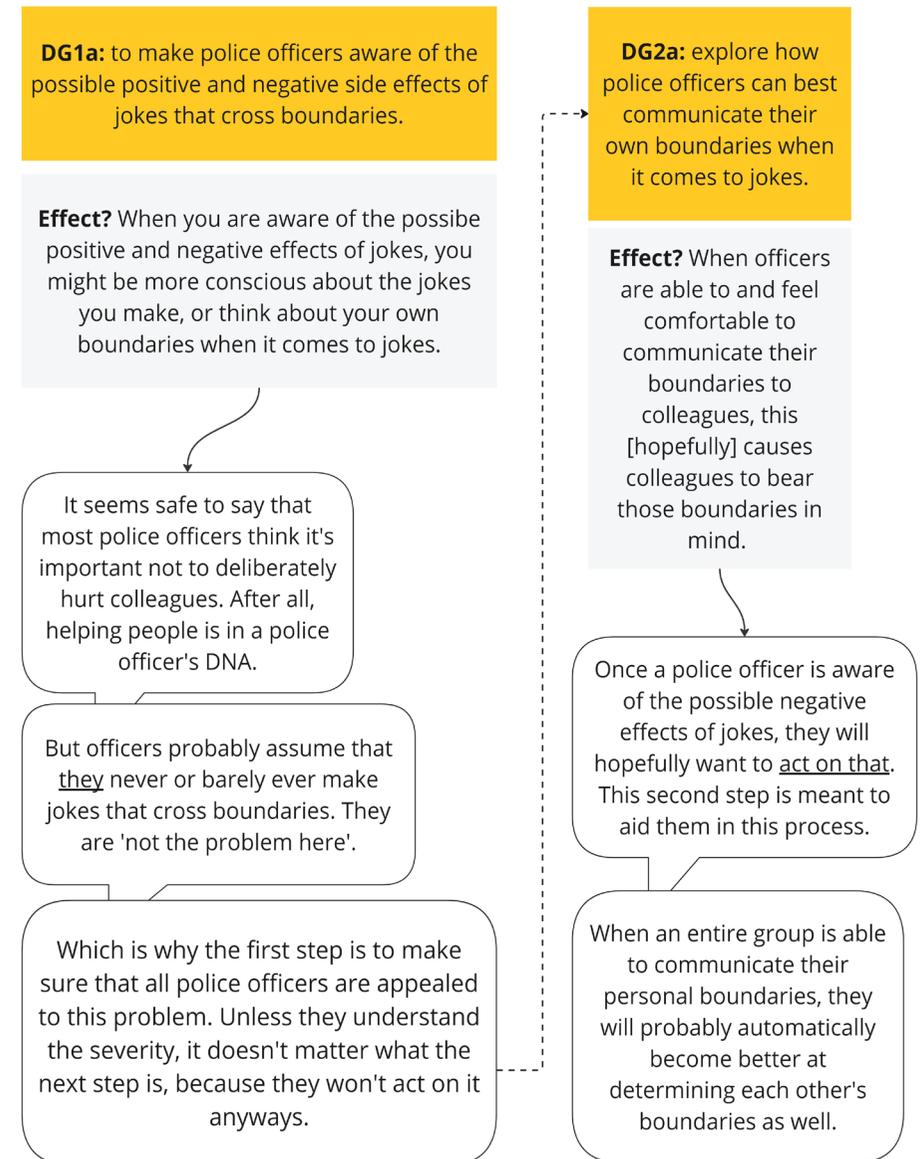
- Process work cases
- Relativise work cases
- Discharge from work cases
- Form a connection with coworkers

The definition of a design goal by the master Dfl course 'Exploring Interactions' was taken, a single sentence through which the intended user, the intended location/situation and the desired effect are specified (Bendor, 2022). For conciseness, the abbreviation 'DG' is used from this point onwards to indicate the term design goal.

The intended user was set in stone at this point: **police officers from a base team in blue**, primarily in neighborhood care and emergency help. This is a choice that was made from the start, in order to limit the size of the context.

The location and/or situation of the interaction, was likely to be **in the general workplace of the police station**, at any time of the day. Most action happens there, it's the most dynamic and most used room of the station. People enter and leave through this space, they greet each other, they work, they chat with colleagues.

Figure 4.1
Design Goal combination with desired effect



The canteen was also considered, but that's the place where officers generally take breaks and are not focussed on work related subjects. The briefing space was considered as well, as it is the space where almost every shift starts and ends. But this space has such a strong connotation to briefing, and it is really separate from the liveliness in the station.

Multiple options were explored to decide the desired effect for the user. See Appendix 9 for the choice process. The chosen DG combination is:

1. To make police officers aware of the possible negative and positive side effects of jokes that cross boundaries.
2. To explore how police officers can best communicate their own boundaries when it comes to jokes.

This DG combination was used in the next steps of ideation. See Figure 4.1 for a more elaborate version of the chosen combination and the desired effect.

LIST OF REQUIREMENTS

A list of requirements was developed and used to define the exact barriers of the design. This list includes mandatory requirements that the design must adhere to (in black), as well as optional wishes (in grey). The list of requirements is flexible and can be adjusted during the idea generation and development process. There will be changes made to this list in a later stage. The input for this list is gathered from previous research, as well as discussions with the client and the mentor team. The list is divided in the following categories: **Humor, Fitting the context, Adoption, Equal involvement, and Sustainability.**

CATEGORY 'HUMOR':

For explanation on these requirements, see Chapter 3.3.

- The intervention should be considered **funny in use**
- The intervention should be **open to different opinions and interpretations of specific topics**, not holding judgment
- The intervention should **appeal especially to all officers** that are not in a managing function (anything below OE and preferably below senior)

CATEGORY 'FITTING THE CONTEXT':

The intervention should be suitable for the police station environment for officers in neighborhood care and emergency help. The general workspace is the most vibrant and social area within a police station. Considering that police officers work round the clock, including nights, and officers in emergency help can be called away at any moment. Additionally, police teams already face a heavy workload due to staff shortages, group sessions only add more pressure to their already overloaded to-do list.

- The intervention should be used in the police station in the **general workspace**
- The intervention should be able to be used at **any time of the day** (& night)
- The intervention should be able to be **dropped in use at any instance**
- The intervention should be a **available unplanned**

CATEGORY 'ADOPTION':

According to the client, the most effective way to achieve national adoption of an intervention is for it to originate from a base team and become a success story. When other stations see the success, they will want to have the same intervention in order to be among the best.

On the other hand, attempting to sell or impose an intervention on police officers or teams will have the opposite effect; they will reject it.

One way to persuade officers to embrace an intervention is by highlighting how it improves their work skills. If someone has ownership or is the driving force behind the intervention, its use is regulated and encouraged.

Despite the presence of numerous similar interventions in police stations, they are often overlooked. Common interventions include posters, e-learnings, postcards, banners, folders, and question-based card games.

Less common interventions include books, movie clips, and VR cases.

- The intervention should be a **good fit specifically for station X or station Y** (preferably both I think). It does not have to be applicable nationally right away
- Police officers or teams should want to use the intervention from their **own incentive**
- The intervention should be **interwoven with the craftsmanship** of police work.
- The intervention could be inspired by the **four core values** of the police: integrity, reliability, courage and the ability to connect.

CATEGORY 'EQUIT INVOLVEMENT':

As this intervention is targeted to improve inclusion and diversity, the intervention should be accessible to everyone. Related, a 'loudmouth' or someone higher in hierarchy shouldn't be able to dominate the interaction with the intervention, everyone should be able to have a say.

The desired result of this intervention is a change in behavior in a social setting, not something to solely reflect on individually.

- The intervention should be **available to use for all officers** from the base team (officers in blue).
- The intervention should have **equal involvement from all users** at the time of use
- The intervention should have the option to be **used by multiple officers** at the same time as well as **individually**

CATEGORY 'SUSTAINABILITY':

As mentioned earlier, the police have many similar educational products lying around in stations that are often ignored. It is important that this intervention is effective and appealing to officers in order to prevent that. The quality and durability should not be compromised by sustainability requirements. Instead, efforts should be made to find combinations that satisfy both criteria.

It is estimated that after a period of use (between 3 and 12 months*) everyone in a police station has used the intervention, and from that point onwards it will be ignored. This should be kept into consideration when developing the intervention for long term use. To prevent unnecessary material waste by products that are never used.

- The intervention should be **produced per order**, not in batch.
- The intervention could be built with **sustainably sourced materials**, preferably **recyclable** or **biodegradable** and sourced as close to the Netherlands as possible (weighing up the quality and durability of the intervention against the chosen material and manufacturing choices)
- The intervention could be **built for repair and disassembly**. (weighing up the quality and durability of the intervention against the chosen repair- and disassembly choices)
- The interventions could be **transferred to a different police station** after a period of use (3 to 12 months)

* This period of time was estimated by police officers in the base teams.

This list is revisited during the ideation phase, to check if ideas check all the boxes. The list was altered after the first user tests, see Chapter 4.3.

4.2 IDEATION & USER TESTING

This subchapter starts by explaining the ideation process. It then introduces two concepts. Following this, the findings of a user test carried out at stations X and Y is discussed. The subchapter wraps up by presenting the conclusions derived from the tested concepts.

IDEATION

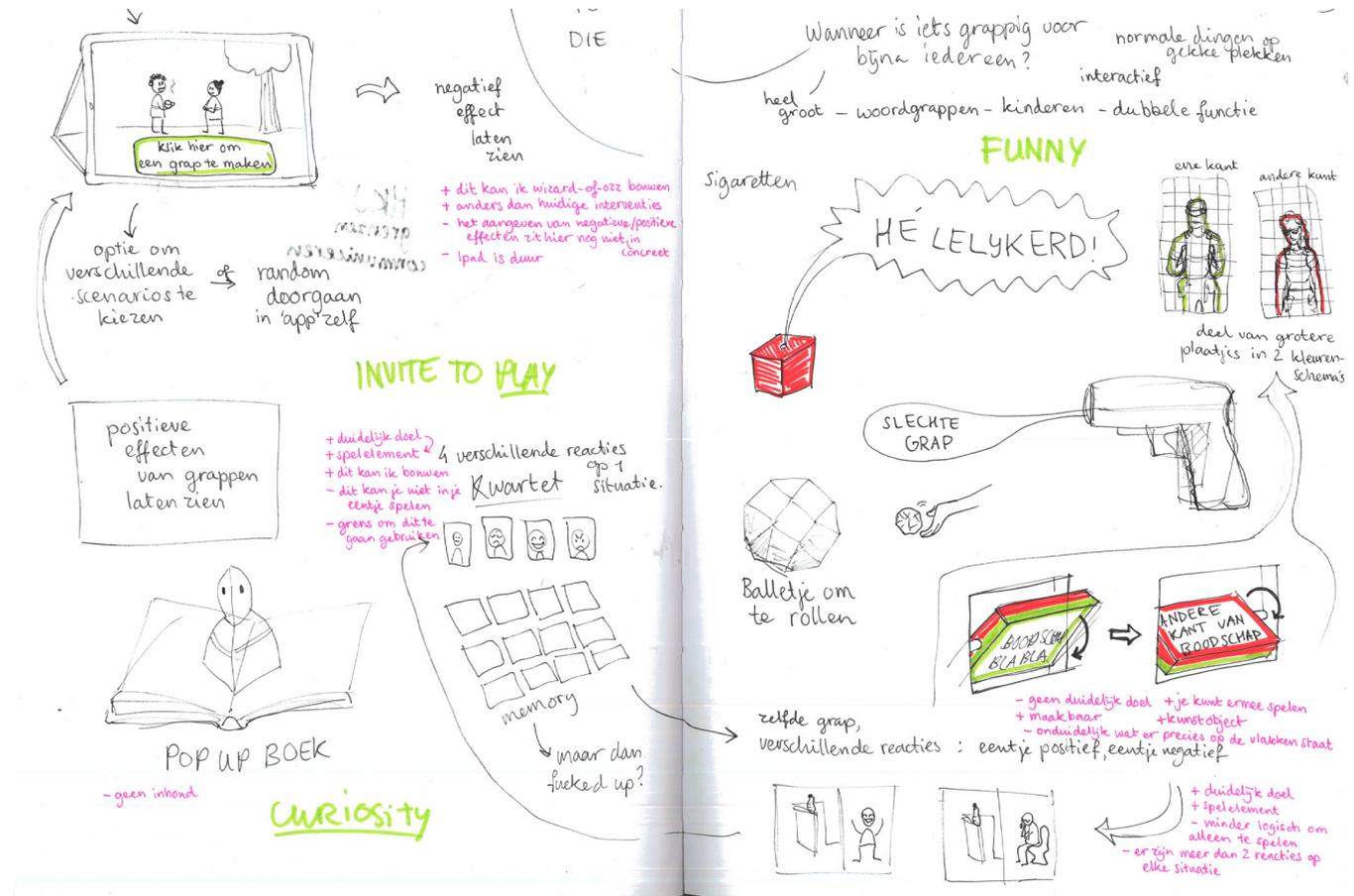
Ideation means generating ideas. About two weeks were taken to generate ideas, in the form of sketches in a sketchbook. Different points of view were applied, for example by incorporating the core values of the police. But also curiosity, inviting to play and funny were applied.

It is common for designers to look for inspiration elsewhere during ideation. For this project some examples were sought that had a similar type of dark humor as the police, combined with some playfulness. These examples can be found in Appendix 10. Some idea directions were:

- Apps with storytelling
- Card games
- Games / gamification
- Ambiguous / art objects
- Campaigning media (posters, movies)

Some ideas were further developed upon revisiting them later. There were also instances where different ideas or elements of ideas were combined. See Figures 4.2 for an impression of the ideas.

Figure 4.2
Idea generation, sketches from the sketchbook



Ideas were evaluated by applying pluses and minuses in the sketch book. See Appendix 11 for pictures of all the sketches including the pluses and minuses in this process.

Two concepts were chosen to elaborate on the basis of this method:

1. A quartets card game, in which fictional colleagues react to 'funny' scenarios
2. An app, in which fictional colleagues react to 'funny' scenarios

These concepts are similar, but have a totally different embodiment and different opportunities: physical versus digital, multiplayer versus more individual, reflection versus conversation.

In both concepts, the same four characters are used to represent the fictional colleagues. These characters are colleagues in a fictional police station. Users will only see the name, job function, years of experience at the police, and years of experience at this fictional station.

To make sure that the characters behave consistently in the different scenarios, they have been developed further like a persona. Each character was given a story about their living situation, their place in the group at the station, and their view on jokes at the workplace. Whilst building the storylines for both concepts, these personas were held close. See Figure 4.3 for the personas. Later on, some of the dates have been changed.

Figure 4.3
Fictional characters personas

Joyce
Senior neighborhood care
Works 15 years at this station



She is 60 years old, lives with her partner, her children have moved out already.

Previously worked in 5 other stations.

She knows everyone at the agency, always chats and enjoys taking care of youngsters.

She thinks it is important that everyone in the team is doing well.

She has already seen or heard everything before and is quite neutral about it. The well-being of colleagues is leading for her.

Tobias
Head officer in emergency help
Works 4 years at this station



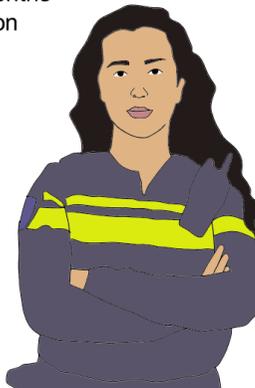
He is 25 years old, lives in a studio with his two dogs.

Has not (yet) worked in other stations besides his training.

He has a close bond with a number of colleagues, and he likes to joke with each other.

He finds practically everything funny, although he knows that not everything is acceptable.

Noa
officer in emergency help
Works 3 months at this station



Is 21 years old, lives in a house with 2 friends.

Has just completed her education, this is her first 'real' position.

Reticent towards colleagues on a personal level. Has 1 good friend on the team who she knows from the academy.

She doesn't really know yet what is normal and what is not. She certainly doesn't find everything funny, but she also doesn't react much.

Joël
O.E. in emergency help
Works 4 years at this station



He is 47 years old, lives with his family of wife and 3 (teenage) daughters.

Previously worked in 3 other stations.

He has known some of his colleagues for a long time and has close friendships within the police.

As a team leader, he tries to pay close attention to appropriate behavior within the team.

He is quite strict about crossing boundaries with jokes but makes exceptions for personal situations.

CONCEPT 1: POLICE HUMOR APP

This app works with different scenarios related to humor at the workplace, the same scenarios as used before with the probe cards, see Chapter 2.2. The goal of this app is to show police officers different reactions that one could have to these scenarios, by hearing how different fictional colleagues feel about them. The underlying and more important goal is to get officers thinking about their own behavior in making jokes and/or reacting to jokes at the workplace. A passive goal is to start conversation amongst colleagues about humor at the workplace.

This prototype was made in PowerPoint and was used for testing in police stations. Using PowerPoint meant that clicking on items that are usually clickable, are now not. The prototype is meant to be used in the PowerPoint app on a tablet in presentation mode, which means that users can only click on the very right or left hand side of the screen to continue or go back.

In this prototype, only one scenario is available and only two of the four colleagues react to it. The user does not have a choice in whose perspective they'd like to hear. Users will be made aware of the limits of the prototype and asked to imagine how it'd be if the app didn't have the limitations.

Underneath some of the most important app screens are shown. Figure 4.4 shows the homescreen of the fictional police station, Figure 4.5 shows the screen with the choice of perspective, Figure 4.6 shows the screen with the chosen perspective, and Figure 4.7 shows the screen with your colleagues' reactions to the scenario. To view all app screens in order of appearance, see Appendix 12.

Figure 4.4
App homescreen



Figure 4.6
App opinion screen



Figure 4.5
App choice screen



Figure 4.7
App colleague screen



CONCEPT 2: POLICE HUMOR QUARTETS

This concept is a card game that works with different scenarios related to humor at the workplace, the same scenarios as used before with the probe cards, see Chapter 3.2. Similar to the app prototype, the goal of this game is to show police officers different reactions that one could have to these scenarios, by hearing how different fictional colleagues feel about them. The underlying and more important goal is to get officers thinking about their own behavior in making jokes and/or reacting to jokes at the workplace. Different from the app prototype, an active goal here is also to start conversation amongst the players about humor at their workplace.

The game is based on the card game 'kwartet', which is well known amongst Dutch people. It translates to 'quartets'. The goal is to collect 4 cards of the same category, called a kwartet/quartet. When a player succeeds in collecting 4 cards of the same category, they say 'Kwartet!'. The player with the most quartets wins the game. The game play is similar to 'Go Fish' or 'Family Game'.

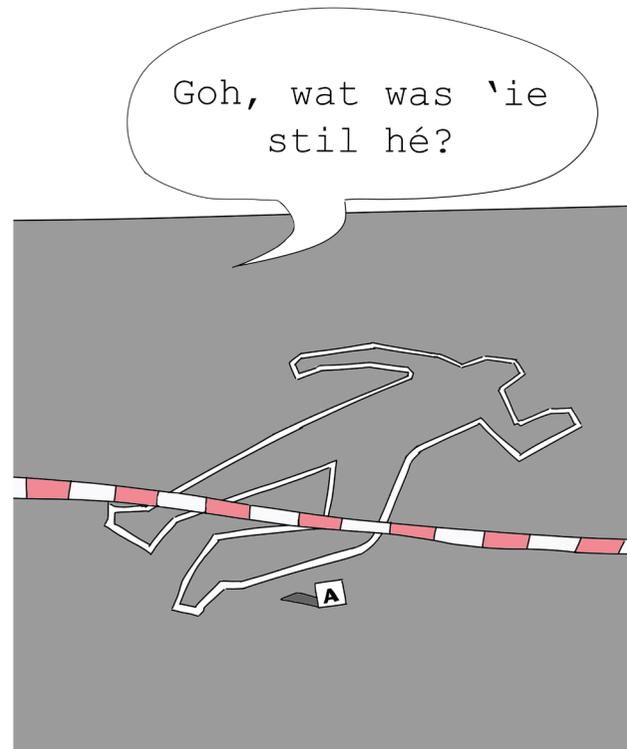
In addition to the *playing* cards, this game also contains *scenario* cards. The categories in this game are a little different than most games of 'kwartet'; they are true scenarios told by officers about jokes in the workplace, outlined on the scenario cards. The playing cards show different reactions from characters to those scenarios.

The prototype of this game was made on paper, printed and cut with rounded corners. Four scenarios were incorporated ('Stil', 'Protest', 'Melk' & 'Water), with reactions of the four fictional colleagues on each

scenario. This was necessary to have enough playing cards to play the game. Rules of the game were printed in a manual. In Figure 4.8, one scenario is shown together with the reactions of the four fictional colleagues. To view all playing cards and the manual together, see Appendix 13.

Figure 4.8
Scenario 'Stil' with two matching playing cards

Collega's komen net terug van een heftige zaak. Een collega zegt:



TESTING BOTH CONCEPTS

In this round of user testing, concepts 1 and 2 will be tested in stations X and Y. The goal is to figure out:

- Which of the two concepts is preferred?
- Do participants understand how the prototypes work?
- What happens during testing? What is the effect?
 - Is there conversation, will jokes be made, or is it super serious or dull, will there be competition, how much focus is on the game itself?
- What setting is suitable for these prototypes?
- Given that officers know about the existence and use of the products, would officers voluntarily use them when they are available in the police station?
- What would officers change about the prototypes?

The intended effect is to see officers sharing personal experiences around humor during or after the tests, and to see them think about humor, either by asking questions or by moments of silence (thinking-pauses). Active participation in the user tests would also be a good sign, as it shows that they are interested and actively involved.

METHOD

During the pre-shift briefing, officers are invited to participate in testing the prototypes. They are encouraged to provide their help and expertise to determine the effectiveness of these prototypes. They are also informed that the prototypes incorporate police humor, and testing sessions last between 10 and 20 minutes. These sessions can be conducted individually, in pairs, or in groups of three. As a token of appreciation, chocolate is offered as a reward.

Participants will choose which prototype they would like to test (first). If they want to and have time, they can test both prototypes. The exact test setup is flexible: Any location with enough space and some level of quietness is suitable. This will depend on the availability and preference of the participants.

For the card game, the gameplay is explained in the printed instructions, or verbally when played in a group. Once all participants understand the game, it starts. In general, I join in playing unless there is a group of four officers who would like to play together, in which case I will observe.

For the app, it is explained that the prototype was created in Powerpoint and does not respond to clicking on the screens. Instead, participants need to click on the very right side of the iPad to move to the next screen.

After playing, participants are asked some questions:

- What did you think of it?
- Do you think this product would be used if it were available in this police station and everybody would know of its existence and how it works?
 - What other setting would you see yourself using this in?
- What effect do you think this product would have?
- Did you understand how the product worked? Was there anything unclear?
- If you could change anything about this product, what would you change?

RESULTS

Twelve participants joined this user test. Eight participants at station Y and four participants at station X. Six of these participants tested both the app and the card game, the remaining six only tested the card game. This was due to the participants' available time and preference for the card game.

The first testing moment was at station X on a Monday morning. This only resulted in 1 user test. Questioning what caused this extremely narrow turnout, the mention of the test being 10 to 20 minutes was left out for the next user test.

The second testing moment was at station Y on a Tuesday afternoon, resulting in eight user tests. The third moment of testing at station X was on a Tuesday afternoon as well, resulting in three more participants.

After the slim turnout at the first test round at station X, a chat with a manager took place to figure out what could have been the cause of that. The manager guessed that it was a combination of factors: Firstly most officers of station X are focussed on sports and don't appreciate chocolate, the offer might have sounded corny. Secondly, Monday morning was a bad time to test, as it is crowded and people are busy after their weekend. Thirdly, mentioning that a test takes between 10 and 20 minutes might have been demotivating, because it sounds like a long time.

Furthermore the manager felt that the combination of people determines the willingness to join for a test like this one, as well as the timing with other surveys, or e-learnings or training: officers get tired from having too many of these types of things right after each other. So the managers' estimation was that this round of testing did not reflect the willingness of the station to join in user tests.

The following insights were gained towards **both prototypes**:

- The **scenarios** are considered quite **mild** by most participants
 - Two participants indicated explicitly that more sensitive topics should be used, matters that divide opinions within the police, such as:
 - Sex, and scenarios between men and women, Sexual preference (homosexuals), Religion, Racism and discrimination, Resigning and getting fired
- The **gameplay** is considered **quite serious**, although there is chatty conversation and jokes amongst officers during gameplay sometimes. Some participants indicated that they were not interested in doing something this serious during their breaks.
- Several participants indicated that the humor within the **ME** (Mobiële Eenheid in Dutch, translating to mobile unit in English) was **much more severe and dark**. Some said that a product like this would not change anything there, as it is so deeply rooted into the work culture.
- These games can feel like a **burden** for colleagues, as it might feel like they are not allowed to joke about anything anymore. These colleagues will be averse towards playing. Simply the topic is the cause of that.
- Police officers have many rules to keep in mind already, they feel like they are not allowed to do anything anymore. There are often new e-learning's, for every new law, besides workshops and training on the already full schedule.
- People feel like they 'cant say anything anymore these days'
- Most participants assumed that the goal of these games was to **start the conversation** about jokes

with their colleagues.

- Several participants mentioned that the fictional character group is **diverse**.

The following insights were gained towards the **app prototype**:

- All participants indicated that this **would not be used in the police station**. They also found it inconvenient, as interactive screens are always used for multiple purposes (such as viewing the emergency notifications of the unit).
- One participant suggested that this concept may work for Intranet, one of the **internal police websites**. He suggested that it could be like a poll, with a scenario and the question whether people think it's funny or not. He said this might work for the moments in quiet office hours (at night) when there's nothing to do.

The following insights were gained towards the **card game prototype**:

- Prototype specific:
 - The cards are **see through**, which is not convenient for a game where you guess who has which card.
 - The cards should be **plastified** if they are to be at the police station, because they will get dirty.
 - There should be **more cards** for better gameplay. Right now the chances of winning depend on the first person who gets a quartet, after that it is too easy for that person to win the whole game.
- When left unattended at the police stations, this game would get some looks and some interaction at the start, perhaps even some people that would play. But all participants were sure that it would **become extinct** after about 3 months.
 - "Mensen kijken 1 keer en dan nooit meer"

- Some participants proposed to play this game in a group of **police students or managers**. But in those contexts, participants do expect that more **socially desired answers** will be given, instead of honest opinions and experiences.
- Several participants indicated that they would see this used more successfully in a group setting on a **'theme-day'**, 'team day' or 'craftsmanship day'. Or during a squad meeting, in case the station has squads.
- Participants were wondering about the best group formulation when this game would be played on one of these days. Groups that consist of close friends would not come to radically new insights, as they share similar values.
- One participant specifically indicated that this card game **does not force** anything, and that that's a good thing. If it would force, officers would not be open to playing.
- The game **sparks conversation** for all participants. When in groups the participants show curiosity to each other's point of view, and in some cases start to joke around and chat with each other about the topic of humor or the scenarios.
- One participant assumed that once he had a quartet, he was supposed to choose which reaction of the fictional characters fit mostly to his own reaction.
- A physical card game was preferred over the app, because of the **lower threshold**; it feels less like a commitment to start playing.
- It is **not entirely clear what should happen when someone has a quartet**. Some participants more naturally started discussing, whereas others were slightly puzzled. Sometimes a participant was reading the cards in their hands, which resulted in an individual focus instead of the group focus.

- One participant shared that he would **react differently depending on the group** of people he was playing with at that moment. He said that if he was with young students, he would be more careful about his own nonchalance towards rough jokes, as he wants to leave the students free to form their own opinion instead of directly copying his nonchalance, as if it is part of the culture and 'they are supposed to'.
- One person started **bluffing** at the very end, proclaiming that he had cards from a specific category, attempting to lure his colleague into losing the game.
- Several participants indicated that they **enjoyed** this activity. Some also indicated that they see the value and importance of talking about humor with their colleagues.
 - No-one seemed negative towards the idea of the prototype.
- In most cases, the ambiance got more relaxed, chatty and open towards the end of the gameplay, whereas the **start** of the game is slightly awkward and **frisky**.

LIMITATIONS

For starters, by chance all participants turned out to be men. Unfortunately this was not noticed until the analysis of the test data. Participants were not handpicked. There are simply more men in both police stations. Due to time restraints and unanimous results towards further developing one of the concepts, it was decided not to take the time to do additional tests with women for this round. However, that makes it extra important that the following iteration is tested by women and men.

Next, it could be argued that the app was not developed far enough compared to the card game, giving the card game an unfair advantage. When it came to the interaction between the prototype and the participants, the card game caused a longer interaction and much more conversation. The interaction with the app prototype was done quickly. Participants also did not have any choice within the app prototype but to move on to the next screen. However, the time spent building the prototypes was roughly equal. And the result of finding an app an unsuitable tool for the context of a police station would not have changed, even if the app prototype was further developed.

Furthermore, one of the clients' concerns on the card game is that the group combinations with which people play the game have a great impact on the outcome. If there are for example four players and three of those players have a similar viewpoint on humor, the one person with a different viewpoint might not feel safe to share their thoughts. Group formulations should therefore be considered carefully in the concept.

Finally, my presence in the tests must have had an effect on the social dynamics. I'm not a colleague, I'm a girl and I'm quite young. This could have resulted in officers giving socially acceptable answers or extensive explanation.

CONCLUSION

The card game appears to be more promising than the app. Additionally, the clients have expressed a preference for the card game due to the high costs and challenges associated with developing and launching an app within the police organization. As a result, the card game will be developed further.

Currently, the card game seems to be working adequately. Although it requires a specific setting and designated time for playing together, the underlying idea is effective. Having a group setting on a fixed day or event holds more promise than making the product available on a voluntary basis at all times in the station. Therefore, the next iteration will focus on this group aspect.

A decision could be made regarding the goal of the card game: whether it is intended to make officers laugh or to facilitate serious conversations. Subsequently the card game could be modified to be either funnier or more serious, with the inclusion of more challenging scenarios.

On a side note, chocolate has not proven to be a successful reward, and police officers don't like to be spawned into a user test. Testing in the afternoon is likely to produce a more successful turnout of participants compared to the morning. Finally, for the next round of testing, the participant group will be strictly divided into 50% women and 50% men.

4.3 TESTING IN A GROUP

This subchapter begins with a discussion about changing the previously set parameters. It then describes the adaptation of the card game concept to suit a group setting. Finally, it presents the results of a group user test.

CHANGING REQUIREMENTS

The results of the user test at stations X and Y indicated a strong preference for the card game concept. However, the test also revealed that in order for the game to be successful, it requires a forced implementation, such as participation on a theme-day or something similar. This is diametrically opposed to some of the previously established requirements:

- Police officers or teams should want to use the intervention from their **own incentive**
- The intervention should be used in the police station in the **general workspace**
- The intervention should be able to be used **at any time of the day** (& night)
- The intervention should be able to be **dropped in use at any instance**
- The intervention should **not** be a **planned group session**

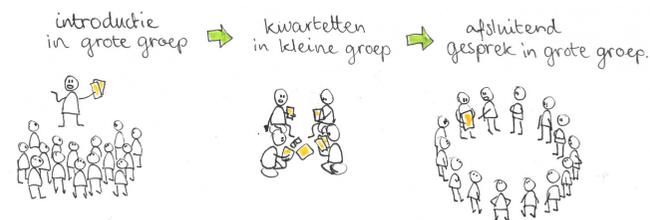
In order to adhere to the requirements, a different concept is required, which means to revisit the ideation phase. Or the concept is kept and the parameters change with it.

The decision was made to change the parameters based on promising results from user tests, where the intended effect was clearly visible. An added benefit of organizing the game for a group is that all colleagues will participate. When the intervention is voluntary, it

may not reach everyone; only those who reflect on their behavior and attitude towards humor are more likely to notice and engage with the concept. On the other hand, those who do not reflect in the same way may not be as interested or may even be repelled by the intervention. Some officers may be hesitant to join, and the effects may vary for each person. However, involving the whole team or squad ensures that conversations are likely to follow.

Another requirement that would be dismissed is that this intervention should not be a set group activity. This requirement was set because group activities take up valuable time, and base teams are already busy. This requirement wouldn't have been discarded if it weren't for the fact that participants themselves suggested doing this as a group activity. Fortunately, this activity only lasts one to one and a half hours, and it doesn't have to be repeated more than once. Overall the positive effects of this choice are considered more valuable than the negative aspects, so the card game concept will be iterated to fit a group setting.

Figure 4.9
Sketch of imagined setup for iteration to fit groups



ITERATION TO GROUP SETTING

At this point, the card game had to be modified to suit a group setting, specifically during a 'theme day' or similar event. A theme day is an annual work-related day where the team is not occupied with their usual tasks, but rather focuses on additional training or skill development. Although the game could also be used during a 'team day', not all officers at stations X and Y were in favor of this idea. Team days are primarily meant for enjoyment and team bonding, whereas this game is more work-oriented.

The card game 'kwartet' is most suitable for groups of four. While larger groups were considered, it was ultimately decided to stick with this option as it allows for more intimate interaction. Smaller groups are also acceptable, but during user tests, the gameplay was found to be most dynamic with four players.

To structure the group session for the card game, a plenary introduction and closing are included. During the session, the group is divided into smaller groups of four to play the game. See Figure 4.9 for a sketch illustrating this setup. In the plenary introduction, the goal and instructions of the game are explained. In the plenary closing, all groups are asked to share their most surprising insight or biggest points of discussion. Additionally, some scientific findings on humor are presented to the entire group. The groups are also encouraged to come up with their own scenarios related to humor, fostering a greater connection between the game and their respective stations.

Two scenarios have been added to the game, bringing the total to six. This increases the number of playing cards and extends the duration of the game. This change adds an element of excitement, as it becomes more difficult to predict the winner.

The scenario 'Protest' was edited and a new scenario 'Benen' was designed to provoke discussion, as they are more extreme compared to the others. The need for this increased level of extremity was identified during previous user tests. These two examples were made up by the designer. See Figure 4.10 and 4.11 for the new scenarios. The scenario 'Kluisje' from the probe cards was added to the game as well.

Each scenario card was expanded with a related question or assignment. This was deliberately done to encourage discussion and interaction among players, which is one of the primary goals of this game. For instance, the card labeled 'Benen' features the question 'Do you think this is offensive? Or do you guys know a colleague who would find this offensive?', see Figure 4.10. The size of the scenario cards has been increased as well, and the front of each card now bears the instruction (translated): "Quartet? Read the text on the back of this card in the colored panels, and then share the card with the group." This was done to increase group participation when a player has a quartet, as previously, this moment was often more individualistic and silent.

Figure 4.10
New scenario 'Benen' (which translates to 'Legs')

In een briefing komt een foto van een voor veel collega's bekende crimineel. Een collega zegt:

Opdracht: Vinden jullie dit aanstootgevend? Of kennen jullie een collega die dit aanstootgevend zou vinden?

Figure 4.11
New version of scenario 'Protest'

Collega's worden net opgeroepen om te gaan kijken bij een demonstratie. Een collega zegt:

Vraag: Zijn er nog andere soorten reacties als jullie kijken naar de vier reacties op de kwartetkaarten van dit scenario?

GROUP USER TEST

The goal of testing the card game concept in a group is primarily to see if it is fit for playing in a group setting or whether changes are necessary. The opportunity arose to do a user test with a group on a team day of the ambassadors of PVI. These were specifically ambassadors for the policy pillar safe and inclusive teams, meaning they came from all over the country. On this day, the ambassadors were provided with inspiring talks and workshops. The closing activity was this user test. Due to the nature of this day, in addition to the user test, a brief presentation of the entire project was given for introduction purposes. These ambassadors are a suitable target group for spreading the game later on, as they are well connected. The composition of this group also makes it suitable to ask for feedback on the concept.

The desired interaction for playing this game is to ensure that participants understand the logistics of the game, observe conversation among smaller groups, and encourage the sharing of personal stories. Additionally, it is important to see participants reflect on their own behavior when it comes to humor, for example by asking questions or by thinking-pauses. Both a humorous and a more serious ambiance are welcome, as both have their own unique value.

METHOD

The day so far had been quite intense and people were a bit tired. So, before starting this test a break of 5 minutes was given. Then a short energizer was done, in the form of "Hoofd, schouder, knie en teen" (Dutch version of "Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes"), a well-

known children's song with a dance.

This user test was facilitated by me and supported by a Powerpoint presentation. There was a strict timeline, as there were only 45 minutes available. The timeline was:

- Introduction presentation 10 minutes
- Test in groups 25 minutes
- Concluding presentation 10 minutes

In the introduction presentation, first I introduced myself and the Master programme. The relevance of this session was highlighted to the participants. Namely to gain a new perspective and learn about qualitative research of a design student, to reflect on their own way of dealing with humor, and by joining to add to this research and the final product.

Some results from the research phase of the project were shared, and the design phase of the project was introduced with a photo of the first prototype of the card game concept. Two scenarios were shown that were not used further on in the game, to show the type of scenarios that they would play with later. Then to get into the realm of reflection, participants were asked to answer the following question on a Post-It note: What do you think about humor at the police? They were given a minute to write down their answer, in silence. This marked the end of the introduction presentation.

After that, participants were asked to create groups of 4, preferably people that had not met before. They were asked to do an introduction round and share their name, something about their work and their favorite food or drink. By sharing something personal like your favorite food, it helps break the ice. After this introduction, participants were asked to share the answer to the earlier asked question with their group. Five minutes were available for this introduction round.

Next, the game was explained. The types of cards were explained, and the fictional characters were introduced. The exact instructions were kept visible on the presentation screen, so participants could look back at it whilst playing. It was indicated that the facilitator would keep the time, and warnings were given one minute before the end of each phase of the test. Participants were asked to imagine that they were playing this game with their own team or squad on a theme-day or something related. The groups had about 20 minutes to play the game and were allowed to sit anywhere suitable.

Near the end of the gameplay, each group was asked to prepare their most surprising outcome, or the topic/ card that produced most discussion. This concluded the playing phase of the session.

After playing, all participants were gathered back to the presentation area to end the session. Each group was asked to share something about their experience. Then, participants were given some Post-Its to share their 'tip and top', so something they liked and something to improve about the game. Whilst they wrote down their answers, the findings of this projects' research were presented. The positive and negative effects of humor within the police were shared, back up by quotes from the interviews. The session was closed by going around the group and asking each participant for one word to describe the session.

RESULTS

A group of around 25 participants joined the session. See Figure 4.12 and 4.13 for photos of the session. Initially, there was supposed to be an hour available, but due to traffic issues, the day's schedule had to be shortened. The session felt rushed to participants. None of the groups were able to complete the game within the given time, only a few scenarios were covered.

Despite the limited time, the desired interactions were evident: each group was actively participating and sharing stories. Some groups were playful and teasing each other, while others were more serious and attentive. The feedback afterwards was overwhelmingly positive; people were enthusiastic about the game. They found it practical and applicable in real-life situations, providing valuable insights for discussion afterwards. Three participants even took home a paper copy of the game to share with their own teams. There was also interest in using the game in a management learning course.

Above all, the game was seen as a great conversation starter. The traditional format was familiar to the participants, evoking happy childhood memories for some. The format was also praised for being lighthearted, practical, and accessible, as it allowed for gameplay alongside conversation and reflection. Participants also appreciated the beautiful graphic design on the cards and found the scenarios to be relatable.

At the end of the session, participants used words like "nice" (leuk), "funny" (grappig), "novel" (vernieuwend), "lighthearted" (luchtig), "nostalgic" (nostalgisch) and "practical" (praktisch) to describe their experience.



Figure 4.12
Photo of group user test



Figure 4.13
Photo of group user test

One area for improvement mentioned was the clarity of some quotes on the playing cards. The new cards were written hastily, so it wasn't entirely surprising that some were unclear.

Another point of improvement raised was the lack of solutions or changes to be made in dealing with humor after playing the game. One participant mentioned 'People will want to know how to improve'. A participant also wondered if all the playing cards would be read. It is expected that not all of them will be read, but there should be enough engagement with the scenario cards to initiate conversations. Some users may choose to read everything, while others may not.

Additionally, a participant suggested changing the character of the senior neighborhood officer (Joyce) to a teamchef. Although this suggestion could have been considered, it was not chosen because the role of the teamchef already resembles that of a manager, like the character Joël. The choice of an older, experienced senior officer was deliberate to generate diverse responses among the characters.

Participants also expressed curiosity about the focus on colleagues in blue. One participant believed that all humor within the organization is similar and saw the game as suitable for any setting. However, another participant wished to see more connection to other branches of the organization to make it more adaptable. It is at least clear that there is potential for this game beyond just the base teams.

LIMITATIONS

The main limitation of this user test was the limited amount of time. 45 minutes proved to be insufficient, especially the allocated 20 minutes for gameplay. Unfortunately, there was no flexibility to adjust these time constraints. Furthermore, there was an overwhelming amount of activity to observe and document, making it challenging for a single person to keep up. Each group was only briefly monitored to assess their progress and observe their gameplay. To obtain more comprehensive results in future user tests, an additional person or two should be involved to assist in data collection.

REFLECTION CYCLE 3

I can sense that I am developing a bias that is 'pro-police'. When I talk to friends or relatives about this project, discussions about the role of police in specific situations arise. People criticize the police and often highlight instances of violence in casual conversations. I often find myself wondering about the context leading up to those specific moments. Were there any warnings that are now being omitted from the story? Did the situation occur intentionally or was it a result of chance? In any case, my automatic response is not 'oh how horrible, the police make mistakes like that all the time.' These conversations rarely mention anything neutral or positive, which makes me inclined to add a neutral or positive perspective.

CHAPTER 5: DELIVER

'Politie humor kwartet'

In this last chapter the final concept 'Politie humor kwartet' is presented. The game is evaluated and recommendations for further development are described. Then, general recommendations are also described. The chapter ends with a discussion on the project as a whole and a final reflection.

This chapter contains:

- 5.1 Final concept: Politie humor kwartet
- 5.2 Product evaluation & product recommendations
- 5.3 General recommendations
- 5.4 Discussion regarding the project
- 5.5 Final reflection

5.1 FINAL CONCEPT: POLITIE HUMOR KWARTET

In this subchapter, the final concept 'Politie humor kwartet' is presented. First the concept is explained once more in its final form. Then the final additions and usability changes to the concept are described.

POLITIE HUMOR KWARTET

'Politie humor kwartet' is a card game designed for groups of Dutch police officers to reflect on humor within the workplace. The game resembles the popular Dutch game 'kwartet', where the objective is to collect four cards of the same category, or a 'kwartet'. Along with the playing cards, this game includes six scenario cards that depict situations related to humor within the police. The playing cards feature the reactions of four fictional colleagues to these scenarios. These fictional colleagues are stationed at the same location where the scenarios occur, providing different perspectives on the stories.

When a player collects a 'kwartet', the gameplay pauses and a scenario card is revealed. Each scenario card contains a question or assignment for the group, intended to trigger conversation about that scenario. See Figure 5.1 for an example of a scenario card and a playing card.

The game is designed for larger groups, such as a police base team or a squad. The session begins with the entire group and then the group is divided into smaller groups of four players. It concludes with the entire group again to share insights. v The introduction and conclusion of the session are guided by videos, while the rest of the session is led by a 'game leader' (spelleider) who facilitates the materials, monitors the time, and guides group dynamics. Typically, this role is taken on by a manager. The whole session takes between 1 and 1.5 hours.

Figure 5.1
Scenario card 'Kluisje' [front of card: left, back of card: right] and a playing card [bottom middle]



ADDITIONS TO THE GAME

The main addition to the game, compared to the previous iteration with group testing as described in Chapter 4.3, is the inclusion of introduction and concluding movies to guide the session. These movies are called the 'briefing' and 'debriefing' movies, which are linked to the (de)briefings that police officers in base teams are familiar with. This eliminates the need for the designer to act as a facilitator. A summary of both movie clips is provided. Additionally, a 'time-out' card has been added to the game to provide a break opportunity during gameplay, and this card is also described.

BRIEFING MOVIE

The briefing movie's main purpose is to explain the gameplay and set the rules. This includes introducing the four fictional characters present on the playing cards. See Figure 2 for the opening screen of the movie, and Figure 5.3 for a screenshot of the briefing movie during the game explanation.

After this explanation, to get into the mood of reflecting, the video asks all players to individually answer the question: 'What do you think about humor at the police?' and write down their answer on a Post-It note or a piece of paper. Players are instructed to keep this answer, as they will share it later.

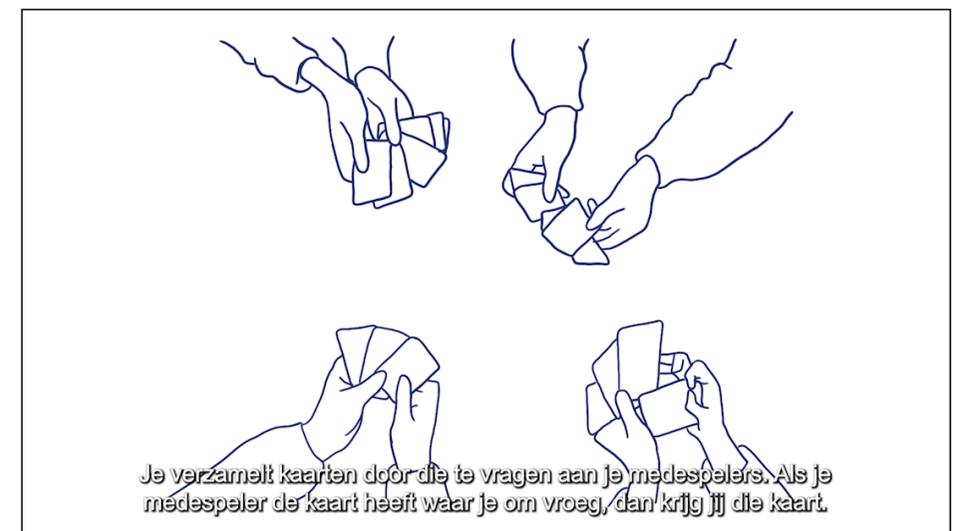
Each group of four players is asked to do a round of introductions to become more comfortable with each other before starting to play the game. Groups of colleagues who already know each other quite well are asked to share something small and personal that their colleagues don't know yet. Groups consisting of colleagues who don't know each other yet, are asked to share their name, something about their work, and their favorite food. Sharing something personal helps build trust and breaks the ice.

The video also warns players that certain topics may come up during gameplay that could lead to discussions or bring up heavy memories. If the tension becomes too high, players can use the 'Time-out' card, inform the game leader, and take a 5-minute break. More details about this card can be found in the paragraph titled 'Time-out card'. Finally, the video informs the players that the game leader will keep track of time and give warnings when gameplay is about to end.

Figure 5.2
Opening screen of briefing movie



Figure 5.3
Screenshot of briefing movie during game explanation



DEBRIEFING MOVIE

The purpose of the debriefing movie is to encourage players to share their insights with each other. It is possible that different groups encountered similar issues, or on the contrary, groups had vastly different experiences. In addition this movie provides a scientific perspective on humor within the police force. It does so by discussing both the positive and negative effects that humor can have.

The video concludes by advising officers to speak up if they have any doubts about a joke or feel that a joke is inappropriate. Another suggestion that is made is to establish team agreements on how to handle humor, in order to establish boundaries collectively. For more information and sources, the video refers viewers to this report.

TIME-OUT CARD

As mentioned briefly in the paragraph about the 'briefing movie', the Time-out card serves the purpose of releasing tension, if any exists. The game scenarios are specifically chosen to provoke discussions and differences in opinions, so it is likely that there will be discussions. It is also possible that these scenarios may trigger memories of intense work cases. In either case, this card can be used to indicate a 5-minute break and to call the group leader. The exact use of this break time depends on the game leader, who may choose, for example, to have a conversation with the person or people whose emotions were most heightened.

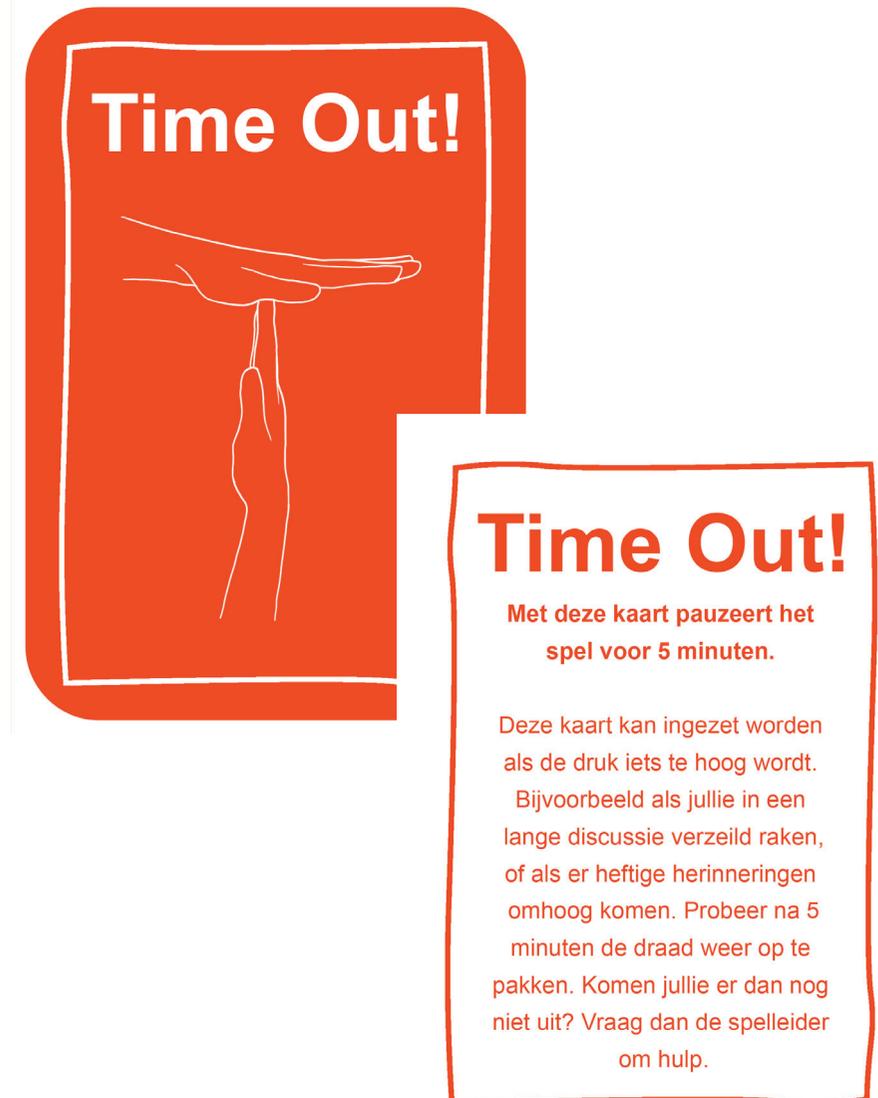
The appearance of the card differs from the other playing cards; it is bright red and white. This intentional distinctiveness serves to highlight the presence of this particular card. See Figure 5.4 for the card.

One could argue whether it is necessary to have a card that explicitly indicates this break. When a group becomes involved in a heated discussion, taking a break is generally considered normal. However, by displaying this message on a card, the option to take a break is always visible. Additionally, all group members have the ability to request this break.

Whether or not this card functions properly needs to be determined through additional user testing. Perhaps it will be deemed unnecessary after all.

Figure 5.4

Time-out card [front of card on top, back of card on bottom]



USABILITY CHANGES

Some final changes were made to improve usability and aesthetics, which are described below.

Each scenario card now has its own color, see Figure 5.5. The scenario cards were matched in color with the playing cards, as shown in Figure 5.1.

The back of the playing cards has been adjusted to match the visual style of PVI, see Figure 5.6.

One usability change that was made is to keep the order of the names of the fictional colleagues on each playing card the same. The name of the character on the card is now made bold. In previous versions, the order of the names changed with every card, in order to have the name of that character on top. This can be seen in Figure 5.5 as well.

Some final aesthetic changes were made, mostly to provide more white space and create a calmer look.

All the final playing cards and scenario cards can be found in Appendix 12.

Figure 5.5
Playing cards in six colors



Figure 5.6
Backside of playing cards



5.2 PRODUCT EVALUATION & PRODUCT RECOMMENDATIONS

To evaluate the final product concept, it is incorporated into the Matrix of Domination and compared to the earlier set design criteria. Product recommendations to make the launch of the product as successful as possible are also included.

COMPARE TO DESIGN CRITERIA

When comparing the concept of the 'Politie humor kwartet' to the earlier set design criteria, it performs quite well. The four categories of criteria are discussed in more detail.

Regarding the category of 'humor', the concept is subjective and open to different opinions and interpretations. It is built upon the fact that people's opinions about it differ. For some, the gameplay and scenarios are funny and enjoyable to interact with. However, this depends on the individuals and the group dynamic. There were no complaints from a specific group within the user group of police officers. So, the concept appeals to all officers in that way. Whether it appeals especially to those who are not in a managerial role is not clear.

When comparing the concept of the 'Politie humor kwartet' to the earlier set design criteria, it performs quite well. The four categories of criteria are discussed in more detail.

Regarding the category of 'humor', the concept is subjective and open to different opinions and interpretations. It is built upon the fact that people's opinions about it differ. For some, the gameplay and scenarios are funny and enjoyable to interact with. However, this depends on the individuals and the group dynamic. There were no complaints from a

specific group within the user group of police officers. So, the concept appeals to all officers in that way. Whether it appeals especially to those who are not in a managerial role is not clear. In terms of 'equal involvement', the concept is designed to be suitable for group use. While equal involvement from all players is not guaranteed, all players need to contribute in order to play the game. The format of the game encourages all players to share. It is not suitable to play individually, although individuals can still explore the contents of all the cards.

As for 'adoption', the idea and research data originated from stations X and Y. However, the concept may not be suitable for direct adoption by both stations. It is more of a game that is played once, rather than a product to own. Therefore, it is unclear whether the concept is specifically well-suited for these stations.

The concept is linked to relatable, real-life experiences of police officers. It also encourages officers to critically reflect on their behavior, thus connecting to the craftsmanship of the job. Although the core values of the police are not directly integrated, they could be incorporated if desired. For example, officers could be asked during the session how the core values relate to humor in the workplace.

Lastly, in terms of 'sustainability', this concept does not require a lot of materials. It is small and lightweight. The cards are laminated, which makes them difficult to recycle due to the combination of paper and plastic that are not separated as waste. However, this lamination does make the cards more durable and allows for easy cleaning if they get dirty. It also enhances the tactile experience of holding the cards, as they become slightly thicker. To promote sustainability, it would be best to print the game sets per order and ensure that the games are used more than just once.

MATRIX OF DOMINATION 3.0

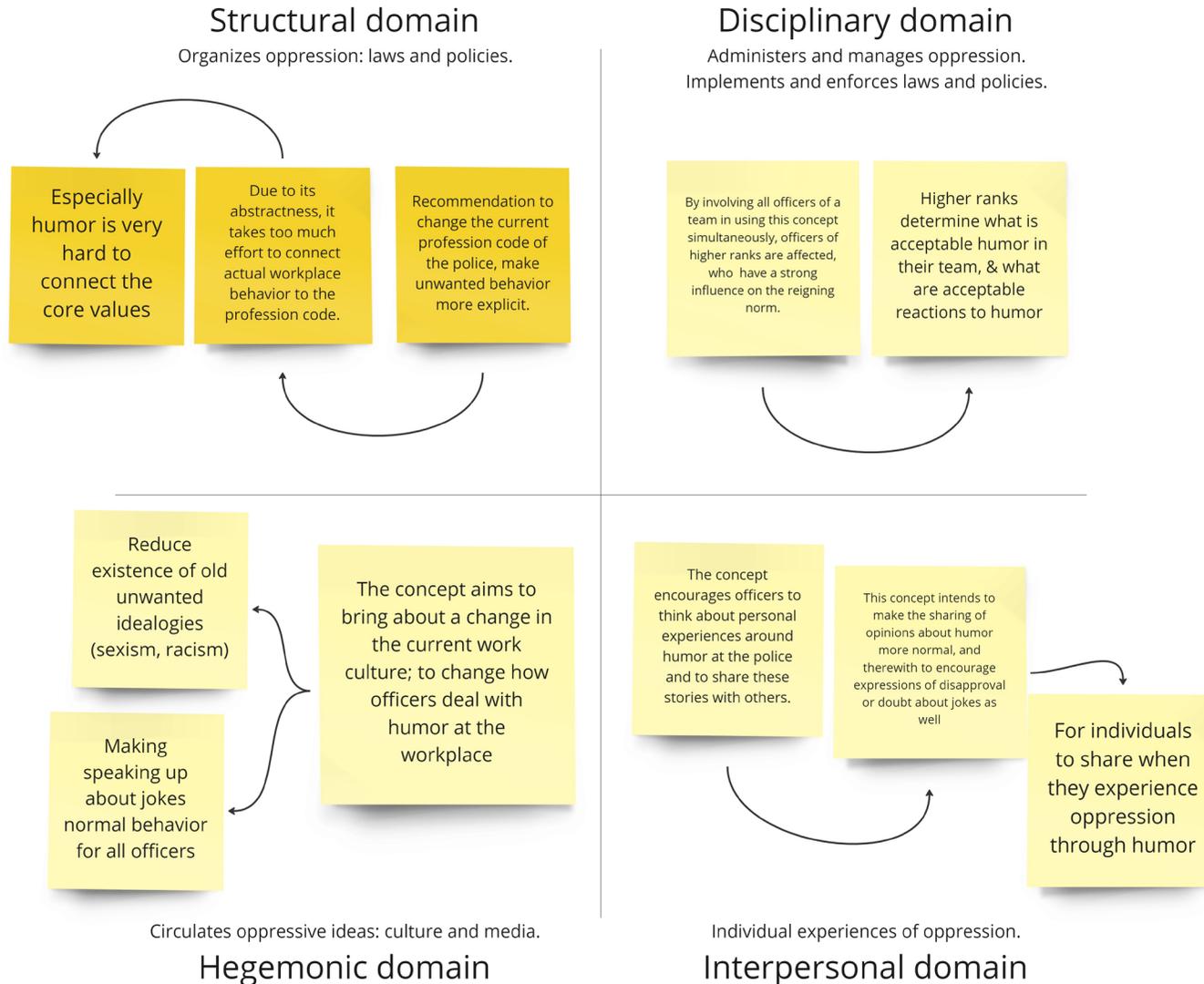
The Matrix of Domination is used one last time, to explain how the Politie humor kwartet concept affects the configuration and experience of systems of power within the police organization. See Figure 5.7 for the completed matrix. As can be seen in the figure, three out of four of the quadrants are addressed through the concept (the light yellow Post-It's).

In the disciplinary domain, the concept plays a role because it involves all police officers within a team, including those with higher ranks. Previously, it was found that officers with higher ranks have a strong influence on the prevailing norm within teams. This includes the norm for what is acceptable humor in a team and what are acceptable reactions to humor. By addressing this specific group, the concept has an influence on the disciplinary domain.

In the hegemonic domain, the concept plays a role as it aims to change the current work culture regarding behavior around humor. The main way it aims to do so is by normalizing speaking up about jokes, instead of categorizing it as different, as it was labeled in the Matrix in Chapter 3.3. The concept also aims to change the culture by reducing the presence of old unwanted ideologies, such as racism, discrimination and sexism.

In the interpersonal domain, the concept plays a role as it encourages officers to reflect on their personal experiences with humor at the police and share these stories with colleagues. Therewith the concept also encourages officers to express disapproval or doubt about humor, which provides individuals with an outlet to share their experiences of oppression.

Figure 5.x
Matrix of domination 3: 'Politie humor kwartet'



The fourth quadrant, the structural domain, is not addressed through the concept, but rather through a recommendation to change the profession code of the police (the orange Post-It's) by explicitly defining unwanted behavior. This is described in Chapter 5.3.

By addressing all four quadrants in the Matrix of Domination, it is evident that this concept has the potential to bring about structural change in the work culture surrounding humor, particularly through behavior around humor and speaking up about jokes.

PRODUCT RECOMMENDATIONS

The final product is ready to use, but as with all products, there are still areas to improve or validate.

One of the things that are not validated yet, are the briefing and debriefing movies. They have not been tested yet. It is important that the briefing movie explains the rules of the game properly. During a user test, attention should be paid to the number of questions or general confusion after watching. If there are many questions or expressions of confusion, this indicates that the movie is not sufficient yet. As for the debriefing movie, it should wrap up the session, provide additional insights, and hopefully inspire police officers. Both movies should provide guidance to the game leaders so that their task is limited to providing materials, keeping time, and observing the social cohesion in groups. During a user test, the role of the game leader should be observed without interference to determine whether the game works properly as is.

The Time-out card has also not been tested yet. This is slightly more difficult to test because not all teams will struggle with tension. Participants could be asked about the card and its usefulness in addition to observing if the card is ever used during a user test. If the card is used, its contribution should be carefully observed. Does the card contribute to the game or is it unnecessary?

Furthermore, the size and thickness of the printed cards should be checked with participants for comfort and ease: Do participants prefer a different size or type of paper?

Figure 5.7 shows pictures of the final prototype in its printed form. The cards have been laminated and printed on thick paper (200 grs.). The printing quality should be improved, something went wrong in the export of the fictional characters on the playing cards.

For sustainable use, it would be best to print the game sets per order and to make sure that the games are used more than just once. Perhaps the games could be returned to a central point after use and shipped off to new requests from there.

No ideal user group has been defined. In principle, this product can be suitable for various groups. However, it is unclear whether it would be effective for a group that lacks social cohesion due to conflicts or bullying, for instance. It may require extensive guidance to prevent further escalation and to find practical solutions that can be implemented in the workplace.

Figure 5.7
Picture of the final prototype of Politie humor kwartet



5.3 GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

My advice is to revise the profession code (beroepscode) (Politie, 2023b) to explicitly define desired and undesired behavior. This revision will have an impact on the structural domain of power within the police organization, as outlined in the Matrix of Domination.

This change relates to three specific areas addressed in this project:

- Humor in the work culture & the end product 'Politie humor kwartet'
- The position of women within the organization
- Issues of racism, discrimination, and sexism

Firstly, revising the profession code could affect the use of humor in the work culture and the impact of the 'Politie humor kwartet' game. If the police aims to achieve the same effect proposed in this project, which is to change internal communication around humor, all aspects should be addressed. By doing so, the legislation will align and support the desired changes in all domains of the Matrix as proposed in Chapter 5.2.

Secondly, revising the profession code could impact the position of women within the organization. The current work culture does not fully support women. If there is a desire to change this, I suggest making comprehensive changes across all four domains of power. Starting with the legislation could be a step in the right direction.

Thirdly, revising the profession code could address the unwanted ideologies of racism, discrimination, and sexism. It is clear that the police aims to eliminate these ideologies, and the organization is making efforts from different angles to achieve this. I recommend incorporating the legislation into these efforts. Figure 5.8 shows how the three areas are interconnected with each other and to a safe work environment.

The profession code, linked to the police's four core values and the first constitutional law, is currently quite abstract and general. While there is some information about behavior towards civilians, there is little guidance regarding behavior towards colleagues. For example, the code does not mention anything about bullying. This raises concerns that the profession code is too abstract for most officers to act upon.

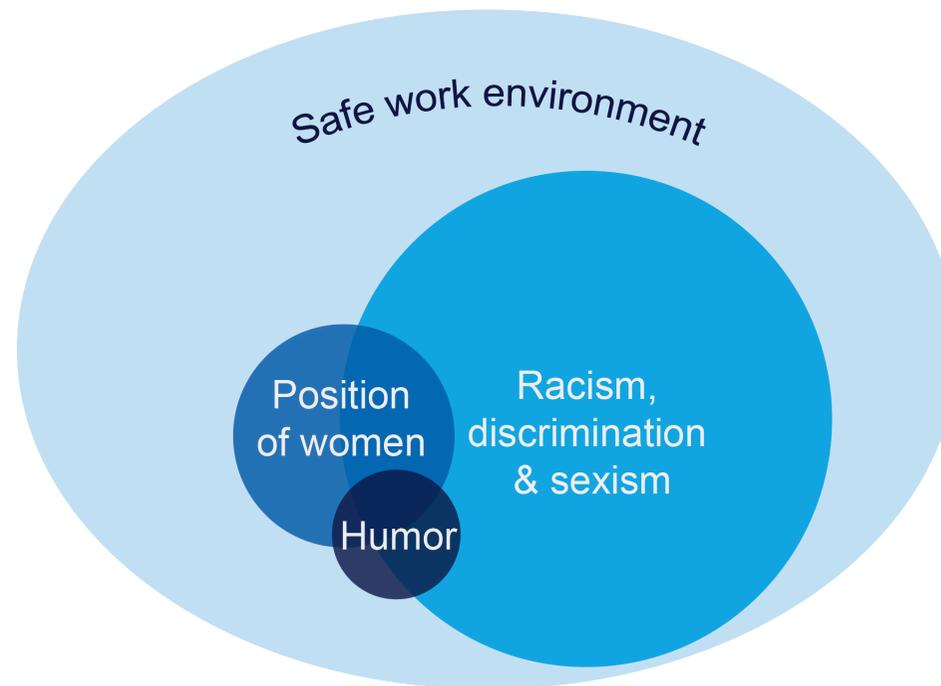
There is a document related to the profession code that provides more explicit guidance on desired and undesired behavior ("themablad 12 bij de beroepscode"). However, this document is only accessible to those actively seeking it, as it is not

directly linked to the profession code itself. Finding this document requires effort (I personally discovered it only after being informed of its existence). When officers are unsure about appropriate behavior, they can also seek help from several subgroups within the police organization, such as PVI or the (central) guidance counselors. This appears to be a more logical option than searching for the "themablad" document.

In my opinion, the profession code should be more explicit about desired and undesired behavior, and it should be better aligned with the additional documents. When it comes to serious issues such as racism, discrimination, and sexism, there should be little room for interpretation.

Figure 5.8

Illustration of the interconnectedness of humor within the project



5.4 DISCUSSION REGARDING THE PROJECT

Various conflicting viewpoints are discussed in this subchapter.

The final solution, the 'Politie humor kwartet', takes a gentle approach, inviting users to consider different perspectives instead of steering or forcing them. This makes it relatively easy for users to engage with, prompting them to think about whether the situations go against the grain rather than imposing a viewpoint. However, it still presents realistic and recognizable situations that have been proven to spark conversations among police officers. Initial user tests have shown positive interaction with the game. If the game were more forceful, the reactions from officers would likely be more intense, both positively and negatively. The question is whether this approach would be effective and serve as a catalyst or if it would offend, shock, and discourage users from taking action. Given that police officers were found to be stubborn, this deliberate choice was made.

On its own, this product will not create an immediate and significant change in the work culture and behavior of officers. However, it has the potential to encourage a large group of officers to reconsider what is considered normal and to change their own behavior.

Black feminism is typically activist and emphasizes taking action. It could be argued that this final product is not activist enough, as it leaves each user and team with the choice of whether to act (and initiate change) or not. The game's openness to different opinions and interpretations also allows individuals to remain in their patterns of inappropriate behavior. However, without incorporating the black feminist mindset during reflection and the use of the Matrix of Domination, the results would not have been the same.

Although the project did not ultimately focus on racism or discrimination, these topics are still closely linked. The inclusion of a diverse group of characters on the playing cards highlights this connection. The game sends the message that diversity is normal.

The game includes elements that encourage individual reflection on personal experiences with workplace humor. It also allows each team to establish their own boundaries regarding humor. This stands in contrast to the uniformity that the police organization embodies in many aspects, such as uniforms, protocols, and equal opportunities for all applicants. Police officers must work together as a united force with shared goals. However, the organization also recognizes individuality, allowing each unit, district, team, or squad to determine their own approaches. The game seems to fit well in either scenario.

The research conducted for this project primarily focused on the work culture within base teams, excluding the police academy and the immediate post-academy phase. It is important to consider what is taught about culture and creating a safe work environment in these stages. Furthermore, how are new graduates supported when they are no longer in a regulated environment with protocols? My assumption is that they tend to copy the behavior observed in the base teams.

5.5 FINAL REFLECTION

I am a democratic person, I like to find solutions that fit all stakeholders. This has played a role in the development and choice of the final concept. The 'softness', as described in Chapter 5.3, is certainly partly due to my character. I could have made different choices. I could have been fiercer and stricter, to force solutions onto police officers in how they should deal with humor. And what jokes are okay and which are not. I could have linked more closely to my anger, which was the initial trigger to follow this path of gender equity. I didn't and I'm fully okay with that. I met so many nice people along the way. And I gained immense respect for the job of police officer and the complexity that comes with it. The complexity that so many other don't see. Even the stubbornness of officers may have played a role, because I recognise my own stubbornness. The environment seemed peaceful and my anger had vanished to the background.

When looking back on the reflections that were done throughout this project, I realize that there were more triggers for reflection at the start than at the end. This makes sense, because at the start everything is new. It is easier to spot flaws and remarkable things when you don't quite understand how the system is 'supposed to work' yet. This made reflecting towards the end a bit more difficult. However I do also realize that there has been reflection more widely throughout the project. When it comes to choosing methods and drawing conclusions, there have been endless rounds of reflection that lead to the decisions that were made. I believe the reflections added to the final results and I would consider doing this similarly in a different project.

It would have been beneficial if I could have started observation at both stations simultaneously. And I'm still interested in what interviews with station Y would have added. But I'm happy with the result and I was able to do everything that I wanted to do.

As mentioned in my preface, I think the police have lots of space for design to intervene and improve. Especially when it comes to efficiency, communication structures and the cooperation between different branches, there is a lot to gain. Multiple groups within the organization work towards similar goals, but unfortunately, some of these groups are not even aware of each other's existence. Similarly, there is a wide variety of solutions, interventions, and products offered in the police force. This makes it difficult to determine the purpose and functionality of each one. Additionally, there appears to be a lack of overview of the available options. The overwhelming number of offerings tends to overwhelm employees, who are required to participate in multiple campaigns and initiatives constantly. Furthermore, finding specific documents is problematic because they are often poorly linked to other relevant documents and departments within the police organization. Throughout the project, I have struggled to identify the root cause of these issues.

Most of the organization is unfamiliar with design, yet very open to it when you approach with curiosity. The playfulness that design can bring seems to work really well for police officers. I would definitely work with the police again for future design projects.

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