

# Labour, inequality and calls for representative police

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## Introduction

Many, if not most, African countries are in transition from high-levels of insecurity or conflict to democracy, a transition in which police reform (as part of wider security sector reform) has been flagged as a key initiative by which to instil democratic principles. Nonetheless, such efforts have been constrained by various issues, including lack of resources, poverty, poor infrastructure, illicit transnational networks, tensions between police and military and the role of police during conflict, to name a few (Rauch and van der Spuy 2006:15–20, Maingi and Omeje 2012:74; Call and Stanley 2003:215–16). Furthermore, the state-centric approaches to policing reform frequently fail to acknowledge the plethora of other policing options civilians may employ (Baker 2008:6). However, studying state police (the focus of this paper) is important not only because they mirror the politics of the regimes of which they are part and their respective pursuits for liberalism, democracy and other normative ideals – or lack thereof (Hills 2000:ix; Francis 2012:14; Marks 2002; Rauch and van der Spuy 2006:13), but they also bring into stark contrast the rifts between external security expectations (whether they be from the state, citizens or international actors) and the internal ability and willingness (of the police as an organisation or officers as individuals) to achieve them (Marks 2002; Rauch and van der Spuy 2006:16; Call and Stanley 2003:216).

The complexity of internal police operations, as in any organisation, is difficult to capture, as there is an overlap between personal and institutional motivators and drivers, which may complement or compete with one another. However, research into state police on the continent has been sporadic and fragmented, frequently failing to account for the variety of actors involved in the processes and more often than not ignoring the voices of officers themselves. Despite limited exploratory research into the organisation of police work and the ways in which inequality and difference inform it, there continue to be popular calls (both within police reform and wider security sector reform) for representative security institutions.

To fill this gap, this paper serves as a literature review, which shifts the focus to how social divisions inform both the composition and operation of the police. This will help to identify several patterns

and areas into which further research is needed. It is important to note, however, that without empirical data, considering how social divisions interact is difficult and consequently, analysis will necessarily be superficial. Nonetheless, contemplating available literature on differences within a select number of police forces will be enlightening. Hence, using available literature on four police forces in Africa (Kenya Police, the Uganda Police Force, the Sierra Leone Police and the Liberia Police) this paper discusses in a historically sensitive manner how difference has informed the operationalisation of policing (namely calls for representative police).

The geographical distribution of academic and policy themes relating to national police stems from of the limited number of researchers on the ground and their personal interests. For example, there is comparatively more information on gender and police in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Southern Sudan thanks to the efforts of researchers such as Salahub (2011) and Valasek (2011). However, the distribution is also tied to the extent of external intervention and the manner in which actors (such as the UK, UN and US) tend to favour reform which includes gender-equality initiatives. Additionally, literature relating to police in Eastern Africa (mainly Uganda, Kenya and Rwanda) pays a fair amount of attention to the ethnic make-up of their forces (particularly during colonial times). Hence, the available information on national police is also contingent on when the research was done. The reduced comment and research on the racial and ethnic composition of the police following independence may also be linked to contemporary shifts toward democratisation and liberalisation, which call for representative forces but which, simultaneously, may lead forces to not want this information to be “exposed” for fear of losing aid. Moving to the South, primarily South Africa, there is more information on how police operate as well as figures regarding their racial and gendered composition. This can, however, be connected with South Africa’s comparatively more developed civil society and research networks, as well as its deeply racialised history.

The fragile status of post-conflict Liberia and Sierra Leone and the bevy of external actors involved in their reform processes, make them an interesting contrast to the better established police in Uganda

and Kenya, which are considered relatively mature and sophisticated (Hills 2000:89). Furthermore, owing to the limited literature on police labour and differences, the choice of these four case studies is also practical, as there is comparatively more information available on them, although in different areas.<sup>1</sup>

In sum, the aim of this paper is to identify, using available literature, how difference and inequality have historically shaped the operationalisation of policing in four African police forces, primarily in relation to calls for representation.

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1. It is clear that there is more information available on some countries and their police than on others. By far the most comprehensive information relates to the South African police. Other “hotspots” include Liberia, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Southern Sudan, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Mozambique, Namibia and Zimbabwe.

## Theoretical framework

Social divisions come into being in relation to one another, not in a vacuum. This notion of ‘articulated categories’ has built on the influential theory of intersectionality. Coined by Kimberly Crenshaw (1991), this theory noted how different social divisions such as race, class and gender intersect with one another at different points in time in varying ways. Intersectionality, however, has been criticised for being too stagnant. It is here that articulated categories become useful, because they do not see inequalities merely as intersecting with one another, but as continually shaping, resisting and, in essence, being articulated through each other. McClintock (1995:177) calls this a triangulated theory, in that she concentrates on how gender, race and class (the three most commonly cited social divisions by academics) create and inform one another in various contexts. However, without empirical data, considering how inequalities shape one another is close to impossible. Nonetheless, one can still theorise about the moments at which different social divisions intersected at particular points in time and why.

In most African countries, social divisions have been forged in tumultuous histories. The comprehensive accounts by Hills (2000), Francis (2012) as well as Rauch and van der Spuy (2006) base their discussions about police on four primary themes: colonialism, struggles for independence, conflict and the new global environment. These themes are both historically bound and intimately involve issues of circulating ownership, patrimonial politics and democracy. An understanding of how inequalities were introduced, changed, entrenched or resisted within these themes will enable an analysis that places social divisions at its base and as the starting point for understanding police operations and reform.

The division of labour within most, if not all, organisations is gendered. That is, gendered beliefs are deeply entrenched in the ways work is done and are continually reproduced within the workplace. However, the reproduction of gendered inequalities may be visible in some settings, seem legitimate in others and resisted in others still. The extent to which gendered inequalities are visible and legitimised in organisations is shaped by how work is done and the means of control over the organisation of labour relations. Similarly race, ethnicity and other social

inequalities permeate and inform (and are informed by) work operations (Ackers, 2006).

This is particularly acute in postcolonial settings in which organisations were created and organised to achieve colonial white-male objectives. Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1992:2) note that race, or rather racism, informs processes of exclusion and exploitation, but that it cannot be considered in isolation. Race and the ways in which it is constructed, are also fluid. The same person may be coloured in one country (South Africa) and black in another (England) and have an entirely different personal understanding. Therefore, constructions of race and the boundaries which determine inclusion and exclusion are not as commonly understood and shared as those related to gender, but are highly contingent on context and national heritage. Additionally, practices in the workplace may be racist in their effects as they re/create boundaries of inclusion and exclusion along racial lines (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992:5, 13). Therefore, as with gendering, racialisation of identity allows work to be organised in a manner that leaves some individuals at higher risk of being sidelined. This sentiment is eloquently phrased by Dianne Perrons:

... there are many differences within ethnic and racial groups and just as not all women are oppressed neither are all minority individuals, but they face a higher probability of being so and therefore in racially and ethnically mixed societies this also forms a key determination of life chances. (Perrons 2004:25)

Therefore, race is a social and cultural construction, in and of itself and is used as justification for oppression based on internalised beliefs about what the physical difference (read: skin colour) means socially (Acker 2006:444). While Africans are not a homogenous group, “the white man”, who has been the target of many feminist debates, is not necessarily a key player in this discussion. In many African societies, more emphasis would be placed on ethnicity (Agbu 2011) than race. However, in post-conflict settings, where efforts to reform the police are under way, inequalities relating to race, nationalism and even ideology may surface with the involvement of international actors and institutions, particularly when these efforts are headed by people from outside the country.

Gender, race and ethnicity are the most academically considered social inequalities, which, coupled with labour and power relations, have varying class implications. Moreover, they come into being and are reinforced through class<sup>2</sup> relations (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992:18; Acker 2006:5; Perrons 2004:25; McClintock 1995:5). This is evident in unequal pay and differing hierarchical structures, which are largely considered legitimate and unavoidable (Acker 2006:453), but which are also created, reproduced and guided by the aforementioned social divisions. Therefore, class is defined by inequality. How resources are distributed is clear in how work and employment are organised and in the police may be visible through insignia, ranks and titles.

However, inequalities within organisations do not exist in isolation, but are fuelled by and largely mirror inequalities in wider society (Acker 2006:444), which are, generally speaking, based on notions of difference. Furthermore, within the organisation itself, inequalities are reproduced through organising processes that reinforce or reproduce disparities between people and, in turn, their ability to access power and resources (this, of course, has implications beyond the workplace). These practices and processes can reinforce or disrupt larger societal inequalities, but are always structured in a way that

best serves the organisation's interests – whether they are commercial, political or both (Acker 2006:447).

In turn, these processes tend to either hide or increase the visibility of inequalities. The degree to which social divisions are visible or invisible is largely contingent on their perceived legitimacy at personal, organisational and societal levels. However, the extent to which these inequalities are normalised and accepted shifts from country to country and from organisation to organisation (Acker 2006:453). That is, legitimacy is contingent on the political and economic context the organisation is in and can be challenged through global, national and organisational laws and processes such as affirmative action. Discussing the visibility of inequalities invariably and implicitly also means discussing the invisibility of some inequalities. When an inequality is spoken of, it has entered common discourse and has, to some extent, been problematised. However, when it is not spoken of, this might point to deeper marginalisation and its invisibility also points to its normalisation. This is significant, because the tangent between the norm and visibility is closely linked to calls for representation. Once an inequality becomes more visible and its normalcy threatened, it tends to be coupled with calls for increasing involvement by the “previously” sidelined people so as to create more representative organisations.

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2. Here, class “refers to enduring and systematic differences in access to and control over resources for provisioning and survival” (Acker 2006: 444).

## Representation and the police

There is a limited pool of researchers who are working, or have worked, on policing in Africa and an even smaller pool that has focused on social divisions within the police as an organisation. One of the first authors to highlight the role of policing on the continent was Christian Potholm (1969), who stated that the police should be viewed as instrumental in national development, nation building and political socialisation. In line with this, Potholm (1969) believes that the police serve several functions, including law enforcement and maintenance of order, internal security with paramilitary operations, regulation of commerce and migration, as well as regime representation. In sum, Potholm sees research into the police as a means of understanding the regimes in which they exist.

Since then, Alice Hills stands out for conducting the most research on police in Africa. She has extensive experience across the continent and is actively referred to by other leading researchers, particularly her book *Policing Africa: Internal security and the limits of liberalisation* (2000). Building on Potholm (1969), Hills delves into the links between policing and politics and how police are more a means of regime representation than of civilian protection. The police are used as a tool to secure order, either by being fragmented or built up. However, they will remain, according to Hills (2000), under-resourced and poorly managed so they do not become a threat to state power. Hills (2000) provides a six-fold model for understanding policing in Africa. The model is simple and flexible, but accounts for the historically complex ways police systems were/are formed in Africa. Additionally, these models illustrate how the police are linked to the development and liberalisation of the state, or lack thereof. In later work, Hills (2007) is more concerned with the interpersonal relationships between African presidents and their respective police commissioners, suggesting that this could lead to research that better understands how the police are used.

This paper takes the position that police can be representative in two ways: 1) police tend to be representative (both ideologically and demographically) of the regimes/governments they serve and 2) police should be representative (demographically) of the citizens and communities they serve. These two types of representation, as will be seen below, are not always compatible or complementary. Police

suffer from a rupture in that their relationship with their political leaders and the normative demands they are expected to meet can be conflictual. The next section, briefly outlines this tension as a backdrop to the discussion on difference and inequality in the show-cased police forces.

### Police represent their regime

State police have a distinctive relationship with politics and act as a microcosm and, in some instances, a conduit for political processes (Hills 2000:x, 55; Marks 2002). By studying the police, one may be better able to comprehend the extent to which liberalisation, democracy and governance (largely externally motivated ideals) have taken hold in a country. This policing-politics relationship is not unique to Africa, but its entrenched and institutional characteristics can be attributed, in part, to its establishment during colonial times.

There is little information on police systems in Africa prior to colonialism, but it is widely understood that with the arrival of colonialists came the “emergence” of modern-day policing (Brodgen 1987; Hills 2000:29; Francis 2012:12; Alemika 2007:3; Rauch and van der Spuy 2006:12). The police (as can be seen in most anglophone countries such as Uganda, Kenya, South Africa and Sierra Leone) were used as a means of not only maintaining imperial power and authority, but also as a means by which colonial forces could monitor production, commodities, labour and the generation of wealth (Brodgen 1987). Therefore, various African police forces (predominantly found in urban centres or capitals) were structured and created as a means of keeping local populations in check, while maintaining white colonial rule. However, the turmoil and insecurity that characterised the 1960s and the various independence struggles (van der Spuy 2006:12) disrupted police processes in a variety of ways, frequently leading to a degree of fragmentation as political players struggled to access and control state resources (including the police).

During these unstable times, the police either splintered (as in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Somalia and the Democratic Republic of Congo) or, not unlike they had been during colonial times, became the instruments of regimes and leaders (such as Amin, Obote, Moi and Mugabe) in fighting personal battles or practising patrimonial politics (Hills

2000:143–4, Francis 2012:12–13). As mentioned previously, Hills (2007:2) took the analysis a step further by highlighting how policing is a matter of presidential choice (whether it be democratic or autocratic) and that the nature of politics on the continent, which includes client networks, is conducive to the police being regarded as “content to be used”. Hills contends that further exploring the relationships between police commissioners and their presidents may shed light on the ways in which aspects such as personality, ethnicity and militarism play into the operationalisation of forces (such as ethnic and racial affiliation in colonial Kenya or the preference for military masculinity in present-day Uganda). But most importantly, this relationship and how it is navigated (which is not easily determined) may illuminate how the police are organised and how their labour is politicised along lines of sameness and difference.

The essentialist underpinnings of this way of considering the police as labour for a particular purpose are the perceived beliefs of the given leaders. That is, the given regimes, governments and/or presidents believe that police and police commissioners that are similar to them (or different, as in the case of Sierra Leone with Keith Biddle) in terms of ethnicity, race, and masculinity will better represent them and their political goals. This is not necessarily an essentialist assumption on the part of the researchers, but rather one that continually finds expression in patterns of preferential appointment based on social differences and similarities.

Whether or not it is formally constituted, police have a dual function: to serve their regime and protect their citizens. However, these functions are not always complementary. If a regime suppresses the rights of certain people, then the police will likely emulate and enforce these divisions (regime representation), which may be in violation of their duty to protect civilians. This is at the core of the two different pulls of police representation and is also a normative crux, in that it distinguishes between how the police operate with how they *should* operate.

### **Police should be representative of their population**

Gestures and concessions relating to police accountability and functioning are frequently made to still the fears and concerns of external actors and players. Following the end of the Cold War, normative notions such as liberalism, democracy and governance were increasingly used as a basis for reform and

are associated with calls for representation (van der Spuy 2007:2). By 1993, 46 countries in sub-Saharan Africa had implemented or demonstrated the intent to implement reforms in line with these new normative ideals (Hills 2000:17). As Francis (2012:9) so succinctly puts it, the new-found focus on policing in Africa is centred on the narrative of transforming “bad cops” into good ones. Therefore, through policy suggestions, access to aid and other interventions (including training), international actors (including other states, NGOs and thinktanks) can shape the organisation of policing and in some instances further complicate policing practices.

Despite the lack of empirical data on how the police force as an organisation is classed, gendered, ethnicised, and racialised, the police have been tasked with monumental normative mandates. Police (at least on paper) are expected to discharge a series of functions that are pregnant with connotations about the role of officers in the societies they find themselves in but also in terms of wider discourses and trends. Take, for example, the definition below:

The police is a civil force of the state, responsible for the prevention and detection of crime and the maintenance of public order. As such, the police service plays a crucial role in establishing internal security and upholding the rule of law. A responsive police service seeks to prevent and respond to the specific security needs of all people, regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion or social background. A representative and non-discriminatory police service seeks to create a legitimate and trustworthy service by having its members mirror the population it seeks to serve and by building a healthy work environment for all personnel (Gaanderse and Valasek 2011:14).

This very idealistic account of what police officers should do is loaded with normative ideas, one of the most obvious being the link between police representativeness and the ability to better serve citizens. In line with this thinking, there has been a shift towards making institutions, including security institutions, more representative of the societies in which they operate. This is also part of the wider pursuit of local ownership. However, creating a representative police (as with any other institution) is a complex political action, one which involves various levels of power relations.

Recent peacekeeping projects and UN interventions openly affirm that the inclusion of women will improve policing efforts by making them more accommodating of local needs and more sensitive to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) is-

sues, which spike in post-conflict settings (UNPOL 2012; Reeves and Doherty 2012). However, while one discourse may overtly promote the inclusion of women in policing in deeply essentialist constructions of what it means to be a woman, a parallel and equally essentialist discourse exists as to why women should be excluded from policing or be allowed to perform only specific tasks within the forces (Butler 2003:308, Eriksson Baaz and Utas 2012; Mobekk 2010:281; Salahub 2011:4). These are not only centred on beliefs about what a woman's body is capable of, that is her strength, but also on a social idea of women's appropriate place and that women are not "made" to deal with violence. That is, the fit may not only determine a women's inclusion or exclusion from the police, but also dictate in what branches of the organisation she may find herself (Charlesworth and Roberston 2012:249). As discussed previously, not only is the police force an organisation that will likely mirror wider societal inequalities, but it is also an organisation said to mirror the state and state pursuits of democracy, governance and liberalisation (Hills 2000:12; Francis 2012:11). Therefore, the absence of certain individuals from police ranks may indicate their general societal marginalisation or othering based on real or perceived differences. Yet, the *ways* in which these "others" are included is also telling.

Grant (2008:54–5) separates the perception of female officers and the roles they play within the police into three general categories: 1) *positive*, where women are seen as having a positive impact on the police service, such as deflecting conflict 2) *negative*, where women are seen as being unsuitable for police work and are as such an additional burden, 3) "*no impact*" or *domination*, whereby the patriarchal system and practices within the police remain the same and women are merely assimilated without changing the structures that oppress them. These three categories are generally used when discussing the issue of who to include in the police, whether they be ex-combatants, women or older recruits. They act as a form of motivation and justification for the inclusion of certain individuals into these processes, or exclusion from them. These are common discourses when it comes to focusing on any

minority or othered groups within organisations (the extent of change or perceived change they are able to bring with them). However, these perceptions are largely imprinted and forced on individuals rather than natural, inherent characteristics.

The same can be said in terms of race, ethnicity, age and even sexuality. Therefore, it could be posited that a black/Christian/homosexual officer will understand the grievances of black/Christian/homosexual civilians better than an Islamic/heterosexual officer. It is, however, unfair to assume that as a result of perceived sameness there will be a special understanding or common ground between individuals. That said, this reasoning can easily open up justifications for exclusion, which is not my intention here. Rather, I am trying to raise awareness of the essential understandings we have of certain bodies and the tasks we expect those bodies to be good at (or bad at). A representative police service is undoubtedly useful for its ability to better understand citizens and cultural clashes that those in power may be blind to (Mobekk 2010:286; Gaanderse and Valasek 2011:18, Salahub 2011:5). However, this is not to say that those with shared experiences and knowledge share innate capabilities, such as peacefulness (women) or aggression (men).

Therefore, representative here means that the police should mirror (in percentages) the society in which they exist in terms of race, gender and ethnicity (not necessarily class). This premise about numbers is based on an essentialist understanding of identity, one that suggests that when people share similar physical (and/or cultural) characteristics, they are also likely to share certain, supposedly innate, ways of behaving. Not only is their behaviour thought to be natural, but the very idea of sameness is thought to be coupled with an inherent level of understanding. Put differently, people who share a trait (whether that is whiteness or woman-ness) are thought to share similar worldviews. Using representation and its essentialist underpinnings as a foundation, I now consider the available literature on four cases and what can be deduced from them in terms of representation, inequality and the organisation of police labour.

## Uganda Police Force and the Kenya Police

The militarised, coercive and centralised Ugandan Armed Constabulary (UAC) and the Kenya Police (KP) were used to suppress riots and dissent, were trained in armed drills and were widely known for civilian torture and brutality (Musiime 2012:96–7; Raunch and van der Spuy 2006:78, Baker 2008:102). Formed at roughly the same time (which was “coincidentally” when the Uganda Railway was built between Mombasa and Nairobi for trade), both were used as a means of policing British imperial interests, leading to labour relations that were gendered, classed, ethnicised and racialised.

The representation within both forces appears to have changed overtime. During the colonial era, both represented the British Empire and its interests (in terms of demographics and goals). However, following independence the police became more representative of the new postcolonial regimes and were subject to ethnic favouritism and increased militarism. At present, the police are attempting to curb their political representation by engaging in community policing, with questionable success. What follows, again based on available literature, is a brief account of the ways in which work within these two police forces since their inception have been organised along lines of difference, which can in turn reinforce organisational and societal inequalities.

### Uganda Police Force (UPF)

The upper echelons of both organisations were filled with white British officers, whereas the lower ranks were reserved primarily for black “natives”. Not only were black *policemen* marginalised in terms of rank, but also in their access to equipment. Only in 1906 (six years after UAC’s inception), were “natives” working for the force allowed to bear weapons so they could police the protectorate (Deflam 1994:53–4). In addition to a racialised labour organisation, ethnic favouritism was also clear in the Uganda Police Force (renamed in 1906). Because of dissent mainly in central Uganda (Banyoro and Baganda tribes), the British preferred to recruit *policemen* from the north (Acholi, Lango, Iteso tribes), thereby fuelling ethnic and religious divisions (Baker 2008:103). These processes indicate a hierarchy of trust and perceived quality contingent on notions of race and ethnicity. The Banyoro and Baganda were not the only social group with limited participation in the UPF: there was also an absence of

women in the formal structures of the organisation until 1961, when female recruitment began (Baker 2008:103).

Ethnic favouritism was characteristic of the UPF well after independence, as Milton Obote (a Lango and Uganda’s prime minister from 1962 to 1966) favoured tribes from the north for recruitment. However, when Idi Amin (a southerner) seized power in 1971, Acholi and Lango tribes were the victims of violence and murder. Recognising the police as Obote supporters, Amin had many officers killed and began recruiting among his own ethnic group, the Kakwa (Baker 2008:103–4). The police were incorporated into the military, leading to police and policing facilities (such as stations and prisons) being actively used for torture and murder (Hills 2000:90). Under Amin, the police became an instrument of personal politics and a means of controlling the opposition and spying on citizens. This role was magnified in the creation of special units, such as the State Research Bureau (SRB) and Public Safety Unit (PSU), which were used to gather intelligence and carry out torture (Musiime 2012:99). However, once Amin had been expelled, Obote was in power again (1980) and attempted to purge the police of Amin sympathisers under the banner of creating a civilian, less brutal force. Obote also stunted funds to the police, as a means of curbing the growth of power in the organisation, leaving officers in a double bind: they were expected to combat increasing levels of crime while being cash-strapped (Hills 2000:91).

Despite UPF (2012) statements that it serves the public interest (see Ugandan Constitution and Police Act), there is still widespread political partisanship. Both Amin and Obote chose to exploit ethnic differences (both within and outside the police) to remain in power, and under Yoweri Museveni, Uganda’s incumbent president, patrimonial politics has also prevailed, with power being concentrated in the hands of groups of officials and officers from the Ankole tribe. Additionally, the head of counterinsurgency was his half-brother and there was a resurgence of arbitrary arrests (Hills 2000:91–2; Baker 2008:109). Museveni has openly expressed distrust of the police as an organisation, an attitude exemplified by his appointment of military men to lead the force: both the former and current UPF inspectors general were army generals, Maj.Gen.

(now Lt.Gen.) Edward Katuma Wamala, and Brig. (now Maj.Gen.) Kale Kayihura (Musiime 2012:116; Hills 2007:6; CHI 2006:12, 17).

In addition to the impact of presidents and the political elite on the functioning of the police, the steepness of the organisational hierarchy is influenced by other external webs of power, including the popular strategy (or narrative) regarding community policing. The latter is meant to forge better relationships between police and the community they serve while fostering greater security and development. It is hoped to flatten the steep hierarchies in the police by instilling better “horizontal” cooperation and trust (Musiime 2012:101). The UPF has attempted to incorporate community policing as a means of better serving the public, burnishing its tarnished status and improving its reputation, and in 2004 it even appointed special community liaison officers. Despite these efforts, there are still numerous human rights infringements and the public openly distrusts officers (Musiime 2012:98–109). Nonetheless, there has been success in accessing the community and identifying potential criminals: for example, between January and May 2008 the UPF was able to arrest 300 suspected criminals thanks to these relationships. However, political competition for power and patrimonial resources has stunted community policing initiatives. Such efforts would not even have been possible but for funding from the Netherlands embassy, which between 2006 and 2008 contributed euro 11.1million to the initiative (Francis 2012:26–7).

The limited funds (as with the appointment of military men) for the police could indicate Museveni’s distrust and dislike for the force. The budget allocated to the UPF dropped by 8.5 per cent from 1999 to 2004, despite an 11.2 per cent increase in the budget for development projects in the same period. Not only are the police receiving less money, but the money they are allocated is increasingly earmarked for other auxiliary policing bodies, such as the local defence units (CHRI 2006:19). The lack of funds is most felt by officers themselves (particularly lower-ranking officers), who have, at times, gone for months without pay (Mushemeza 2008:9, 14). In addition, accommodation is not up to scratch. For instance, the Nsambya police barracks was built to house 1,214 families, but actually in 2000 housed at least 1,600 families, leading to poor sanitation and crime (Hills 2000:96).

Not only has the government been irresponsible in its care of officers’ reproductive lives, but it has

failed to provide officers with the necessary facilities to perform their duties effectively. Stations are devoid of basics such as pens and paper, with more advanced equipment (such as transport and communication) being critically scarce (Hills 2000:95). For instance, “one sub-district of over two million had just 184 personnel and one motorbike, whilst in Fort Portal the police had no vehicles or motorbikes to cover a town of 45,000” (Baker 2008:108). The UPF has access to some 120 vehicles, but they are poorly maintained and the supplies of fuel are limited. Operationally, two vehicles may be used to police very large areas, leading to slow reaction times (one to two hours in urban centres and anywhere up to 24 hours in rural areas). Additionally, training has been undermined (and is considered a district rather than a national “problem”), leaving officers to come up with their own ideas. When there was training, classes tended to be overcrowded, sometimes in excess of 100 officers (Hills 2000:96–7). All of these are class issues, and when tied to political battles for power over the police leave officers with no one to hold accountable for their poor working and living conditions.

The UPF recruits roughly 500 new officers per year, but this is only enough to replace those who leave (CHRI 2006:19). Retention issues are compounded by the proliferation of HIV/AIDS within the force, which boasts among the highest prevalence rates in the country (double the national average) (Baker 2008:108). The overstretched police force has been unable to achieve its mandated goals, not only because it stands at less than half the target goal of 40,000 officers, but also because equipment and training are inadequate as well. Consequently, the government has got into the habit of sending in the army to help with police work (CHRI 2006:19). And, where government has failed to support training for the police, external actors have filled the void, such as the training programmes offered by France, the UK, North Korea (Hills 2000:95) and the US (CHRI 2006:19). Given the force’s recruitment issues, it is surprising women have not been seen as a new pool of labour. Despite the increased aid for and attention on policing reform in both Uganda and Kenya, gender equity development has remained sidelined.

In 1997, Uganda developed a national gender policy and two years later a national gender action plan, which sought to mainstream gender in national development. Uganda is also a signatory to numerous international instruments which call for

gender equality. Consequently, police reform should take into consideration the ways in which policing processes are gendered. However, the UPF has been slow in this regard. Documents still make use of masculine and male-centred language and there are no gender-sensitive internal codes of conduct or particular recruitment measures aimed at women (or minorities, for that matter). Consequently, the higher ranks of the force are dominated by men, the ethnicity of whom is unclear (Mushemeza 2008:14–15). Additionally, there is no information relating to what the gender ratio is within the force and how notions of masculinity and femininity are incorporated into actual work functions. In fact, the invisibility of women and issues relating to reproduction (for both men and women) is exemplified in the absence of mention of any provisions relating to maternity or paternity leave in the Police Act. The only restriction regarding reproduction in the Police Act is a reference to the disciplinary code of conduct (5), which states that police officers seeking to marry a foreign national must obtain the approval of the inspector general. Nonetheless, exclusions pertaining to women persist, despite the constitution's calling for gender balance and fair representation of marginalised groups as a fundamental human right. The situation is not much different with the Kenya Police.

### **Kenya Police (KP)**

As in Uganda, “natives” were only allowed to serve in the lower ranks of the force. KP's organisation did differ from the UAC's in the high presence of Indian officers. Asians, like Europeans (but not to the same extent), were allowed to serve in the upper ranks and were afforded more trust and authority (Rauch and van der Spuy 2006:78, Deflam 1994:55–6). However, the expansion of African recruitment in the late 1940s was tied to the British attempt to curb increasing Asian commercial influence. That said, not all black labour was of the same value, with the British clearly favouring Kamba over Kikuyu recruits. At the time, Kamba made up 18 per cent of the police and 2 per cent of the Kenyan population, whereas Kikuyu made up 2 per cent of the police but 20 per cent of the Kenyan population (Deflam 1994:55–6).

With colonialism came new ways of thinking about and of determining the limits of social inclusion and exclusion. One of the most prominent myths and narratives during the colonial era was of the black native who was idle and lazy. This was closely linked to contestation over labour habits

(McClintock 1995:52–3). For example, policing in Kenya also emerged as a means of accessing hut tax. Required to be paid in cash, hut tax was used as an indirect incentive to push men into towns and farms to work on imperial enterprises, such as the railway (Deflam 1994:53–4). However, discourses surrounding policing, particularly in anglophone colonies, were also shaped by a variety of other Victorian narratives, including fears about filth and criminality, which were associated with “natives” (McClintock 1995:47, 153). This led not only to the policing of intra-social relations and how people policed themselves and who they associated with, but also actual policing practices and who should be monitored. Two examples follow.

Firstly, Luise White's (1990) account of prostitution in Nairobi demonstrates how prostitutes who worked during the colonial era and in wartime were seen as a means of controlling the labour of men. Prostitutes provided reproductive value and were consequently policed less. However, as narratives of criminality, filth and disease became more prevalent, the movement of prostitutes and their ability to generate wealth was restricted more than ever before. This example illustrates the complex ways in which varying social divisions interact with one another to produce a mosaic of interacting inequalities. The white, male-owned police attempted to control black male labour by policing (either by allowing or disallowing in certain areas) their access to female black labour (which was further complicated by matters of religion, ethnicity and sexuality), all of which were linked to the generation of wealth and the maintenance of class structures. This example also indicates the fluidity of such inequalities and that they were not merely reproduced within the confines of police stations but through the work police do. The latter requires policing (or controlling) larger social divisions, which undoubtedly has an impact on the internal makeup of the force.

A second example of how myths and narratives informed the construction and practice of police labour is the escalation of white fear in the 1950s, linked to Mau Mau resistance, which in turn led to a state of emergency during which many were arrested without trial. The lion's share of these detainees were Kikuyu, who were thought to have ties with the resistance (Rauch and van der Spuy 2006:78).

The state of emergency only ended in 1960 as Britain prepared to hand over power. The following year, Jomo Kenyatta, a Kikuyu leader of the Kenyan

African National Union (KANU), was elected the first president of the country (Rauch and van der Spuy 2006:78). Kenya's second president, Daniel Arap Moi (a Kalenjin), was accused of feeding ethnic tensions so as to undermine the fledgling multi-party system, and was not afraid to use the police to do so. In 1993, he explicitly gave them permission to "use all means at their disposal" to deal with his opponents' threats of civil war (Hills 2000:186). Mwai Kibaki, Kenya's current president and leader of the Party of National Unity, has not been as blatant in his use of the police for political purposes. However, Hills (2007:6) cites Kibaki's focus on fighting crime as related to the pursuit of power rather than as a real concern.

The fight against crime also served as Kibaki's justification for replacing his civilian police commander Edwin Nyaseda (a Luo) after just a year with Brig. (later Maj.Gen.) Hussein Ali (Hills 2007:6). Ali was both the first Muslim and Somali to lead the police in Kenya. Despite being brought in to crack down on crime, his brutal measures led to his removal and his replacement by Mathew Kirai Iteere. There is little available information on Iteere other than that he was the former head of the paramilitary General Services Unit. Kibaki's move away from military leadership followed the negative publicity over the police's "shoot to kill" policy and is undoubtedly political. When one considers how commissioners are selected, the political nature of the appointments becomes even more apparent.

The KP and their operations fall directly under the supervision of the president and the ministry for national security and provincial administration in the office of the president (APRN 2012). The president does not need to consult parliament about his choice. Furthermore, the police commissioner is not given fixed tenure and may be hired or fired by the president at will. This is also the case in Uganda, where the two highest ranks within the police (the inspector general and deputy inspector general) are appointed by the president. These two figures preside over the functioning of the entire UPF and are answerable to only the president ("guided" by parliament and the ministry of internal affairs) and the Police Authority (which is also answerable to the president and whose members are chosen by him as well). Therefore, the internal operations of the police are largely political and there are no external oversight bodies (Mushemeza 2008:15–16).

Also, like Uganda, Kenya has engaged in community policing initiatives as a means of better

serving communities and of being held accountable by civilians. Community policing, however, has further complicated social divisions that exist between police and those they are meant to serve. In countries such as Kenya, where rural and peripheral towns are not policed as regularly and as thoroughly as urban areas, officers identify themselves as Kenyan and approach other nationalities with suspicion, especially Somalis. These feelings lie in the country's colonial past and its independence struggles, when portions of the country sought to secede from Kenya and join the Somali state. This policing practice compounds ethnic and cultural divisions (Mangi and Omeje 2012:86–7) and illustrates how community policing may change the ways in which inequalities are understood and managed.

According to Mangi and Omeje (2012:75–6) one of the "fundamental myths" of security in Africa is that the state can provide the security its citizens expect. In Kenya, security institutions are not able to control the flow of illicit materials and of refugees. This lack of control becomes more acute in rural areas, which are even more poorly monitored. "In ungoverned territories, the state is not always the primary source of authority" (Mangi and Omeje 2012:75–6). In these formally ungoverned regions, governance and control are divided along ethnic lines, using traditional laws as a source of control (Mangi and Omeje 2012:75–6). In Northern Kenya, the state has limited control, which is evident in the existence of parallel networks created and sustained by corruption and criminality. Furthermore, officers in these remote regions are underpaid and have even less access to the equipment they need to function effectively, making them more vulnerable and susceptible to corruption by illicit networks. (Mangi and Omeje 2012:84–5). These parallel sources of security are attractive to Kenyan civilians, who view the police as brutal and corrupt, meaning they have little legitimacy in the eyes of the people they are to protect. This leads to multi-choice policing (Baker 2008), whereby civilians may seek protection from an array of actors, such as private security companies, rebel groups or traditional leaders, the choice often being made along ethnic and national lines. All these factors further complicate the security issues in the country, as the police are seen as part of the threat (Mangi and Omeje 2012:89–92). In short, as much as the police are enmeshed in the politics, and are in the pay of the governments and leaders they serve, there are, as Francis (2012:15) and Baker (2008) rightly point out, other centres

of power to which officers are answerable, such as illicit networks or Big Men that exist beyond the police and government.

However, officially, the welfare of police officers is an internal affair dealt with by the Police Representative Association which relays officers' concerns (such as pay disputes) to the Police Council, which is comprised of four government representatives. Despite the existence of this body, there is little to suggest that much has been done to improve officers' sense of job security. In 2004, most Kenyan officers reported feeling that there was no room for career growth, an opinion largely influenced by practices of nepotism and favouritism. There have been increases in police salaries, with lowest ranks earning as much as \$140 per month. However, living conditions remain poor, with only 8,891 housing units for 32,361 junior officers, making for three officers (and their families) per room. Additionally, the Council is internal, meaning that if a complaint is made in the wrong manner, an officer can face disciplinary action. This makes speaking out about operational concerns increasingly difficult (CHRI 2006:15–17, 41).

Another operational anomaly is the lack of women in the KP. It is unclear when exactly Kenya recruited its first females. However, what is clear is the lack of gendered consideration in official docu-

ments. The Kenya Police Act has been written using only male pronouns and, like its Ugandan counterpart, has several exclusions pertaining to gender. In 2004, however, the Kenya Police did establish a police station operated by women (the Kilimani Police Station in Nairobi) tasked with handling female victims of crime, specifically victims of sexual abuse and rape (CHRI 2006:11). Nonetheless, the focus has been very much on civilians and responding to escalating levels of sexual abuse, as opposed to internal structures and measures to accommodate gender mainstreaming. Additionally, the hiving off of female police officers into a separate station that is meant to deal primarily with sexual abuse, may further entrench gendered divisions of labour by leading to a naturalisation and divisibility of tasks. "Any particular group that frequently occupies a particular role may be perceived as having the characteristics usually associated with that role" (Butler *et al.* 2003:307). This compounds beliefs about who should do what within the police organisation by making their functions seem self-evident and natural (Chan *et al.* 2010:427).

In contrast with the low levels of equity and the skewed gendered organisation of police work in the KP and UPF, the police in Sierra Leone and Liberia have been forerunners in highlighting gender issues within their respective forces.

## Sierra Leone Police and Liberia National Police

The West African Frontier Force was created in 1829 to police Freetown, capital of Sierra Leone, and in 1908 the Court Messenger Force was established to maintain order as a result of escalating tensions between the Krio descendants of freed slaves and other ethnicities in the protectorate. In 1920, these two forces merged to form the SLP, which was tasked with enforcing British law, while chiefs administered customary law (Baker 2008:131). State policing was also introduced into Liberia in 1920 (Rauch and van der Spuy 2006:144–5). However, it was only established in legislation as late as 1975, with the mandate of protecting civilians and detecting crime (Gaanderse and Valasek 2011:144). Today, both SLP and LNP are unarmed forces with the exception of their respective Emergency Response Units and Support Operations Division, which act as intermediaries between police and the army (Bokoe 2012:42).

With the civil conflicts in Sierra Leone and Liberia ending later than those in Kenya and Uganda, there has been a stronger focus in the former on representative policing. However, this has largely been based on the premise of adding women to the forces. Although racialisation and ethnicisation is also evident in the composition of the police force, these considerations have been afforded less attention than gender. In both Sierra Leone and Liberia, external actors have been deeply involved in police reform processes, particularly the UN police (UNPOL), which have carried out training, recruitment and operational mandates. However, there has been little reflection on the impacts this has on labour and the reproduction of social divisions. Nonetheless, during colonialism, the SLP, as in other British colonies, represented its colonial administrator.

### Sierra Leone Police (SLP)

As in Uganda and Kenya, during the colonial era the higher echelons of the SLP comprised retired male British non-commissioned officers. These white police officers helped to maintain colonial power and became closely associated with the administration. Only in 1947 (11 years after SLP's creation) did the force recruit its first women and the following year, its first Sierra Leoneans (Kabia 2012:57). However, in terms of the tasks they carried out and the ranks they filled, participation by British women and Sierra Leoneans (presumably non-white men) in po-

lice work is difficult to determine. One can only assume, based on larger societal practices, that they were marginalised and afforded little power and/or that their labour was divided along largely racial, national, geographical and gendered lines.

In landscapes such as postcolonial Sierra Leone, where the leaders lack legitimacy, support is bought and protected through the manipulation of the police, utilisation of colonial structures and ratification of official documents. This is done to discourage dissent and maintain power, which is determined along lines of difference. For example, the 1964 Police Act in Sierra Leone gave the Police Council, headed by the ministry of interior, the power to decide who could (and could not) hold senior positions in the police. If the resources such as wealth and power are not able to maintain patrimonial politics, then violence may be used to suppress opposition, as in the student demonstrations of 1977 (Kabia 2012:57–9). That is, the brutal nature of the police is likely to be manifested in the face of resistance and when citizens do not widely accept the regime (Hills 2000:8).

Manipulation of and marginalisation within the police continued after independence (1961) and in 1968 the All People's Congress (APC) took power and instituted one-party rule until it was overthrown in 1992. Thereafter the country was characterised by a series of military coups and a civil war that was only declared over in 2002 (Rauch and van der Spuy 2006:125). Successive leaders tried to influence the police with patrimonial politics characterised by preferential appointments and promotions (Kabia 2012:58; Meek 2003:106). Although they participated in and in some ways contributed to the violence, the SLP officers were also victims, with their personnel and infrastructure being hard hit during the conflict years. It is estimated that 900 officers (thought to be aligned with the Kabbah government) were killed, with a third of them murdered in the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council/ Revolutionary United Front attack on Freetown in 1999 (Kabia 2012:59; Baker 2008:135).

Following the conflict, the SLP, although still in existence, was a shadow of its former self (Kabia 2012:59). With rampant corruption, crumbling infrastructure and poor provisions, external players stepped in to assist with policing reform (Rauch and van der Spuy 2006:127). As early as 1999 (three

years before the official end of the war), the UK, through its Department for International Development (DFID), and the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) took the lead in reforms. Despite issues of coordination between the two, they were able to provide substantial operational support (Kabia 2012:60; Meek 2003:105–6). From 2002, UNPOL had a presence in all police divisions and managed to train close to half the force by the time it left in 2005. Competencies taught were wide-ranging, and included computer literacy, family support and criminal intelligence (Kabia 2012:64). However, the sustainability of these reforms has been questioned and the impact of UNPOL's exit in 2005 has been considered regressive because facilities and mechanisms were set in place that are beyond the capacity of the government to support (Rauch and van der Spuy 2006:125).

One outcome of the extensive external involvement in the SLP is the advancement of gender policies and procedures, including an institutional gender policy, human resource policies (which include provisions for both maternity and paternity leave), sexual harassment policy, a gender-sensitive code of conduct, standard operating procedures in response to gender-based violence (GBV) and procedures for responding to cases of sexual harassment/GBV perpetrated by police (Gaanderse and Valasek 2011:227–8). Interestingly, the 43 Family Support Units (FSU) established in 2001 to deal with cases of sexual abuse and GBV employ 178 men and 139 women, illustrating a move towards sensitising male officers on issues of sexual violence and moving such issues beyond being considered primarily female territory. One may initially conclude that women are not over-represented in this unit, due to the almost equal numbers of men and women in them. However, considering that SLP as a whole only comprises 16.26 per cent women (whereas for FSUs the figure is 43.85 per cent), this would be an unwarranted conclusion. As of March 2012, men still made up 83.7 per cent of the police force. For the women members of the SLP, there is limited information on their distribution by rank, their rates of attrition and their ethnic and class backgrounds. However, in terms of recruitment, SLP does not discriminate against ex-combatants, but does require that all new recruits undergo strict testing and meet several educational requirements (Baker 2008:140). Raising the educational bar is both classed and gendered, in that those with access to schooling, or who

have the luxury of completing it, need certain class advantages.

In 1999, Keith Biddle, a retired British police officer, was appointed as the inspector general. He was specifically appointed due to his lack of religious or ethnic affiliation and in turn was deemed more neutral and suitable for the job at hand. Biddle was largely successful and managed to streamline and better focus the functioning of the force “with less outcry and resistance” (Kabia 2012:62). More generally, police operations are primarily guided by the Police Act of 1964, which is outdated and gives chief oversight responsibilities to the minister of the interior, who can hire and fire at will and is answerable to the president (Rauch and van der Spuy 2006:126; Kabia 2012:57–8). In terms of operations, the inspector general of the police is accountable to the Police Council, both of which are also overseen by the president (Rauch and van der Spuy 2006:129).

### **Liberia National Police (LNP)**

The LNP, unlike the other three examples, falls under the ministry of justice. It is unclear, however, what role the president plays in the selection of the inspector general or the internal functioning of the ministry of justice itself (Salahub 2011:18). However, like the other three forces, LNP is gendered and ethicised, characteristics informed by a tumultuous history. Samuel Doe ethicised the police by giving the most senior posts to fellow Krahn, while under Charles Taylor the LNP was further politicised and militarised as it became a player in the 14-year war (Bekoe 2012:37).

Because Sierra Leone was a former British colony, the UK was willing to help with both short- and long-term security sector reform. By contrast, Liberia was not as “fortunate” in securing donor support (Malan 2008:68). Nonetheless, the US and the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) have been the predominant external police reform actors in the country. After the signing of a comprehensive police agreement (CPA) in 2003, UNPOL took the lead in police training in Liberia (Gaanderse and Valasek 2011:144; Bokoe 2012:42). The mission had trained 3,522 LNP personnel by June 2007, all of whom graduated from the newly (2004) established national police training academy. Having reached its mandated goal, UNPOL began the handover process and from 2007 the LNP took more responsibility for the operational aspects of training, including budgets and logistics

(Malan 2008:58). Two leading concerns were retention and vetting.

Retention is a vital component of police processes in post-conflict settings. There is a need to find a balance between retaining institutional knowledge (Charlesworth and Robertson 2012:242) but not those members who may have been perpetrators of human rights abuses during the conflict (vetting). This delicate balance is achieved in different ways, all of which are linked to and recreate varying social divisions. For example, the deactivation exercise in Liberia, which dismissed existing LNP staff (considered unqualified for their positions) and asked them to reapply for them led to a loss of qualified staff who knew the ropes (Salahub 2011:16). Evident here are tensions over age, skill and perceived worth, which may be full of preconceived ideas relating to gender and undoubtedly have class impacts: those officers who were retrenched lost a “regular” income and may have later been slotted into lower ranks with lower salaries.

Poor vetting has led to people who have committed crimes within police ranks. LNP, under the guidance of the UN, sent the information on recruits to NGOs (side-stepping communities) and subsequently only denied 10 per cent of applicants (Bekoe 2012:42). What is unclear is what demographic those denied members belonged to and whether this is even a significant consideration. Nonetheless, vetting veers dangerously close to the double-edged sword of the inclusion and exclusion of ex-combatants: including them can be a source of strife, which hampers and stalls policing reform due to rifts that continue to exist between fragmented groups, or it can contribute to an environment that is more representative and conducive to reconciliation (Call and Stanley 2003:220).

In both Sierra Leone and Liberia, there are no formal restrictions as to which units women or men can serve in (Gaanderse and Valasek 2011:227–8). However, wage discrepancies may be subtle, due to the differing values placed on different tasks or divisions (Hills 2000:15). For instance, in the armed Emergency Response Unit of the LNP (a decidedly masculine unit), only four of its 344 recruits are women (Bokoe 2012:44). Additionally, despite wanting greater female representation in the service in Liberia, efforts encountered structural challenges, in that women were not sufficiently educated to meet the expected professional standards. Consequently, the entry-level education standards were dropped and a training programme especially for

women was introduced. Despite these challenges, the quota system used in Liberia has led to the successful recruitment of more women, who now make up roughly 17 per cent of the LNP, even though they constitute only a small portion of the upper ranks (Salahub 2011:21–2).

In fact, LNP is the only force in the 14 West African countries studied by Gaanderse and Valasek (2011:16–17) that has an internal gender structure. In March 2008, LNP created a gender affairs section and also made it mandatory for officers to undergo gender-sensitive training. However, the organisation of this section is itself gendered, with five of its seven members being women, illustrating how women are overrepresented in certain types of police work (and how this representation and its organisation into divisions remains mostly invisible) and that concepts of “gender” and “woman” are constantly colliding and collapsing into one another. This is particularly evident in the fact that one of the main mandates of this division is handling issues relating to SGBV. Other key new structures include a women’s and children’s protection section, the community policing section and the professional standards division (Salahub 2011:18).

Salahub (2011) conducted interviews and was able to generate data on policewomen’s perspectives regarding gender reform in the LNP, but it would have been interesting to have had the insights of men as well. This one-sided gathering of data reinforces the collapsing of women and gender. Nonetheless, the results of these interviews (one of the only sources on officers’ perceptions of social inequalities) were telling about some of the in-house operational and labour-related challenges women may face in the LNP. Women, although grateful for the accelerated training programme, indicated it was not enough. They had no follow-up courses and were not prepared to cope with the professional demands of the job. Additionally, recruitment on lowered standards had bad effects on self-esteem. These feelings were reinforced when other policewomen (accepted prior to the lowered threshold) were more critical of new women and unforgiving of their differing standards (Salahub 2011:26). This brings into stark relief the notion that women understand one another’s experiences simply because they are women, but also how levels of fairness and self-worth are intertwined with how police work is done. In addition to their training woes, women felt they were still subject to sexual harassment and that, despite policies to help, they were unable to

speak out for fear of jeopardising their job prospects (Salahub 2011:26).

Based on the above four case studies, it becomes clear that, at least in terms of available literature on

how social divisions are operationalised and understood, there are definite trends with regard to the organisation of police labour, difference and inequality.

## Trends and ideas

It is obvious that police are, as suggested by Hills (2007), viewed as content to be used by their presidents and governments. However, they are also viewed as content to be used by citizens and other external players. The different demands on this “content” have numerous outcomes in terms of the representative nature of the forces and are contingent on time and space.

### Content to be used: Police bodies

Using sterile constructions like “job”, “rank” and “hierarchy”, workers (officers in this case) are found in an organisation where they themselves are invisible. Rather, it is the task that is important, not the person discharging it. Although the persons, in all their complexity, may be invisible, their bodies are not. Regardless of the neutral and disembodied way in which organisations and jobs are contemplated, they very much rely on the presence of bodies (Acker 1990:150), but not just any bodies – certain bodies, bodies that embody the symbolic characteristics to fulfil the task at hand. The word “bodies”, as opposed to “people”, captures how police officers have come to be considered as beings – not people – who are classed, gendered, ethnicised, aged and otherwise characterised (and practised). Officers have been constructed as sterile universal individuals, through “which” liberal and democratic ideologies can be implemented (Acker 1990:150). They are not considered as people, complex and fluid. That is, “filling the abstract job is a disembodied worker who exists only for the work” (Acker 1990:149). Furthermore, when the job requires being a representative, the body, ultimately, becomes a symbol.

Bodies are canvasses on which ideologies can be impressed, as well as markers through which socially constructed inequalities are portrayed and perceived. Bodies are what meanings are attached to: not the individual, but the characteristics associated with certain bodies in certain contexts. For example, policing is often equated with physicality and for this reason is considered “men’s work”, as presumably women are unable to perform physical tasks to the same degree (Chan *et al.* 2010:426; Butler *et al.* 2003:304). They are, based on the case studies above, also intimately tied to themes of belonging, trust and loyalty. This is evident in the political, presidential even, pursuit of recruits who are from the same or similar ethnicities or regions.

This sense of sameness can have class implications stemming from the practice of patrimonial politics, whereby certain individuals, based on their physical characteristics, are either included or excluded from engaging in the labour of policing. Take, for example, the exclusion of Acholi recruits under Amin or the concentration of white men in the upper ranks of the colonial police in Uganda, Kenya and Sierra Leone.

There is, then, a large amount of direct, legitimate political interference in how the force operates and looks. Although this is a fairly obvious example of political intervention in police affairs, Hills (2007:2) stresses that academics and practitioners alike know very little about the relationship between presidents and the heads of police operations:

Indeed, we do not know the extent to which commissioners are responsible for policing policy, or for detailed operational direction, let alone what variables affect their relationship with their middle-ranking officers or constables. Only when such questions are answered can the nature of African security networks – and the nature of the African state – be understood. Police governance must be contextualised.

This quote is valuable in that it highlights not only the hierarchy and connections between the state and commissioner, but also how that relationship, in the higher tiers of the hierarchy, is linked to the operations and functioning of middle (and presumably lower) ranking officers. This lack of independence from the state makes the police force a very political structure, one that both serves and represents state purposes, even if these are based on the preservation of difference and inequality. In light of this, it is unclear how commissioners are expected to navigate their highly ethnicised, racialised and gendered landscapes and what the consequences are for police labour (Hills 2007:4). However, what can be deduced from the above case studies is that the police officers who benefit (through patrimonial politics and client networks) by representing their regimes are not necessarily those officers who face poor provisions and lack of reproductive care.

Nonetheless, demands made by leaders and by external actors (who also view the police as content to be used) are not always synonymous. Although race may not be an issue in the inequalities evident in contemporary African police stations, the or-

ganisation of police across the continent has been shaped both historically and currently by ideas about race and ideology. One has to wonder what the impact of having an external, white police commissioner had on the psyche of police officers in the SLP. Despite being employed precisely because of his lack of ethnic affiliation (which is ethnic in itself), Biddle may very well have entrenched structural and narrative inequalities regarding Western dominance. However, was the limited resistance to his appointment a result of his lack of ethnic or religious affiliations? Possibly. Or could it also be tied to the disproportionate authority and prestige afforded to foreigners? Or because during his tenure, there was a larger UK and UN presence in terms of personnel and funds? Lack of reflection on the sociological implications of these interventions is troubling.

Discontent over ownership illustrates that current reforms inadequately account for local needs, desires and restrictions, and the heavy hand of international players undeniably has a role to play in how police across the continent are shaped. In reading about police reform in Africa, there are three prominent players: the US, the UK through DFID and the UN through its various missions (UNMIL, UNMISL, etc.). One has to stop to ask why these players have such a vested interest in police reform on the continent and what ideological, racial and gendered impacts their involvement has on the organisation of the police. In current police reform efforts, one of the more popular means of assistance is through the deployment of UN police (as with SLP and LP), who monitor and “guide” the local police (Call and Stanley 2003:218). However, UNPOL is normally faced with cultural and social challenges, such as language barriers and ideological differences, not to mention limited funding. Additionally, UNPOL has been criticised for being too multinational, which leads to both conflicting and overlapping lessons, due to the differing operational backgrounds of its members (Malan 2008:57). Training initiatives (such as UNPOL in Kenya and Sierra Leone), which are largely carried out by external actors, also raise a crisis of ownership of police reform. Distinct North/South divisions (or, if you will, a parent/child or expert/novice dichotomies) are becoming engrained in how police training is carried out in Africa.

As such, understanding the ways in which social inequalities (which have very real material consequences) influence one another is imperative to

understanding the ways in which the police force, and indeed any organisation, operates and, in turn, its effectiveness as a service (Walsh and Conway 2011:72–3; Gaanderse and Valasek 2011:14; Call and Stanley 2003:217, 221). Police, as individuals, cannot be expected to fulfil the grand narratives and mandates of the Global North when they themselves are not paid adequately or are reproducing divisions within their organisation. There is a tension between external calls for police to act as agents of democracy and their personal, reproductive pursuits of survival and the internal equipment and resources available to them for police duties. While police reform is vital to creating security, limited attention has been given to the actual working conditions of police officers. Police across the continent, barring South Africa<sup>3</sup> and Lesotho, are not formally allowed to unionise or engage in collective action. Monique Marks (2002) links this lack of internal democratisation to the rocky progress of police reform processes and broader democratisation. Internal and external democratisation are contingent on one another, and only through more comprehensive analysis will we be able to grasp how they interact.

One of the best ways of showing how police are content to be used is to illustrate how the demands on them have changed over time and space. First, in three of the cases, the police were used as a means of regime representation and in the pursuit of colonial economic interests. Second, all four forces continued to represent their regimes as they were subject to patrimonial politics. Third, with the intervention of external actors and increasing pressure from civil society, police are expected to become more representative of the communities they serve. Fourth, with the increasingly global focus on gender, police representativeness was equated with increasing the number of serving women officers, while other social divisions and inequalities were left by the way-side.

3. In 1993, South African police officers were officially allowed to unionise, which resulted in the creation of three institutions: the Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union (POPCRU), the South African Police Union (SAPU) and the Public Service Association (PSA). The establishment of these organisations as well as the inclusion of the police in the Labour Relations Act in 1995 has meant that, to a degree, police are able to flatten the hierarchy between themselves and the political elite that may have a vested interest in how the police operate. South African police officers have used the unions as a tool of collective bargaining to fight for better benefits and working conditions (Marks 2002).

### **Demands for changed representation over time and space: A focus on gender**

As fledgling forces, the SLP, UPF and KP were characteristically white and male, and representative of the British colonial rulers. However, as needs for labour and policing increased, so too did the allowance of “native” police. This change was brought about not because of a need for a representative force, but rather out of imperial interest and anxiety. Similarly, drives to improve gender composition as part of improved representativeness also indicate an organisational shift for survival.

According to Cuadrado (1995:149), the over-representation of women in the lower ranks of the police could be due to the fact that, “the earliest functions of women in police departments at the beginning of the century were those of social worker: ‘preventative and protective work with women and children’”. The disproportionate presence of women in low-rank positions is certainly the case in West Africa. Women in the region are underrepresented in security sector intuitions broadly speaking (filling only 12 per cent of positions), but their low visibility in higher ranks is notable. In Liberia, for instance, it is estimated that only 4.31 per cent of higher ranking positions are filled by women (Gaanderse and Valasek 2011:9). Structural and social practices contribute to women being largely confined to lower ranks within the organisation, thereby creating an actual and symbolic gendered hierarchy with class implications. Regardless of their confinement to the lower ranks, the desire to incorporate women is both normative and practical (Hendricks 2012:14).

The justification for including women in police work is essentialist, with women as the cornerstones of peace and men the epitome of violence and force (Hendricks 2011:12; Mobekk 2010:286). This parallel debate has meant that more money has been pumped into issues relating to gender, specifically GBV, but has resulted in superficial consideration of how social divisions interact with one another. Despite the perception of different work performance, there is little evidence that there is a substantial difference in the ways men and women actually conduct police work (Cuadrado 1995:150). Regardless, how performance is evaluated can be deeply impacted by the perceptions. That is, “it is presumed that the individual’s gender conveys special competence” (Grant 2000:69). However, according to Cuadrado (1995:163) the gender bias shifts, depending on the angle of vision. Men are favoured for brute force and women for professionalism. But the weight

given to professionalism versus force is also context-specific, and is largely based on local conceptions of the “gendered expectations about the ‘fit’ between officer gender and the crime or problem to which the officer responds” (Grant 2008:67). For instance, if a woman is unable to effectively respond to a house call relating to domestic abuse (something women are stereotypically assumed to be better at), she is likely to face a greater backlash than her male counterpart. Likewise, if a man is unable to protect himself physically (which is considered the natural preserve of men), he will likely receive more heckling and repercussions than a female officer (Grant 2008:70). However, the divisions of labour are not just between men and women – there are certainly also divisions between women and between men.

The limited involvement of women in the police in both Kenya and Uganda, as well as the limited information relating to their recruitment and participation in the force, is revealing about the extent to which women’s involvement was, or could be, considered legitimate by the various players involved (including female officers themselves). This is tied not only to local conceptions about women’s place and marriage rituals, but to colonial narratives as well. In contrast to other African police forces undergoing reform (such as those in Southern Sudan, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Mozambique), KP and UPF have very little information on and processes that relate to the mainstreaming of gender equality or even the recruitment of women. By contrast, SLP and LNP, despite facing massive operational and organisational challenges, have been leaders in attempting gender reforms in the region and possibly the continent. However, these concentrated pockets of information and practice are also historically created, because the upheavals in Liberia and Sierra Leone ended later than those in Kenya and Uganda, and reform was thus more influenced by international shifts in gendered thinking. In sum, both sets of police forces have long been politicised, and in independence have continued to be politicised, although differently, through presidential preference and/or new forms of external intervention.

There is, however, increasing visibility of women’s issues within the forces, highlighted in the creation of female police officer associations such as the Sierra Leone Police Wives’ Association, the Liberia Female Law Enforcement Association and the Association of Women Police Officers of Liberia (Gaanderse and Valasek 2011:147 227–8; Salahub 2011:28). What is troubling though is the scarcity

of information about male officers, their masculinity and their reproductive needs. Although policing is a male-dominated enterprise, little has been done to understand the masculinities within it and how organising processes are gendered.

In the literature consulted, the general absence of officer voices is astonishing. Salahub (2011) conducted interviews with policewomen and civil society regarding policing in Liberia, but even in this work there is a marked absence of male voices. Although men constitute most of the police service, there has been little effort to understand the ways in which the organisation is already gendered. Additionally, there seems to be comfort in numbers, with numbers being used in most of the literature consulted as a tool to indicate the force was becoming more representative. This was so, despite being hinged on essentialist constructions and failing to be critical of gender relations, notwithstanding percentages. Given the limited numbers of women in the police, it would be fascinating to know how certain masculinities are rewarded over others, and how they are, in turn, classed, racialised, gendered and ethnicised:

There exists a paucity of understanding about how gender regimes in non-Western law enforcement contexts play themselves out and in turn shape the ways in which indigenous members of these organisations are likely to negotiate interventions managed by (mainly male) cultural outsiders. (Higate 2012:35)

Higate's observations nicely highlight some of the transnational and local dilemmas encountered by policing bodies in Africa and how they mesh with various social divisions. This tendency to focus security debates on women and propose them as a solution places an unfair amount of responsibility on their shoulders by framing them as the bearers of peace. The question remains, however, whether the small number of women injected into the force have had an impact on the gendered organisation

of the institution, a problem often described as "add women and stir politics" (Eriksson Baaz and Utas 2012). Creating a more representative police service in terms of ethnicity, gender and race (but not necessarily class) is not easy and other societal constraints may impact its development, including lower levels of education or agency within marriage (Salahub 2011:3). Nonetheless, several practitioners and academics believe that by creating a representative police service, the police will be better able to serve the public (as opposed to the political elite).

However, policies, because they do not immediately bring about change and may not always bring about the right kind of change, have the potential to make inequalities invisible. By contrast, explicitly thinking about how labour is organised in a class, ethnic, sexualised, aged, gendered manner can make visible those "others" not normally represented (Acker 2006:45) or lost in the sterile construction of worker, or officer in this case,

The extent to which gender has become a focal point in police reform is, in part, indicative of the increasing volume of materials on the subject. The legitimacy of divisions of labour based on gender has been criticised and women have been seen as a key tool in improving security sector reform. This shift in thinking is clearly different from 20 years ago. However, another shift may be in our midst. The conflation of gender and women and the increasing weight placed on female representation in security sector reform is being criticised more than ever before, with increasing calls for an understanding of how organisations are currently gendered and what role masculinity plays in those organisations. However, these shifts do not happen evenly across space. Although there is a global trend towards focusing on gender as a unit of analysis, this has largely been pushed by the West, as is clear from the uneven implementation of gender policies in the four case studies above.

## Conclusion

The tension between the different calls for representation leaves officers in a double bind, unable to satisfy all parties. Not only do police represent the societies in which they exist, they also represent the governments they serve, having a double reflection if you will: one that reflects the government and its political pursuits and another that reflects society and the wider inequalities and discrepancies within it.

Officers are the people who are expected to keep control and maintain order. They are the ones who monitor the social boundaries of inclusion and exclusion within wider society, while also being subject to structures and processes that are politically contingent and loaded with history. They are expected to police abject actions and people in society but are also, themselves, not entirely trusted or incorporated. Police are viewed as content to be used by their presidents, international actors and communities but are frequently not trusted by these parties. Therefore, police in the work they do sit on many boundaries of inclusion and exclusion, and this is also the case with calls for representation.

According to the literature, in practice police are puppets of the state and have very few, if any, means of collectively acting against or resisting the wishes of the regimes they represent (as is evident in their poor personal and professional provisions). However, they are simultaneously faced with international, civil and normative calls to be more representative of their communities, calls which are not always compatible with the wishes of the given regime.

Not only do the demands for representation shift according to the government of the day but they are also affected by international and global trends. This is evident in the increasing attention,

in recent years, afforded to women in the police and the ways in which gender inequality and its construction changes over time and space. Officers who are characterised by some or other social inequality (such as being a woman) are valued differently and expected to police boundaries different from those policed by “ordinary” (read: male) officers. This is evident in the belief that women have a better understanding of sexual and gender-based violence. On the one hand, they are actively pursued for these supposed innate capabilities, but on the other they are rejected for not possessing other attributes (such as physical strength or bravado).

With pressure on the police to conform to governmental, external and societal pressures, it is increasingly important to consider how local, contextual factors inform and shape not only the existence of social divisions but how these divisions themselves may be reinforced in the practice of policing. By moving away from purely policy-oriented discussions to ones more sensitive to difference, policing reform initiatives will be more nuanced and better able to account for how inequality informs policing practice. This may, in turn, lead to more sustainable interventions. Instead of ill-informed, essentialist and wide-ranging calls for representative police, there is a need to understand how organisations are currently structured and how those who work in them practise their labour. Therefore, there is a need for more empirical research that documents the thoughts and feelings of officers on the ground in an intersectional manner, because only by speaking to the people who police can an in-depth understanding of the challenges currently facing policing reform be achieved.

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