

**Keeping up appearances: Female correctional officers shaping their
work identity in a South African Correctional Centre**

by

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I declare that the above dissertation is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that I submitted the dissertation to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at Unisa for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.


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ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

APA	: American Psychological Association
CO / COs	: Correctional officer/s
CS Act	: Correctional Services Act (Act no. 111 of 1998)
CSPRI	: Civil Society Prison Reform Initiative
DCS	: Department of Correctional Services
FCO / FCOs	: Female correctional officer/s
IPA	: Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis
JDI	: Just Detention International
LHR	: Lawyers for Human Rights
Marc	: Master's in Psychological (with specialisation in Research Consultation) at the University of South Africa
NICRO	: South African National Institute for Crime Prevention and the Reintegration of Offenders
SA	: South Africa
SAPS	: South African Police Service
SOP	: Standard Operating Procedures - Research Ethics Committee, (DCS, February 2019)
SIT	: Social Identity Theory
UK	: United Kingdom
Unisa	: University of South Africa
USA / US	: United States of America

ABSTRACT

Alarming global crime levels lead to increased incarcerations, resulting in changes in the dynamics of the offender population. Developments that call for urgent progressive reforms of corrections, thereby fast-tracking the employment of female officers. A qualitative study was conducted to explore the lived work experiences of 17 female correctional officers, at Kgoši Mampuru II Management Area in Pretoria, South Africa, to determine how they shape their work identity in this male-dominated sector. An interpretive phenomenological analysis methodology is applied, informed by the Social Identity Theory (SIT) to conceptualise the factors that shape these officers' work identity. Themes identified include the role of the corrections environment as a social institution, corrections operating as separate communities, and how being different contributes to the distinct attributes of female correctional officers. Emotional labour, vigilance and their uniform also proved significant tools these female officers applied as a means to cope and assert their rightful place in this harsh, strained environment.

Key terms:

Female correctional officer, lived work experiences, social identity, interpretive phenomenology, environment, social and separate communities, shared space, emotional labour, vigilance, sense-making

Titel:

Voorgee is my behoud: Vorming van ‘n werksidentiteit van vroulike korrektiewe beamptes in ‘n Suid-Afrikaanse korrektiewe sentrum

Toenemende misdaadsyfers lei globaal tot al hoër getalle oortreders in gevangenskap, wat onvermydelik die dinamiek van dié groeiende populasie verander. Die tendens noodsak die transformasie van korrektiewe dienste, wat gevolglik die indiensneming van vroulike korrektiewe beamptes bespoedig het. ‘n Kwalitatiewe studie is onderneem met 17 vroulike beamptes te Kgoši Mampuru II Korrektiewe Bestuursarea, Pretoria, Suid-Afrika. ‘n Interpretiewe fenomenologiese analisemetode is toegepas, met die beginsels van die Sosiale Identiteitsteorie as grondslag, om die faktore te konseptualiseer wat bydra tot werksidentiteitvorming van vrouwe in hierdie manlik gedomineerde sektor. Temas geïdentifiseer behels die rol van die korrektiewe omgewing as sosiale instelling, korrektiewe dienste wat funksioneer as afsonderlike gemeenskap, en die besondere bydraes wat die vroulike beampte, huis deur haar uniekheid lewer. Emosionele arbeid, voortdurende waaksamheid, asook die rol van haar uniform, is verder aangedui as betekenisvolle meganismes wat dié beamptes aanwend in ‘n uitdagende omgewing en so hul regmatige plek inneem in hierdie onkonvensionele werksmilieu.

Kernwoorde:

Vroulike korrektiewe beamptes, geleefde werksondervinding, interpretiewe fenomenologie, sosiale identiteit, omgewing, sosiale en afsonderlike gemeenskappe, gedeelde ruimtes, emosionele arbeid, waaksamheid, betekenismaking

Isihloko:

Ukushaya Sengathi Konke Kuhamba Kahle: Ojele Besifazane Babumba Isimo-bunjalo sabo Somsebenzi Esikhungweni Sokuhlunyeleliswa Kwezimilo saseNingizimu Afrika

Ubugebengu obuphakeme kakhulu emhlabeni sebuholele ekutheni sikhule isibalo seziboshwa emajele, okwenza ukuthi silokhu sidlondlobale njalo isibalo seziboshwa nakuba amajele esegcwele ngokweqile. Izinguuko esimweni sesibalo seziboshwa esikhulayo sezibeke ingcindezi engeziwe phezu kwamahlombe ojele nakuba sebevele bethwele kanzima. Lokhu sekudale isidingo esiphuthumayo sokuthi kwenziwe izinguuko ezinohlonze okuhloswe ngazo ukuphucula nokuthuthukisa isimo, ngokuthi kusheshiwe ukuqashwa kojele besifazane. Lolu cwaningo lwenziwe ngaphansi kwalesi simo-ke ngenhoso yokuhlolola nokucubungula impilo ephilwa ngojele besifazane uma besemsebenzini nezigameko zansukuzonke abahlangabezana nazo ukuze kubhekwe ukuthi basibumba futhi basibonakalise kanjani isimo-bunjalo sabo njengabantu ukuze bathathe indawo yabo ngeqholo kulo mkhakha okukhonya kuwona kakhulu abantu besilisa.

Ulwazi locwaningo lwaqoqwa ngokusebenzisa izingxoxo zokubonana ubuso nobuso ezingama-*semi-structured interviews* ezabanjwa nojele besifazane abayi-17 e-Kgoši Mampuru II Management Area ePitoli, eNingizimu Afrika. Izindlela zocwaningo ezasetshenziswa kwaba yindlela yocwaningo olukhwalithethivu kanye nohlaziyo olubizwa nge-*interpretive phenomenological analysis*. Ithiyori yokuzihlonza komuntu isimo sakhe emphakathini nokuthi ungebani iveza umbono wokuthi umuntu wakha izimo-bunjalo ezihlukahlukene okuyizimo-bunjalo zakhe uqobo ngaphakathi kanye nezimo-bunjalo afuna ukuziveza ngazo futhi azibonakalise ngazo emphakathini ukuze akwazi ukwenza izinto kahle futhi ngendlela efanele endaweni ethile azithola ekuyona. Izingqikithi eziyinhloko ezahlozwa ngenhoso yokweseka lo mgomo zibandakanya indima yesikhungo okwenzelwa kusona umsebenzi wokuhlunyeleliswa kwezimilo njengesikhungo zomphakathi, isikhungo sokuhlunyeleliswa kwezimilo uma sisebenza njengesikhungo somphakathi oseceleni noma ohlukile, kanye nokuthi ukwehluka kwaso kusifaka kanjani isandla ekuvezeni izimo-binjalo ezicacile futhi ezihlukile zojele besifazane. Ikhono labo lokulawula imizwa yabo ukuze bakwazi ukwenza umsebenzi wabo ngendlela efanele kanye

nokucophelela kwabo kwahlonzwa njengamathuluzi asetshenzisa ngojele besifazane ukuze bakwazi ukumelana nesimo esilukhuni, esishubile futhi esamazonzo abasebenza ngaphansi kwaso. Indima edlalwa ngumfaniswano ekubumbeni isimo-bunjalo sabo emsebenzini nayo yabonisa ingqikithi encikile esemqoka eyahlonzwa ngenkathi kwenziwa uhlaziyo.

Amagama asemqoka:

Ujele wesifazane, impilo yasemsebenzini nezigameko zansukuzonke okuhlangatshezwana nazo, *interpretive phenomenology*, isimo-bunjalo emphakathini, isimo sendawo okuphilwa/ okusetshenzelwa kuyona, umphakathi ophila ndawonye futhi olandela izinkolelo, imithetho kanye nezinqubo-nkambiso ezifanayo kanye nomphakathi ophila ngokwehlukana, ukuhlalisana endaweni eyodwa, ukusebenza ngokomzwelo, uphapheme, okwenza ingqondo

CONTENTS	PAGE
Declaration	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Acronyms	iii
Abstract	iv
Abstract - Afrikaans	v
Abstract - IsiZulu	vi
 Chapter 1: Introduction	 1
1.1 Introduction and background to the study	1
1.2 Rationale of the study	4
1.3 Objectives and significance of the study	7
1.3.1 Research questions	8
1.4 Theoretical framework	9
1.4.1 Social identity, work identity and the self	10
1.5 Definitions of terms and concepts	15
1.6 Structure of the dissertation	16
1.7 Conclusion	16
 Chapter 2: Literature review	 17
2.1 Introduction	17
2.2 History shaping corrections and punishment	18
2.3 Correctional centres as social institutions	21
2.4 South African Correctional Services in context	24
2.5 The correctional officer operating in a separate community	29
2.6 History shaping the female correctional officer (FCO)	34
2.7 The female correctional officer today: A call for unique attributes	37
2.7.1 Role conflict and emotional labour experienced by the FCO	40
2.7.2 Rehabilitation	43
2.7.3 Resilience and vigilance: A tougher exterior	46
2.7.4 A Uniformed Force	49
2.7.5 The correctional officer's image through a magnifying glass	55
2.8 Conclusion	57

Chapter 3: Research Methodology	58
3.1 Introduction	58
3.2 Research design and method	59
3.3 Research Approach: Paradigmatic perspective and interpretive phenomenology	60
3.4 Selection of participants	62
3.5 Data collection	67
3.6 Interview process	68
3.7 Analysis of data collected	74
3.8 Ethical considerations	82
3.9 Trustworthiness of the study	85
3.10 Conclusion	87
 Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion of Findings	89
4.1 Introduction	89
4.2 Overview of the research process	89
4.2.1 Research participants	89
4.2.2 Interpretive phenomenology	90
4.2.3 Extrapolation of data	90
4.3 The social identity theory underpinning the shaping of the work identity of the FCO	91
4.3.1 Micro and macro factors shaping the work identity of the FCO	91
4.4 Unique attributes of the FCO	93
4.5 Inter-relational process of identity formation	93
4.6 Findings	94
4.6.1 Main topic 1: The corrections environment shaping the work identity of the FCO	95
4.6.2 Correctional centres as social institutions	95
4.6.2.1 My Institutionalised Self	96
4.6.3 Correctional centres operating as separate communities	103
4.6.3.1 The social spaces we share	103
4.6.4 Main Topic 2: The FCO representing correctional services today	107
4.6.4.1 Being different becomes her saving grace	108
4.6.4.1.1 Emotional labour	111
4.6.4.1.2 Vigilance as my armour	112
4.6.4.1.3 My Uniform ... the fabric of which I am made	116

4.7 Discussion of Findings	125
4.7.1 The FCO shaping her work-life identity: An inter-relational journey	126
- Multiple work identities	127
- Shared communities, shared identities	128
- Social work identity	129
- Interrelated self-identity	130
- A gendered identity	131
4.7.2 Unique attributes of the FCO	132
- Consciously adapting and asserting the self	132
- A matter of masked emotions	134
- Symbolism, meaning and function of the FCO's uniform	135
4.8 Conclusion	137
 Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations	 140
5.1 Introduction	140
5.2 Recommendations and challenges	142
5.2.1 Realising the reality of the CO's work environment	144
5.2.2 Acknowledging the unique attributes of the FCO	145
5.3 Reflection and conclusion	147
 REFERENCES	 152
 LIST OF TABLES	
Table 3.7.1: Emerging topics, superordinate and subordinate themes	81
 LIST OF DIAGRAMS	
Diagram 3.4.1: Representation of demographics of participating FCOs	67
Diagram 4.5.1: Interrelated topics, superordinate themes and subordinate themes shaping the work-identity of the FCO	94
 APPENDICES	
APPENDIX A: Ethical clearance: Ethics committee of the Department of Psychology at Unisa	173
APPENDIX B: Ethical clearance: DCS Research Ethics Committee	175
APPENDIX C: Consent form for participation in a research study	176
APPENDIX D: Letter of consent	178
APPENDIX E: Interview schedule	179

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction and Background to the study

Correctional facilities do not have a *right of admission reserved* notice at their doors for new occupants. Corrections are essentially a reactive service, and cannot control who enters their facilities, who they prefer to accept, or who requires their immediate and constant attention and services. Most professional institutions have admission requirements that regulates the inclusion or exclusion of members, such as health care providers or tertiary institutions, that have the prerogative to admit patients or accept students. Correctional centres house members of society that are regarded as problematic and posing various challenges, but who are at once a vulnerable population of society. Often, these centres of incarceration serve as the only place of rescue for some individuals (Lyon, 2009; Owers, 2009).

The operations, dynamics and the occupants within these confined settings have long captured researchers' interest (Hogan, Lambert, Hepburn, Burton & Cullen, 2005), and in recent decades the criminal justice field, particularly in corrections, has become a prominent field of study (Flannery, 2011). Of interest to this study is research that focus on factors that shape social behaviour and human interaction within these centres. Corrections, South African centres included, often viewed as institutions of a neglected population have become facilities of preference for community studies, outreach, and engagement, in an attempt to restore past wrongs (Bezuidenhout & Van Niekerk, 2015). Although many studies in the past focused mainly on the offender, research on correctional staff, as research subjects, has shown a considerable increase (Paoline, Lambert & Hogan, 2015).

Statistics from a report by the Institute for Criminal Policy Research (ICPR), World Prison Brief (Jacobson, Heard & Fair, 2017), reported that by October 2015, globally, more than 10.35 million people were incarcerated in corrective institutions, that results in increasing demands on its employees. At that time, with a total of 159 241, South Africa (SA) had the most sizeable corrections population in Africa and represented the eleventh highest in the world (Jacobson et al., 2017). This rise in the offender population results in increasing demands on correctional services and evidently impacts on its already over stretched correctional employees.

The Department of Correctional Services' (DCS) Annual Performance Plan 2018/2019, reported that the South African incarcerated population increased from 160 583 in 2017/2018 to 162 875 for the period 2018/2019 (DCS, 2019b). SA has 243 correctional centres, of which 236 are in operation, including two public private partnerships with nine female correctional centres, 129 male-only, and 14 juvenile centres (DCS, 2019a; Makou, Skosana & Hopkins, 2017). With bed space for only 118 572 of the total incarcerated population (DCS, 2019b), it was reported in the 2019/2020 annual performance plan (DCS, 2019b), that between 2014/15 to 2018/19 overcrowding increased from 33.9% to 37%, and several centres where overpopulation exceeded 100% (DCS, 2018b). Overcrowding, as stated by Advocate Masutha, former Minister of Justice and Correctional Services, impacts on all DCS facilities ranging from services such as basic nutrition, health and hygiene, to providing security, adequate, manageable facilities, rehabilitation programmes, and community corrections (DCS, 2018b).

According to a report on findings from the 2018/19 Victims of Crime Survey (VOCS), crime statistics released by Statistics South Africa (Stats SA, 2018) showed an increase in crime levels from the 2017/18 reporting year, with housebreaking/burglary making up 54% of total household crimes, while still significantly high in the 2018/2019 reporting year with 1,3 million incidences affecting 5,8% of households, and 1.2 million cases of theft of personal possessions in SA (Stats SA, 2019). Violent crimes that represent threat, injury or murder, represented 42.1% of the crimes in SA for the 2017/2018 year, presenting a 4,5% increase compared to the 2016/17 year (Sicetsha, 2018; Stats SA, 2018). Murder statistics, however, continued to increase by 3.4% with 21 022 cases for 2018/2019, as reported by the South African Police Service (SAPS, 2019), averaging 58 murders per day (Africa Check, 2018; Parliamentary Monitoring Group [PMG], 2018; Sicetsha, 2019). SAPS, however, further reported a total of 32 000 murders for this period, based on murders mostly unknown to the public such as “murders of homeless people, immigrants, temporary visitors and gang related murders” (Stats SA, 2019, para 6). Sexual offences according to SAPS (2019) definition include rape, sexual assault, attempted sexual assault, and contact sexual offences, increased with 3212 cases, from 50 108 for 2017/2018 to 52 420 cases, representing a 4.6% increase, for the 2018/2019 reporting year (SAPS, 2019; Sicetsha, 2019). Rape statistics remain problematic, due to the challenges in non-reporting. Stats SA (2019), however, reported an

increase in the percentage of victims reporting a sexual offence, from 73% in 2017/2018 to 88% in 2018/19 statistics. Information available for the 2017/2018 year, 110 cases of sexual offences were reported daily (Africa Check, 2018). An alarming increase has also been reported on cash-in-transit heists, increasing from 152 in 2016/2017 to 238 in the 2017/2018 reporting year (Africa Check, 2018; Sicetsha, 2018).

These concerning statistics evidently impacts on correctional services, augmenting the pressure on COs in an already challenging environment, and a most diverse, demanding population. Of particular interest is the role of the correctional officer (CO), whose duties and responsibilities are mandated by DCS (DCS, 2019b) and require officers to ensure the safe custody of offenders under their supervision, maintain and promote a just, peaceful and safe society by correcting offending behaviour in a safe, secure and humane environment, facilitate optimal rehabilitation, reduce repeat offending, and prepare offenders for re-integration into society. For the purposes of this study, correctional officials refer to employees of DCS other than COs, such as psychologists, social workers, medical officers, human resource officers and financial officers.

As demands on and diversity within the correctional environment increase, progressive correctional reform has become paramount, and a way of addressing this has been to change the demographics of correctional centres (Husseman & Page, 2011). In the corrections fraternity, known to be an environment characterised by male-dominated attributes, no distinction is made in terms of requirements, skills or competencies required by all employees. In the development of a diverse workforce, a dramatic increase in employing female correctional officers (FCOs) has occurred, whereby they have become prominent role players in this fraternity. Research in this regard has thereby gained some importance (Lambert, Paoline, Hogan & Baker, 2007; Pollack, 2004; Smith & Loomis, 2013).

Within the context of this study, the following definitions apply in terms of the American Psychological Association Guidelines (APA, 2015): *Sex* is assigned at birth, based on the appearance of external genitalia, as well as chromosomal and hormonal indicators. *Gender identity* refers to a person's inherent internal sense of male or female or an alternative gender that may or

may not correspond to a person's sex, or to a person's primary or secondary sex characteristics, which is not necessarily visible to others. *Gender role* refers to appearance, personality and behaviour associated with being male or female. These characteristics, however, may or may not conform to what cultural and environmental standards prescribe. This often refers to the quotidian social role, such as male, female or intersex.

1.2 Rationale of the study

Research in corrections, similar in other law enforcement fraternities, has, apart from focusing on the incarcerated population, primarily been conducted on males versus FCOs. The various topics researched, the majority of which are conducted in other countries, range from among others their work life, attributes, attitudes, work stress, conflict management, and coping mechanisms (Paoline et al., 2015). Moving towards a more diverse workforce, by corrections, females' transition into a traditionally male-dominated arena brought its own challenges, and often studies were more focused on the obstacles or challenges experienced in this regard (Lambert, Kim, Keena & Cheeseman, 2017).

The history of women in the various disciplines as law enforcement officers, span over centuries, with the appointment of women as correctional matrons in the USA, as early as the 1840s (Martin & Jurik, 2007), working as matrons in women's and girls' facilities (Tracy, 2004). Apart from supervising female offenders, women were initially employed as matrons for their maternal attributes, to build the morale and rehabilitate "fallen women" (Kim, Devalve, Devalve, & Johnson, 2003, p. 407). Their duties further involved the training of female offenders in various domestic skills, such as food preparation, cleaning, needlework, as well as honing their skills as mothers and wives, to prepare the women for the world outside once they are released (Kim et al., 2003). Through decades, women served in corrections in various capacities, but it was not until the 1964 Civil Rights Act of the USA was amended that women started making professional inroads into the corrections fraternity. Research and information on FCOs in South Africa are limited, although reference to such can often be found in media reports, particularly referring to the correctional system during the apartheid era (Dissel, 2002). Information on the incarcerated population for the period between the 1950s and the 1990s mostly reported on offences relating to

transgressions such as opposing apartheid, political activism, and people contravening the pass law that regulated the movements of Africans in SA (Dissel & Ellis, 2002). The most prominent reports on the life of the incarcerated, are found in the accounts of women imprisoned as political activists during that time (Goldblatt & Meintjes, 1996). It is also through those stories that a glimpse of the FCO was discovered.

Within the social context of the corrections population, as discussed by Flannery (2011), FCOs are faced with the challenging task to maintain order in a specific social structure, and often need to employ different strategies or presentations of their own identity and self, to perform their duties. It is within this context that the study aimed to gain insight into their world, what strategies they apply to meet these demands, and how this shapes their work identity, but also, what unique contributions they can make to enhance their role as FCO.

Working in corrections is unique and challenging, where both genders are exposed to the same risks and challenges (Lambert, Hogan, Griffin & Kelley, 2015). As Hogan et al. (2005) have elaborated, it is not uncommon for a specific individual to be attracted to specific occupations. Despite the perception of corrections as a masculine space, men and women, both with different strengths and stature, often choose corrections to pursue a career. In this regard, a study by Hogan et al. (2005), was conducted to determine whether similarities and differences between male and FCOs exist in, for example, matters such as decision-making, and how they respond to or act in conflict situations. Interviews were conducted with 96 female and 96 male COs, at a large correctional centre in a South-Western State of the United States of America (USA). Results indicated that COs' decisions in their responses to conflict situations are similar, however, the sex of the offender seemed to be a significant factor in how COs respond to or resolve conflict.

As echoed by Lorber (2000), continued dialogue in this regard should be supported by not repeating and framing research based on historical standardised categories of male versus female characteristics and perceptions. As Newbold (2005) reported, even after FCOs were already introduced in male correctional centres in among others the USA, Britain, and Australia, they still experienced resistance and opposition. This was mainly based on FCOs being regarded as physically weaker than their male counterparts and would not offer much assistance during a

confrontation and might even endanger colleagues who had to protect them. As argued by Dothard (cited in Newbold, 2005) females pose a greater risk for physical harm by predatory and sexually deprived offenders. A further generalisation made was that they are mentally weak, unable to take the strain of working in male correctional centres, vulnerable, and more likely to engage in compromising relations with offenders.

In their fight for equal employment opportunities, FCOs are often still regarded as vulnerable and needing protection from discrimination, harassment, assault and various forms of abuse in the workplace, from offenders as well as male COs (Smith & Loomis, 2013). The FCO are often still viewed negatively, whether they perform well or poorly, are faced by a “*damned-if-you-do, damned-if-you-don’t*” attitude (Paoline et al., 2015, p. 340). So how do women then frame and shape their identity to match the demands of their job? Cornell (1998) claimed that it is by not using gender comparisons as the norm for equality. Although this might contradict the fight by feminists for equal treatment of men, the question remains, equal to what exactly?

Differences in equal opportunities and prospects in social and work life even exist between men themselves, so who’s definition of male do we then accept? Women have made great strides in their aspirations to be acknowledged as unique, but are often still disillusioned and unfulfilled (Cornell, 1998). In this regard, the question is often whether it is not the misguided endeavours for so-called equal treatment, that results in missing and ignoring their unique attributes and differences. Lorber (1997) has argued that the concept of accepting women as different, and the practice of *doing gender*, might be a factor that contributed to their struggle entering this discipline, proving themselves as competent equals and often causing them to remain in sub-ordinate positions, creating conflict within this environment. If progress is to be made, learning from these unique gender attributes in areas such as how we communicate, manage, and socialise is essential and to take full advantage thereof is imperative (Branter-Smith, 2011; Gurian & Annis, 2008).

My interest in correctional services was stimulated through my engagement with the Inside-Out Outside-In South African Corrections Interest Group (<https://sites.google.com/view/inside-outwikipage/home>, 2019), initiated by the Department of Psychology at Unisa, with Prof Eduard Fourie as project leader. My first involvement included sessions that commenced in 2017 at

Correctional Centre A, Zonderwater Management Area, situated in a small town Cullinan, east of Pretoria, South Africa (herein after referred as Zonderwater), with offenders, as well as being involved in the books project providing donated books, on various topics, to numerous correctional centres in SA. During the time of the study, I was involved in a research programme under supervision of Prof. Christina Landman, with male offenders serving life sentences at Zonderwater.

Apart from our liaison with other professionals or correctional officials, it was during these engagements that it became quite noticeable how the CO operate: they are the first line of contact at the centres, both physical and administrative, by means of body searches, searching our possessions, or books that we have arranged to deliver. The CO either allows or refuses access through the numerous gates at the facilities, where one is quick to realise the need to know your place and step. During sessions, they work in the background to ensure that our activities run smoothly and enable the team to conduct our outreach or research. At all times, their conduct was visibly professional, but it was their almost invisible presence that captured my interest. The FCO was my first contact with a centre on almost every occasion. Although I was aware that FCOs are employed in corrections, I was surprised to note the number of female officers' present in facilities surrounded by male offenders, as well as male colleagues. The environment of harsh, cold, grey buildings, hardened iron doors and gates, begged the question as to how it is possible to cope in these settings. Through my journey with COs and officials I have, however, experienced quite the contrary, and that the cold and grey setting is not at all representative of their warm personalities and professional conduct. I wished to explore how they experience their work life, how they cope, and what characteristics are required for them to work in a male-dominated environment.

1.3 Objectives and significance of the study

Behind noisy iron gates and barbed wire, sharing the day-to-day lives of the incarcerated, FCO are required to play various roles from matron, babysitter, attendant, and disciplinarian (Tracy, 2004). As offenders' first point of contact with the outside world, COs are required to provide various professional services, and become the confidant of offenders, but are also the eyes and ears of the institution. My recent engagement and research on the environment of the offender triggered an interest into a world that the FCO share with the offender. Their true roles extend over and

above their formal mandate from DCS (2019b) to ensure a safe society, secure a humane environment for offenders, and the facilitation of optimal rehabilitation, that requires a great deal from all employees. Clearly this demand for an array of skills, competencies and knowledge, taps into all levels of their existence from mental, psychological, sociological to their spiritual being (House of Commons, 2009; Tracy, 2004).

Through this study, the work-life of FCOs in a South African correctional centre was explored to determine why they chose a career in this challenging male-dominated environment, what meanings they attach to the experiences of their work life, how their work identity is shaped to match the demands the job requires, and how this enables them to navigate in an environment often faced with adversities and risks. To achieve these goals in an already demanding and challenging environment, Gangi comments on the work and life as CO, “They stand tall in the face of adversity and risk their lives to maintain an environment that is conducive to rehabilitation. It is an environment that promises hope to the hopeless” (2015, p. 1). It is with this background that I address my research objectives and research questions.

1.3.1 Research Question:

The primary research question is:

- How does the FCO’s work-life experiences shape her work identity to match the demands of her occupation?

The secondary research questions are:

- How does the FCO see her role and unique identity in her work environment?
- What contributions do FCOs feel they can make in their work environment to capitalise on their unique strengths and attributes as FCO.

To answer these questions and gain some insight into the work lives of the FCO, data was collected by conducting interviews with 17 participants from the Kgoši Mampuru II Management Area in Pretoria (herein after referred to as Kgoši Mampuru). Interviews were conducted by means of face-to-face, semi-structured interviews, with open-ended questions using an interview schedule. The schedule enabled me to remain focused, obtain facts, opinions and insight. The

open-ended structure of questions allowed for more informal interactions and for participants to feel comfortable to elaborate on their stories (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Smith, 2017; Yin, 2014). By following an interpretive phenomenological paradigm, the officers' lived experience and how they make sense of those experiences in their daily lives was revealed (Smith, 2004).

High walls and gates isolate the CO from the rest of society daily, where they work in permanent contact with offenders and often criminal conduct in all its different forms. It is in this space, which very few 'on the outside' know about, that they are required to perform their custodial mandate. It is within well-defined boundaries, that their roles and responsibilities frame the scope of their activities, relationships and interactions (Little & McGiven, 2014). This study explores how, in these settings, they shape and assert their identity to claim their rightful place in the corrections fraternity (Bensimon, 2004), and set vocational goals.

Liebling, Price and Shefer have commented that "It must be a pretty hard balance because I mean you've got to try and develop your interpersonal relationships with others so that you can control an environment without resorting to violence every minute of the day" (2011, p. 1).

Through this study, following a more holistic approach, allowed me to listen to, and share in these women's daily work experiences, and valuable insight was gained into their world. This involved not only how they meet the demands and mission of their profession, but also what unique contributions they feel they can make to give more prominence to their careers, in order to enhance the role of the FCO. This study was, therefore, not aimed at comparing female and male COs since, in my view, this would not contribute to escalating and emphasising FCOs' prominent role in corrections. In making any comparison, one assumes that some norm is set. It is often a practice in gendered studies using the male as norm, particularly for women in non-conventional jobs. The aim is to contribute to a better understanding and build on existing knowledge, of what shapes the female officer's identity and to illuminate their unique roles and contributions.

1.4 Theoretical framework

Aimed to address the primary and secondary research questions I set out to answer, my typical enquiries related to the "how" and "what" of the FCO's lived work experiences. This approach

complies with a qualitative research method, that are directed at answering research questions by allowing for a semi-structured approach, using open-ended questioning during, for example a face-to-face interview process, as used here (Willig, 2013). This approach enabled the exploration of those factors that assist in the shaping of the FCO's work identity. A qualitative method differs from a quantitative method since it is primarily aimed at testing a certain hypothesis with a theory as foundation, or to prove a specific theoretical stance. More on these methods will be discussed in Chapter 3. In qualitative research, explanations and answers are derived by studying specific phenomena, using the stories and voices of the selected participants. The theoretical framework provides a frame of reference that enables a better understanding and interpretation of concepts and findings, as in this study by exploring the work lives of the FCO and the shaping of her personal, work and social identity, without fixed prescribed definitions (Willig, 2013). For this study I chose to apply the Social Identity Theory (SIT) as developed by Tajfel and Turner (1986), that will be discussed hereafter.

1.4.1 Social Identity, Work Identity and the Self

Social Identity Theory (SIT), developed by Tajfel and Turner (1986), depart from the principle that, for individuals to function within a specific environment, we have multiple selves and identities that we need to apply to operate competently. These identities assist us to form affiliations within different groups. The context we classify ourselves into can range from categories such as organisational membership, gender, age, race, culture, to religious and political affiliation. Having to operate within a specific space and context, these multiple identities enable individuals to position themselves within the social environment in which they operate (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

Ashforth and Mael (1989) explained that our identity or self-concept consists of a *personal identity*, characterised by our psychological and physical attributes, abilities, and interests. Our identity further consists of a *social identity*, including several characteristics of the individualised self, as well as of the group within which we operate. An individual's social *identification* refers to how we perceive our interactions with and relationships towards others (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Smaldino, 2019). For example, as FCO she may define herself in terms of her different group affiliations, and classify herself as respectively being a South African woman, mother, wife, life

partner, friend, sister, daughter, colleague, employee, and working in the Public Service as CO.

This identification of the self and definition of others as deliberated by Tajfel and Turner (1986) is largely a process of inter-relations and comparisons, whereby one defines oneself relative to others. What these authors suggested was that a category, for example, *young*, only has meaning in relation to the category of *old*, as *rich* has to *poor*, and *tall* has to *short*. In the context of this study, FCO are affiliated with various inter-relational groups, from being a female officer in the correctional environment of DCS, in the Public Service, working within a group of other COs in a male-dominated environment, and supervising offenders, to mention only a few.

The self and identity also need to be discussed in relation to self-categorisation, where Tajfel focuses on intergroup relations, and Turner on the nature of the self (Cinnirella, 1998). Self-categorisation is regarded as a cognitive process dependent on the social context, that makes it fluid and flexible. It involves “cognitive representations” (Haslam, 2004, p. 30) of our individual selves, but also with the FCO in relation to her group memberships, for example, as DCS employee, colleague, co-officer as well as a female officer in corrections. FCOs themselves, acknowledge the shared work experiences, and often similar, significant meanings these are accorded (Cornelissen, Haslam & Balmer, 2007; Tajfel & Turner (1986). This closely relates to the SIT that focus on the role of self-concept that allows individuals to internalise their group affiliation, with self-categorisation at the centre of most group processes, among other group polarisation and stereotyping. This approach involves dynamic group processes and instances where in-group members, due to their shared experiences, interact and act in a relatively homogeneous manner. As developers of the SIT, Tajfel and Turner emphasised a focus on the self and individual differences by introducing the concept of possible social identities or possible selves (Cinnirella, 1998; Dumont & Waldzus, 2015; Haslam, Oakes, Turner & McGarty, 1995).

The concept of possible selves complements other approaches of self-knowledge and self-identity. Markus and Nurius (1986) theorised that throughout our lives, interactions and growth as individuals, we form various possible identities. Within different social contexts, these selves assist us to make sense of the world in which we live and work. This theory is regarded as a cognitive-

motivational process, whereby a person conceptualises their multiple selves as cognitive depictions from past experiences, and how they view themselves in future (Harrison, 2018). Possible selves' function in two important ways, providing a conceptual link between cognition and motivation, along with an interpretive framework to make sense of past behaviour, as well as provide patterns for new behaviour (Harrison, 2018; Markus & Nurius, 1986). In essence, possible selves represent a person's hopes, goals, and aspirations in terms of what they believe they can be, what they would like to become, as well as their fears, or threats of what they are afraid of becoming. Possible selves additionally provide meaning as well as context for a person's current behaviour (Dumont & Waldzus, 2015; Harrison, 2018; Markus & Nurius, 1986).

Within an organisational setting, individuals establish a new identity, attach new meanings to their experiences by continuous development as a member of an organisation, as well as within a particular group in how they express themselves and project their organisational self (Hatch & Schultz, 1997; 2000). An organisation constitutes different groups performing different roles, continuously in a process of making sense of themselves within the system. Brown and Toyoki (2013) refer to these processes as 'identity work' and 'internal legitimacy', where identity work refers to how people formulate, shape, maintain, evaluate and revise their life stories and identity, by integrating, constructing and reconstructing it in order to make sense of their situation or work (Little & McGiven, 2014). The internal legitimacy of an organisation is an ongoing set of social processes that manifest in a collective acceptance by all its members of the organisation in which a person lives and operates (Brown & Toyoki, 2013; Suchman, 1995). As with the FCO, she acknowledges her social identity as member of different groups within the same correctional environment, albeit co-officers, officials, or offenders. Each group with its own social system, norms and sentiments that contribute to making sense of the shared world in which they live and work (He & Brown, 2013).

Further to the SIT principles, in terms of shaping our social and organisational identities, it is not only a cognitive process, as mentioned earlier, but within the context of this study it was also evident that many social, emotional, and psychological realities come into play (Cornelissen et al., 2007). In terms of the SIT, it is posited that once individuals accept the identity of a group, for

instance as COs, this implies a shared organisational identity of the structure of the “psychology of individuals” (Cornelissen et al., 2007, p. 55). This aspect regards the self and possible selves that associate with the values, ambitions, beliefs and attitudes of the group or community (Harrison, 2018; He & Brown, 2013). This in turn serves as some of the components whereby the FCO, whether consciously or unconsciously, constructs her work identity (Markus & Nurius, 1986).

However, recognising the prevailing characteristics of a group or organisation in shaping a persons’ work identity does not necessarily mean one accepts it without reservations, but rather that one might define oneself in terms of only certain aspects. One might disagree with some ascribed group characteristics, where social identification only partly helps to determine the self (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Stryker & Serpe, 1982; Turner, 1982).

Workplace identity as the primary mechanism, as described by Ridgeway (2007), corresponds to how we interact in the workplace. Lambert et al. (2015) add that workplace identity involves the individual contextualisation of the self and others, and their behaviour. In exploring FCO’s work identity, one category that they automatically classify themselves into is gender, which refers to our so-called background identity that acts as a social process, integral to organisational and interpersonal groupings, and not just a mere individual process (Harrison, 2018; Ridgeway, 2007). Gender also colours an individual’s sense of themselves and their actions and it is such research and statements that stimulated interest in the role of different gendered models (Lambert et al., 2015). This is particularly the case in the correctional environment, where gender, as merely one aspect, influences the officer’s experiences, perceptions, needs, expectations; and ultimately shapes their identity in such a diverse working environment.

Lambert et al. (2015) conducted specific research on the very demanding challenges COs often face in their workplace and found that perceived feelings of risk and danger significantly predicted levels of job satisfaction and work stress for both genders. In exploring whether workplace variables have gendered effects, these authors proposed that COs may be differentially influenced by workplace variables, due to the differences in how they experience and perceive them. Earlier

research by Husseman and Page (2011) drawn from data of over 900 COs in Minnesota supports the assumptions of the role CO's attitude towards offenders differed, in the sense that FCOs, when compared to male COs, tend to be more empathetic, pro-rehabilitation and less punitive. This study, however, found that other aspects, such as the role of organisational and cultural factors, was also important in the way it affected a CO's perspectives, perceptions and experiences, often more than personal characteristics.

The corrections environment is a diverse and multifaceted space, with different role players that often cause ambiguity and role conflict. Within an institutional context, as explained by Weick (1995) much of our work life is about interpretation, intellect, and attitude in everyday decision-making and coping. In an unpredictable, often adverse environment, such as corrections, decisions are highly discretionary and roles often ambiguous. In the shaping of a person's identity these factors can pose several challenges. Making sense of one's world is a constant process. In this regard, the environment, events, and the context within which we operate, regulates, shape and define our understanding of the reality in which we live and work (Bolander & Sandberg, 2013; Brown, Colville & Pye, 2015; Heritage, 1987; Weick, 1995).

Within the contexts mentioned, this study aimed to explore the phenomena of the FCO's lived work experiences, and how this affects the shaping of her work identity. This was studied from the stance that shaping one's identity is a subjective process, filled with personal emotions, experiences, and behaviour. Fundamentally, this involves a behavioural and interactional process of the FCO's everyday work life, habits, actions and beliefs (Fleming & Spicer, 2003; Tracy, 2005). Further to this, the impact of the unconventional corrections environment on the FCO's identity formation is examined and interpreted in relation to participants' stories. This is also explored in relation to the FCO's interaction and operation within, and with different groups, that is, among other colleagues and offenders; and considering the significance thereof in making sense of her world as FCO, and consequently shaping her work identity.

1.5 Definitions of terms and concepts

Correctional officer (CO): Employed by DCS to ensure the safe custody of offenders under their supervision.

Correctional Official: Refers to employees of DCS, other than COs, such as psychologists, social workers, medical officers, human resource officers and financial officers.

Correctional centre: Any place established under the CS Act for the detention, confinement, training or treatment of persons liable to detention in custody or to placement under protective custody (CS Act, 1998).

Guard/warden: Used here to denote an individual or participant is directly quoted, to reflect an exact media report, or a literature source reviewed, to uphold a specific intent or content of the author. The correct term to use as prescribed by DCS is “correctional officer”.

Inmate: Also referred to as offender. According to DCS policy, it is preferable not to use inmate or prisoner, but rather offender. In this dissertation this term is only used in the direct quoting of participants, media reports, or when used in a literature source to uphold a specific intent or content of the author.

Kgoši Mampuru/KM: Refers to the Kgoši Mampuru II Management Area, situated in Pretoria, SA. Officially KM is also used to refer to this management area.

Management area: An area determined by a Provincial National Commissioner, which consists of one or more correctional centres or offices, under the control of a National Commissioner (CS Act, 1998).

Members: Used in this dissertation by participants and offenders, refer to COs employed in DCS.

Offender: A person convicted and sentenced for a crime committed and incarcerated for a set period.

Prison: Used here when it forms part of the actual name of a correctional centre. It is also used in the direct quoting of participants, media reports, or when used in a literature source to uphold a specific intent or content of the author. According to DCS policy, it is preferred not to refer to a prison, but rather correctional centre.

Prisoner: Similar to the use of “inmate”, where according to DCS policy, it is preferred not to refer to a prisoner, but rather to an offender. In this dissertation, it is also only used in the direct quoting of participants, media reports, or when used in a literature source to uphold a specific intent or content of the author.

Remand detention facility: A place for the reception, detention or confinement of a person liable to detention in custody, all land, branches, outstations, camps, buildings, premises, and all quarters

used by correctional officials in connection with any such remand detention facility, including places used as a police cells or lock-up (CS Act, 1998).

Zonderwater: Correctional Centre A, Zonderwater Management Area, in Cullinan near Pretoria, SA.

1.6 Structure of the dissertation

This dissertation consists of five chapters. In Chapter One, an introduction, background and rationale of the study is explained, followed by chapter two that will provide a literate review of various sources consulted to form a foundation for the analysis of data collected, themes identified, and consequently the discussion of findings. Chapter Three details the research methodology and approach followed in this study, as well as the analysis of the collected data. In Chapter Four the findings of the study are presented and discussed. Chapter Five concludes with recommendations for future research and a reflection by the researcher of the study conducted.

1.7 Conclusion

Chapter One contained an introduction and a brief research background to contextualise the study. The rationale of the study on shaping the work identity of the FCO in a South African correctional centre was provided, and an overview of how the study addresses its objectives, together with the primary and secondary research, saw elaboration. In terms of the significance of this study, I discussed how it contributes to a better understanding of the factors and aspects that shape the FCO's work identity, thereby aiming to contribute to existing knowledge.

In the section on the theoretical approach, I explained the SIT relating to a person's formation of a social and work identity, and possible selves, as well as the role of the environment and group affiliations in this process. A section on definition of terms and concepts was drafted, followed by an outline of the study as presented in this dissertation. Chapter 2 contains the literature review of relevant sources consulted to provide structure and context of my dissertation, as well as the basis of the analysis of data collected, themes identified, and consequently the discussion of findings.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The search for relevant literature involved a conscious attempt to provide structure and context. It furthermore assists in offering a foundation for the analysis of data collected, themes identified, and consequently the discussion of findings. The various sources consulted offer a broader scope of the phenomena studied, enabling the reader to understand some of the history, in a global and national setting, regarding development in the corrections fraternity. In this regard, I firstly explored the history shaping corrections, and the issue of justice and punishment. Further factors and elements found to be relevant in this and particularly the correctional services will firstly be discussed in terms of correctional centres as total institutions that consist of and which are regulated by specific organisational processes to supervise and secure an incarcerated population (Geppert & Pastuh, 2017), as well as manage various other members of this organisation, such as employees. To provide further context, literature on the South African Correctional Services and its history were reviewed, and background thereon discussed. A third area to be discussed is correctional centres operating as separate communities in the form of a space inhabited by large numbers of offenders as well as employees, cramped into a confined space (Sykes, 2007). Such a community is established with all the necessary amenities, as on the outside, to ensure efficient co-inhabitation of all role players; some permanent, and others temporary working residents.

My literature search and reviews then advanced to focus on the FCO's role in this unique setting, as well as her journey in the corrections fraternity. This was complimented by significant aspects that impact her lived reality. These aspects are represented through firstly a history on shaping the FCO, followed by a discussion on the FCO today. In this regard, important aspects of the officer's work reality were extensively explored, amongst others: the role conflict and emotional labour experienced by the FCO, aspects of resilience and vigilance, the role her uniform plays in shaping her work identity, and the image of COs as portrayed by the public and media.

It is envisaged that the areas highlighted below will contribute to an understanding of the factors that assist the FCO in her making sense of her work life and shaping her work identity.

2.2 History shaping corrections and punishment

Conducting research in the field of correctional services requires acquainting oneself with some background on the environment in which its employees operate, and in which its offenders live, as well as the role of all other relevant parties. We have only seen imprisonment as punishment and correctional centres as formal institutions to detain the imprisoned population for the last two-and-a-half centuries (Singh, 2005). In the search for the history one soon realised that research on the issues of justice, punishment, incarceration, and the offender has been the subject of many studies over centuries. Alexander (1922, p. 235) defines punishment as “pain, suffering, loss, confinement or other penalty inflicted on a person for an offense by the authority to which the offender is subject”. This definition evolved over time, from the primitive man, who was punished for his own protection, self-preservation, and deferred to his primal instinct, taking immediate action and destruction of those who posed harm or threat. Later, as families or society became involved in sanctions, punishment was very much evaluated in terms of the severity of the offense, but added to that, the offenders’ status and position in society was considered (Alexander, 1922). Similarly, Stearns (1936) reported in his *Evolution of Punishment* that for many centuries, punishment was very much understood in terms of religious laws of “an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth...” and to be applied as harsh possible, appropriate to the crime committed (Fish, 2008, p. 58). In early civilisations, it was at the discretion of society or community to decide on the appropriate sanction against the “wrongdoer” (Stearns, 1936, p. 219).

As civilisation developed and retribution became more formalised, common practices worldwide took the form of public displays of bodily punishment, for example, for minor offenses, where the offender was then free to go. Public prosecutions were also conducted for more serious offenses, such as executions by firing squads and public crucifixion (Singh, 2005; Smith, 2011). Pritikin (2006) explains that with further developments of correctional practices, retribution related more to an interpretation of the Hebrew oral law that did not entail severe physical punishment, but rather took the form of a reward, similar to “the value of the ‘victim’s lost eye’” (Pritikin, 2006, p. 716). This also echoed and contributed to the more current principles and aim of punishment, that is, to be more aligned with an individual’s restoration, as well as spiritual rehabilitation (Pritikin, 2006).

During the earliest times, male and female offenders were placed together in any place available to house these so-called outcasts, for example in cellars under buildings. No policies or standards existed to regulate the management of offenders, their welfare, or where they should be housed (Singh, 2005). These buildings and living conditions were unsanitary, unfit and unacceptable for habitation, that evidently contributed to an increase in undesirable, immoral behaviour. Such actions were not only taken by offenders, but by officers who had to work under these conditions, ultimately regressed to improper conduct as well, such as selling of liquor to the imprisoned (Singh, 2005).

In Europe, over centuries, outcries against torture as a form of punishment, and disproportionate sentencing, as well as the appalling living conditions of those incarcerated were a concern of many. One such was echoed by the work of an Italian marquis named Beccaria, famous for his novel *Crime and Punishment* (1762), for which he did not acknowledge authorship for many years (Stearns, 1936), possibly for fear of persecution, since his findings were both exposing and challenging the authorities at the time. It was Voltaire who translated his book into French, that escalated his work to start a long process of improving the welfare of offenders and a re-evaluation of the severe forms of punishment (Stearns, 1936). Many of Beccaria's recommendations for a more enlightened and humane approach to punishment became principles that are still found in today's schools of law and criminology. Some highlighted by Matetoa (2012) include: the humane treatment of all; that the law regulates and awards sentencing, and that it should exist to protect society against an offender. Matetoa (2012) also highlighted Beccaria's sentiment that the gravity of the offence and harm inflicted to individual as well as society, should be balanced versus the sentence awarded. A further matter of concern was the practice that convictions and sentencing of those from underprivileged and often destitute individuals formed the majority of the incarcerated population. Consequently, the calls were made for equal punishment to be awarded, irrespective of one's status (Bagaric, 2015; Matetoa, 2012).

During this time, between 1773 to 1789, John Howard a High Sheriff of Bedford in England, took upon himself the responsibilities to inspect various correctional facilities through Britain and Europe. Over these years he was known for his passion, dedication, and concern for the

circumstances of offenders and travelled to numerous countries in his pursuits (Simkin, 2014; Stearns, 1936). The findings that he reported on in his books, were in many cases so shocking that some countries refused to publish it. Howard died in 1790, ironically, after contracting typhoid on one of these visits (Simkin, 2014, Stearns, 1936). His findings resulted in changes such as legislation that regulated improvement of conditions for those incarcerated including provision for a sanitary, healthy environment with more space, fresh air and water, and washing facilities and ovens to sanitise clothing (Matetua, 2012).

Howard and Beccaria also fought for the separation of male and female offenders. Thereafter they advocated for separating adult and juvenile offenders, according to age and type of offense (Matetua, 2012). Howard also suggested the establishment of penitentiaries or reformatories, rather than places of executions and severe punishment, where a chaplain as well as medical services be made available to offenders (Stearns, 1936). His wishes were that “human hearts could be softened by penitence and prayer” and therefore, that the penitentiaries should be designed to promote corrective and rehabilitative measures for offenders (Stearns, 1936, p. 224).

The penal system in South Africa around the time of the first 17th century Dutch settlers was not much different from that in the rest of the world. Offenders were often chained and had to work as labourers or slaves, while some guilty of more heinous crimes were removed from society and deported to Robben Island (Singh, 2005). Overcrowding soon became a problem and alternative buildings had to be erected. Facilities to house offenders, such as the Fort and the Castle, were built in the Cape Colony. Another matter of concern was the increase of “prison fever” (Singh, 2005, p. 16), in particular typhoid, a disease that was prevalent in close confined spaces, particularly amongst the imprisoned population (Stearns, 1936). Not only buildings but also “prison ships” were used as means of harbouring large numbers of the incarcerated, that also included soldiers of war (McCandless, 2007, p. 231). Travelling long distances to other countries, to be deported or transported to desolated places to be incarcerated, many died of yellow fever, smallpox, malaria, and typhoid. Most of these diseases are highly contagious, worsening the already dire conditions (McCandless, 2007).

In late 1600, the Cape and Robben Island were also used by many other countries to deport offenders as a form of punishment (Matetoa, 2012). During those times, prisons as described by Neser (cited in Matetoa, 2012; Singh, 2005) were places of detention, and not places where ordinary punishment was affected, but rather as places of torture and to obtain confessions and house pre-trial offenders. It was with the arrival of the British at the Cape between 1795 and 1803 that radical changes and reformations occurred in the Cape region. Changes implemented in Europe and other countries, influenced by among others Beccaria, Howard, and Roman-Dutch law, eventually reached the most southern part of the African continent. The practice of physical bodily harm as punishment was abolished, and sentences and incarceration were sanctioned proportional to the seriousness of the offence (Singh, 2005; Van Zyl Smit, 1984). Being such a young colony, provincialisation over vast distances took time, and therefore the implementation of any new government policies was slow. Other provinces in the country did not have any formal systems, or even proper buildings to house offenders (Singh, 2005). From that time onwards, especially after the unification of South Africa in 1910, the penal system of South Africa underwent various changes, for example, the establishment of a Department of Prisons, the promulgation of the Prisons and Reformatories Act of 1911, as well as introducing a Prison Board to ensure the proper treatment of and better conditions in which offenders are housed (Singh, 2005). The late 1980s and early 1990s correctional centres in South Africa were desegregated, and in 1993, solitary confinement and corporal punishment were abolished. During the political transition and with the implementation of the new Constitution, the rights of offenders and correctional reform received high priority (Dissel, 2002). This is to be discussed in more detail in section 2.3 below.

2.3 Correctional centres as social institutions

Correctional centres, its employees and offenders, have for decades been subjects of research in various disciplines. Conducting such research, one inevitably encounters theorists and sociologists such as Michel Foucault and Erving Goffman. Foucault, known for, amongst others, his work *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975/1977) may not be the first, but is probably the best known for his studies on the correctional system operating as total institutions.

His representations initially focused on punishment by means of total isolation, deprivation of freedom, torture, infliction of pain, and often public executions before and during the 19th centuries (Foucault, 1975/1977; Power, 2011). He later moved his focus to a more established form or *the birth* of a correctional system, facility or penitentiary, an institution closed-off from the outside, where offenders ought to repent and reform from their old ways (Hacking, 2004). Foucault used the actual design of these centres to replace the previous power of physical punishment (Franzén & Holmqvist, 2014). The structures of walls, fences, surrounded by watchtowers unconsciously symbolised a new method of power, whereby offenders were under constant surveillance and control by COs (Foucault, 1975/1977; Franzén & Holmqvist, 2014), without exerting any visible physical force. These structures were purposefully designed to create the illusion that offenders are surrounded by glass walls. They were institutionalised, fixed in a set, classified, categorised, and numbered. These institutions were new machines designed to discipline their bodies and minds, training, continuous recording, coding, and correcting behaviour (Foucault, 1975/1977; Power, 2011).

Goffman (1961) is known for his studies on, for example, mental hospitals and military camps, and for purposes of this study, I will focus on his accounts of corrections as a system and a total institution. His contribution to the discipline, as documented in his renowned book *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates* (1961), was not dissimilar to that of Foucault, but was marked by a shift of emphasis from a top-down approach to a bottom-up approach, supported by effective organisational design (Hacking, 2004). Foucault's views focused on the design of total power and control, without promoting any interaction between residents, whereas Goffman's focus was more towards the individuals occupying these spaces, and the social relationships between all occupants and employees. He referred to correctional centres as total institutions, where large numbers of individuals live and work together, cut off from the wider society for fixed, often quite extended periods (Goffman, 1961; Hacking, 2004). For Goffman, the symbolism of these institutions was found therein that individuals are involuntarily incarcerated, removed from their normal lives and society as the offender knew it. For the outside world, they become outsiders (Carrigan, 2015; Goffman, 1961; 2009) and within this institution – a new society as it were – they become insiders.

The corrections environment is regarded as one of a few where the main purpose is to supervise and secure an “unwilling and potentially violent population” (Armstrong & Griffin, 2004, p. 577). Corrections deal with humans in a complex, dynamic, demanding and hostile environment (Lambert et al., 2015) that, apart from interruptions with periods of crisis, at the same time is regarded as rather routine (Jayewardene & Jayasuriya, 1981). Crawley (2013) extrapolated further by describing the correctional system and centres of incarceration as both extraordinary and ordinary. It exhibits characteristics of extraordinary facilities inhabited by large groups, such as offenders, officers, and officials, unknown to each other, placed in a confined space, in constant contact. At the same time, it is ordinary in the sense that this population’s lives revolve around everyday chores, similar to what they would have performed if outside, eating, sleeping, doing the washing, while often working, studying and socialising.

Correctional centres as total institutions consist of specific organisational processes that, compared to other organisations, and which are characterised by a “heightened and condensed” (Geppert & Pastuh, 2017, p. 256) structure that includes various members of clearly defined groups, following strict procedures and protocol. There is a clear divide between the groups of COs versus offender, with almost no social interaction. This structure is required to regulate operations of a large population sharing the same environment, coupled with the amount of time to be spent in these institutions. These institutions operate like a machine, where individuals need to co-exist, be treated similarly, and participate in the same activities (Goffman, 1961; 2009). Daily routines, mostly regulated by COs, are pre-planned and monitored, where the activities of its occupants almost synchronised. A further characteristic of corrections as total institutions is the visible division between high ranking officials and lower-ranked officers. Such organisations also follow a set hierarchy of officials and officers, with stringent measures of control and management (Davies, 1989; Geppert & Pastuh, 2017).

During earlier centuries, correctional centres were primarily regarded as a more humane alternative to other punishment such as public humiliation practices, exile, and torture. As elaborated by Singh (2005) before the new Prisons Act No. 8 of 1959 was established, the main objective of the DCSs was the safe custody of offenders. Placing a greater emphasis on critical social services to be provided by Correctional Services, its facilities, employees, recruiting

practices and training methods, required drastic changes. This resulted in correctional facilities becoming closed institutions, prohibiting the media, reporting, or the publication of photographs or any outside inspections.

The conditions of correctional centres improved over time, and were seen as an opportunity to rehabilitate, rather than merely a practice of just punishment (Phelps, 2011; Sykes, 2007). The continuous increase in the corrections population globally remains a challenge for COs to perform and balance their main functions of control and upholding a punishment-oriented approach, as well as to maintain a rehabilitative environment (Gordon & Stichman, 2015). In 2006 a study was conducted with COs in different correctional centres in a Mid-Atlantic state of the USA (Gordon & Stichman, 2015). The aim of the study was to determine the outcomes and effectiveness of a rehabilitative versus punishment-oriented approach among the COs in the selected centres. Over 1,200 responses indicated that officers with a more rehabilitative-orientation, as opposed to a punishment-oriented attitude, felt they had more legitimate and expert control and influence, as a means of gaining compliance and respect from offenders.

Even though these practices and perceptions are often still echoed, correctional centres cannot and should not be seen as institutions that merely punish, process or produce lifeless, meaningless products or services to unwilling clients. It is an interactional social environment where, as stated by Podsakoff and MacKenzie (cited in Lambert, Barton-Bellessa & Hogan, 2014) prosocial behaviours provide the lubrication for the efficient operation of this machine.

2.4 South African correctional services in context

The changes that characterised Correctional Services reform in South Africa during the 1990s included the release of large numbers of political prisoners, as well as revoking the death penalty in 1995 (Singh, 2005). To counter this change in the practice of the death penalty, the first C-Max correctional centre was established in 1997 as a conversion of “death row” to house offenders that committed of the most heinous crimes, the “worst of the worst” (Dissel & Ellis, 2002, p. 143). Offenders in this facility are under 24-hour maximum security, with limited movement of 1-hour allowed per day.

Corrections were known for their quasi-military style practices and management since 1950, and in 1996 this service was de-militarised. This involved major changes to the organisational and ranking structure and designations, daily parades, as well as the removal of all uniform insignia (Dissel, 2002). The objective of these changes was to better achieve the DCS' mandate for the development and rehabilitation of offenders. This restructuring was not received well, since many CO were of the view that they were stripped of their status and felt quite demoralised (Dissel, 2002; Singh, 2005).

With the major changes in South Africa since 1990, it was envisaged that it would result in a decline in the incarcerated population, however, this was not the case, as overcrowding and the conditions of the facilities remained a serious concern (Dissel, 2002; Singh, 2005). During 2001, the DCS Strategic Plan for 2002-2005 was adopted to address the various challenges, with the rehabilitation of offenders as focus. Where DCS previously had a reactive approach in this regard, a more pro-active approach was tabled to offer programmes that reintegrated offenders successfully into society. As Singh (2005) mentioned, these strategies included among others, the division of correctional centres into smaller units; focus on the fundamental rights of the incarcerated population; the protection of offenders against the use of unnecessary force or solitary confinement; and increased programmes to encourage community involvement; to improve offender-officer relations and supervision of offenders; encourage offender participation in various programmes offered; establish measures to address the serious challenges of gangsterism; amended disciplinary policy; and introduction of a new parole system. In 2001 an anti-corruption strategy was also introduced with the aim of investigating allegations of corruption and mismanagement; enforcing disciplinary actions against corruption and mismanagement; and leadership that focuses on preventing corruption, as well as non-adherence to rules and regulations (Singh, 2005).

Since 1993, calls have been made for investigations into Correctional Services, that resulted in the recognition of offenders' rights in the Constitution of South Africa. After a five-year investigation, conducted by the Jali Commission¹ in 2005, the DCS was declared as “no longer

¹ Commission of inquiry into alleged incidents of corruption, maladministration, violence or intimidation into the Department of Correctional Services appointed by order of the President of the Republic of South Africa in terms of Proclamation no. 135 of 2001, as amended.

governable” (McGrath & Van der Spuy, 2014, p. 39) reporting on high incidents of corruption in procurement procedures and appointments; administrative inability; offender abuse; coercion; sexual violence among offenders; prevalent overcrowding; and gangsterism. Apart from various other relevant Acts, policies, White Papers and mechanisms to address these challenges an independent watchdog, the Judicial Inspectorate of Correctional Services (JICS) also took effect in 2000, headed by an Inspecting Judge (McGrath & Van der Spuy, 2014).

Today these concerns are still the focus of reform in DCS, and at the core, the CO remains an important role player in this very challenging environment. The reality is that many challenges of the correctional system will remain due to South Africa’s high crime rates which, as voiced by Sicetsha (2019, para 5) shape the “discourse on how violent South Africa is”. Statistics released by SAPS and Stats SA reported a total of 2.01 million recorded crimes for the period 1 April 2018 to 30 March 2019 (Sicetsha, 2019). Weapons mostly used to commit crimes such as house robbery were 54 % guns and 47 % knives (Stats SA, 2019). Concerning is the increase in the number of contact-related crimes, as Minister of Police, Bheki Cele reported on 12 September 2019², such as murder, attempted murder, sexual offences, as detailed in an earlier discussion (SAPS, 2019; Sicetsha, 2019). Cases such as common assault, increased with 3.7% from 2017/18 with 156,243 to 162,012 in 2018/19, which means an average of 444 people were victims of common assault every day. Assault with the intent to inflict grievous bodily harm increased with 2.2% from 2017/2018 which represents an average of 468 recorded assaults of this nature (Africa Check, 2019; SAPS, 2019; Sicetsha, 2019). All sexual offences as defined in the previous chapter, remaining a matter of grave concern, increased from 2017/2018 by 4.6% (SAPS, 2019).

In a study by McGrath and Van der Spuy (2014) with participation by Inspecting Judges, expert researchers, legislation developers, members of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee for DCS found that after 20 years of democracy, issues such as overcrowding, unacceptable health conditions, gangsterism, and violence were still rife in South African correctional centres. In 2018,

² The official release of the annual crime statistics for financial year 2018/19 by the Minister of Police General Bheki Cele at the Imbizo Centre in Cape Town, Western Cape.

this state of affairs was again echoed in the DCS's 2018/2019 annual performance plan reporting, detailing that the total corrections population are 162 857, as highlighted in more detail in the Introduction of this dissertation, with bed space for 118 572 offenders (DCS, 2019b). In the 2017/18 report, statistics showed a 38% overpopulation rate, with some centres overpopulated in excess of 100% (DCS, 2018b).

Overcrowding results in numerous consequences that have an adverse effect on the health conditions of the facilities and its occupants, which escalated due to poor sanitation and hygiene. Inadequate resources to provide health care functions or manage these challenges further contribute to these conditions (Dissel, 2002). Offenders lives are characterised by being very close, interactional and “intensely communal” (Lindegard & Gear, 2014, p. 40), and as such are a breeding ground for gangs that still control the correctional environment with their fearful conduct (Dissel, 2002). It is the non-gang members who are mostly intimidated and whose lives are violated. Being a gang member, however, does not necessarily indemnify a prisoner from victimisation and coercion (Lindegard & Gear, 2014). A study was conducted by Muntingh (2009) with 35 ex-offenders, two groups in Cape Town, and two groups in Johannesburg, of which one group were mainly isiXhosa-speaking and the other groups Afrikaans and English-speaking. The most challenging aspects during incarceration, as voiced by participants, no matter how long they have been there, is the constant threat to one’s personal safety. In their attempts to avoid the intimidation by gang members also placed offenders at risk. Participants remembered how they lived in constant fear of being raped, severely injured, or robbed, and were constantly suspicious of everyone.

As an organisation, valuing all its resources, corrections need to rely heavily on all role players in achieving their goal of creating a more socially desirable environment (Lambert et al., 2014). A local example of this challenging environment in which COs might find themselves is at the Pollsmoor Remand Correctional Centre. Justice Edwin Cameron in August 2015 reported and described conditions at this correctional centre, which operates at over 300% capacity, as ‘deplorable’, ‘profoundly disturbing’, and ‘vulnerable to constitutional challenge’ (Constitutional Court of South Africa, 2015, p. 30). Further to this investigation, the Non-Governmental

Organisation, Sonke Gender Justice,³ brought a case to the Western Cape High Court (2017) that issued a judgment by which the government was ordered to address the serious matter of overcrowding (Sonke Gender Justice, 2017). The DCS managed to address these concerns at Pollsmoor Remand Centre with an overpopulation rate of 251% by the end of 2016, and by September 2017, this figure declined to 159% by transferring detainees to less-populated correctional centres (DCS, 2019b).

Employment rates of COs, who are required to manage these challenges directly, are a further concern. According to the Thematic Report on Criminal Justice and Human Rights in SA, submitted to the United Nations Human Rights Committee in Geneva (Civil Society Prison Reform Initiative (CSPRI), Just Detention International (JDI), Lawyers for Human Rights (LHR) and the South African National Institute for Crime Prevention and the Reintegration of Offenders (NICRO), (CSPRI, JDI, LHR & NICRO, 2016), COs are alarming understaffed in their supervision of offenders. Reasons suggested for under-staffing is that not all COs are involved in the direct supervision of detainees, many have other roles or duties, albeit as training officers, educators, or managers. Furthermore, not all COs are on duty all at once, due to being on annual, sick, disability leave, or suspension. Furthermore, the additional duties are proportionate to the shifts they work, which drastically increase the number of offenders the COs are required to handle. Research conducted at a Johannesburg Correctional Centre in 2010 found that only 463 of its 726 approved positions were filled, and the remand centre had 384 of its 751 approved positions filled (CSPRI et al., 2016). The DCS Annual Report for the 2017/2018 reporting year (DCS, 2018b), the approved posts in the Programme: Incarceration were 27 980, of which 27 139 were filled, showing a vacancy rate of 3.0%, with 840 vacancies. For the same period April 2017 for 31 March 2018, the Programme: Custodian and Security Personnel saw a turnover rate of 5.7% out of a total of 34 560 employees, representing 1 980 out of 2172 persons. The overall reason for persons leaving the DCS were resignations, which represented 20% of the reasons for leaving (494 leaving out of a total of 2468), where 5.2 % was due to dismissal/misconduct (128 out of 2468),

³ Sonke Gender Justice (Sonke) is a non-partisan, non-profit organisation, based in South Africa, working globally, with a growing presence in Africa. Aim: To strengthen government, civil society and citizen capacity to promote gender equality, prevent domestic and sexual violence, and reduce the spread and impact of HIV and AIDS.

the other reasons are: Expiry of contracts 49%; Retirements 14.4%; Death, 7.1%, Transfers 3%; and Discharged due to ill health 1.3% (DCS, 2018b).

At the center of this challenging environment is the CO, who is in daily close contact with offenders in a shared confined space, expected to achieve the mandate of DCS. A further concern raised in the Thematic Report (CSPRI et al., 2016) is how understaffing, difficulty in retaining officers, combined with overcrowding, affects COs leaving staff feeling overwhelmed, severely stressed and disillusioned (Dissel, 2002).

2.5 The correctional officer operating in a separate community

*Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage...*

(Richard Lovelace, 1904)

Within the romantic backdrop that this poem was composed, Lombardo (1989) stated that one might regard correctional facilities indifferent from its stark, stoic structural characteristics. Negotiating between researchers' representations of the corrections environment a different world was discovered, where the social climate and lives of its inhabitants are not attributed to those cold, unforgiving walls (Day, Casey, Vess & Huisy, 2011). The reality is that this steel and stone do in some sense define correctional institutions, as a "world unto themselves" (Lombardo, 1989, p vii), operating as separate organisational communities, mostly locked off from the outside (Tracy, 2004). Six-meter-high walls barricade a free outside community from offenders not only to prevent any escapes, but more so symbolises a society's rejection of those incarcerated (Sykes, 2007).

Access to a correctional centre, for the CO and offender, is through the same small steel door and security gates. Looking beyond the high barbed wired walls, however, one finds an almost self-sufficient, self-created society (Lombardo, 1989). A community with courtyards, laundries, a chapel, kitchens, workshops, and offices, inhabited by often thousands of offenders and officers working, flocked together in a couple of square meters (Sykes, 2007). Even occasionally vegetable gardens and livestock can be found. A newly established society within the correctional centre, as

discussed earlier, of co-inhabitation, some permanent residents, and others as temporary working residents.

Goffman (1961; 2009) has explained that a society establishes categories of individuals and the complement of attributes members need to possess. Operations are regulated by rigid boundaries, allowing very little permeability. Social settings establish these categories, which one is likely to encounter, and once entering any establishment, the old self is eliminated, and a new identity created (Smaldino, 2019; Weinstein, 1982). A community, as explored by Turner (1982), comprises complex positions, roles, norms, and values determined by specific social structures, to enable stable patterns of human activity (Little & McGiven, 2014). These roles, within the challenging correctional environment, represents a dynamic inter-relationship between formal groups, such as the management of the correctional centre, Correctional Officials, COs, administrators (Caldwell, 1956), and informal groups such as the offenders. The operation of the correctional system depends very strongly on the sociological understanding of the nature of the functional and dynamic relations that exist between these groups (Smaldino, 2019).

The clearly defined roles of COs are the safe custody of offenders, effective and efficient management of the incarcerated, to enforce sanctions and punishment, ensuring their humane and safe custody, rehabilitation and reintegration into society (DCS, 2018a). These roles shape them as a group and provide a work identity and cohesion. The offenders' roles are to comply and abide by those mechanisms that regulate their behaviour. As a group, they share commonality by being incarcerated and are unified in being subjected to those exact regulations, authority, and commands (Jewkes, 2005). It is often mentioned that research in corrections traditionally focuses more on the conditions of correctional facilities, the lives, challenges, and well-being of the offender (Nylander et al., 2011). Research on the role, attributes, and lives of the CO has very often been limited, rather highlighting their failures. The concept of interactions between CO and offender seemed non-existent, and the focus has been more on opposing or constructing an *us-and-them* narrative (Crawley, 2013; Liebling, 2000; Nylander et al., 2011).

In the South African context, another problematic reality is the grouping of gangs operating in these facilities. It is not an uncommon remark that it is the gangs that regulate operations. Non-

gang members are regarded as inferior and left quite vulnerable. Within the gangs, further groupings exist, where roles, positions, and advantages are allocated, with many discrepancies, depending on a member's experience (Lindegard & Gear, 2014).

Prison studies by Lucien Lombardo during 1976, conducted at the Auburn Correctional Facility in the USA, formed part of a longitudinal study he followed up in 1986, as documented in a new edition of *Guards Imprisoned* (1989). The findings over this period consisted of 160 hours of personal experiences, observations, and interviews with 37 Correctional Officers. One important finding was that policies and regulations regarding the management of offenders tend to portray an ambiguous picture of the reality of the people working and living in those facilities (o, 1989). These roles, dictated by institutional rules and bureaucracy, were often interpreted by researchers as the dividing factors that created social distance between CO and offender. Members from the two distinctly different groups perceive each other stereotypically as hostile (Ben-David, 1992; Goffman, 1961; 2009; Liebling, 2000). Studies performed in Israeli correctional centres by Shapira and Navon (1985), however, demonstrated that this disconnect between the groups, as emphasised by researchers such as Goffman (1961; 2009), is narrowing. In societies, often closed off from the outside, members are often reminded of their similarities, shared cultural and social values and interests. Members from the different groups might have families, some with wives and children, brothers and sisters, with the same family problems, and often share religious beliefs (Liebling, 2000).

One commonality is that both parties need to comply with strict rules and authority and can find solidarity in everyday institutional challenges (Liebling, 2000) in working and living in a system that regulates their lives every hour of the day. Sharing a confined space, isolated from the outside and similarly viewed and described in stereotypes, CO and offender forms an alliance against their respective restrictions. No member is safe from derogatory remarks, neither has a better place to live or work, both have no chance of escape, and like the offender, the CO is also ultimately 'just a number'. Officers are reduced to mere guards and "turnkeys" (Liebling et al., 2011, p. 2). Both COs and offenders experience stereotypes that they are aggressive, abusive, prone to violence, immoral, living and working under inhumane conditions, where it is often assumed

that prisoners deserve their punishment, and COs choose to work in a place where no one else wishes to go (Cecil, 2017).

On the other hand, these facilities are often described as a “country club” (Cecil, 2017, p. 3) where offenders are seen as getting freebies, wasting tax payer’s money, and earning privileges Cecil (2017) that law abiding citizens don’t even have, giving nothing in return, and COs just sitting around with nothing really to do. It is these shared institutionalised typecasting that bridges the “gap” between CO and offender that Goffman (1961; 2009) suggested in his studies. Within the confines of this society, members are acutely aware of these similarities, and it is here where the CO needs to be skilled in setting boundaries. This solidarity can create a vulnerability on the part of COs, making them open to many forms of exploitation and unacceptable demands (Liebling, 2000), which the media often enough catch wind of and bring to public attention.

Corresponding findings and conclusions as discussed in the above sections, resonates with a recent research project conducted from 2017 to 2018, with a group of 30 male offenders at Zonderwater Correctional Centre, South Africa by Landman, Ncongwane and Pieterse (2019). Sharing the same isolated environment with a uniquely defined social system, officer and offender must redefine their everyday lived realities. In a harsh and unforgiving space, both parties must adapt to survive. It is often required that multiple identities are formed to conserve what is still their own and not to lose themselves, to accommodate the setting they are placed in, or to counter their old identities (Landman, et al., 2019). Offenders often form groups, sharing religious and spiritual identities, where CO’s also form different group identities through the interactions they have with other officers. These two parties, namely COs and offenders, also form group affiliations through the similarities and interests they share, such as, among other, religion, gender, family structures, as discussed in the previous paragraphs. In the formation of these multiple identities, both groups also follow the same principles of shaping a personal and social identity (Landman et al., 2019).

It is at this juncture where the worlds of these groups meet, in performing and balancing different responsibilities, that the CO is tested and tried. It is here that their different roles in this diverse society as member of the officer fraternity in correctional services, but also as person

sharing a social setting with other persons, albeit offenders, are often less emphasised (Lombardo, 2017). The CO is not only expected to work with a diverse, problematic offender population, but also to operate in a highly challenging working environment. Daily administration, regulatory requirements, bureaucracy and changes in the system cause a great deal of stress on them (Lombardo, 2017). As CO, they are confined within a society characterised by adversity, sharing a space of cold stone and iron, deprived and left with very little choices during a working day. For the CO, it remains a delicate balance between being vigilant, assertive and caring. As reported by Lindegaard and Gear (2014), in the South African context, it is often a matter of choosing the alternative with the least negative effects. These choices are often similar to what the offenders are left with, where “there is no simple dividing line between self-preservation and self-interest” (cited in Lindegaard & Gear, 2014, p. 37).

The CO continuously find themselves keeping up appearances and saving face by acting with utmost discretion, managing their multiple tasks, as well as themselves. Their dilemma is that multiple identities are required to perform their diverse roles, often all at once. Between 2007 and 2008 Bruhn, Nylander and Lindberg (2010) conducted a study among a random sample of 1218 COs at 18 different correctional centres in Sweden, aimed at determining the forming of professional and occupational identities. Based on the theory of social representation, this team of researchers focused on the dynamic interaction and relationships between group members and subcultures on grounds of social, institutional knowledge, as well as shared identities. Findings of this study indicate mechanisms that assist the CO to navigate between these worlds and shape their identity is the working group in which they operate within the same physical environment, sharing and relating to a particular social construction, such as correctional facilities. Members of this group are “jointly situated” (Bruhn et al., 2010, p. 4) on the side of the subjects such as the offenders, and on the process side with the same objectives and mandate, operating within the same regulatory framework.

The particularly unique working environment of corrections consists of different groups and sub-groups that all have an impact on the CO. Given the symbolic societal structures of this environment, these groups also have certain boundaries, and initial membership, with their own territorial concerns. This is a process whereby the CO, over time, move from general socialising

to being transformed by occupational socialisation. This group cohesion and belonging translate in a conscious construction of identity and image they wish to portray to the out-group members. These are tools, the CO apply, “almost always out of the public eye” (Lombardo, 2017, page 2 page of the Foreword to 2016 Routledge Revival Edition) to assist in coping with the day-to-day work challenges (Bruhn et al., 2010; Hertz, 2015).

Tajfel (1974) explains that many groups are also created as a common shelter for their members from outside threats and dangers, and in any complex society, an individual from early on in life becomes part of groups that present individuals with a network of relationships into which to assimilate. One of the most important and lasting challenges individuals experience, in positioning themselves in society, is to determine, create and define their own place in these networks. This further concerns the individual and the social processes in the psychology of intergroup behaviour and relations (Smaldino, 2019; Tajfel, 1974). As articulated by Muntingh (2009) in establishing and promoting the vision and aim of a reformed correctional system, much rests on the daily interactional relationships between COs and offenders.

2.6 History shaping the female correctional officer

Research conducted on the history of FCO in the USA revealed that, long before the formal appointment of women as correctional matrons in the 1840s, sheriffs’ wives were utilised in this capacity (Martin & Jurik, 2007; Ruddell & Leyton-Brown, 2013). These findings were mainly obtained from newspaper articles that reported how these wives assisted in the operation of rural correctional facilities. Their duties included to admit and discharge offenders, often even had to apprehend escapees, and ensure that offenders are cared for and fed (Ruddell & Leyton-Brown, 2013). When the sheriff was out of town on patrol, their wives had to maintain law and order and manage the day-to-day operations. These responsibilities mostly went unpaid and almost invisible, and articles reported their daily struggles to endure physical risks of violence, coupled with challenges of managing being a matron, cook, operations manager, wife, and mother (Ruddell & Leyton-Brown, 2013). The important role of these women is how they lead the way for the role of females that entered law enforcement professions, such as correctional officers, police officers, prison commanders, and administrators (Ruddell & Leyton-Brown, 2013).

Attempts to obtain information on FCOs in South Africa proved an even more complicated and painstaking endeavour. Most sources refer to the correctional system during apartheid era, where criminal behaviour and punishment were defined and enforced by the government at the time (Dissel, 2002). Reports from the 1950s to the 1990s mostly reflected on those incarcerated, due to offences such as opposing apartheid, political activism, and people contravening the pass law that regulated the movements of Africans across the border (Dissel & Ellis, 2002). The most prominent reports on the life of the incarcerated are found in the accounts of women imprisoned as political activists during that time (Goldblatt & Meintjes, 1996). It is also through those stories that a glimpse into the life of the FCO was discovered. One can of course not discuss or explore the discourse of the FCO without a background of the incarcerated population and the corrections environment in the context of our history.

During the apartheid era in particular, correctional facilities were harsh, overpopulated spaces of isolation. It was reported that during those times the population rate was almost 200% in some facilities, which is not much different from today (Lawler, 2015). Women were mainly guarded by female officers, although male officers would also often be used to guard and search them. Their physical inabilities and often emotional weaknesses made them easy targets of physical and sexual abuse (Lawler, 2015). The accounts of their stay are of shock, horror and enduring pain from male officers as well as FCOs. Ex-political detainee Nomvula Mokonyane has reflected on her disbelief over the way in which some women can treat other women so inhumanely, inflicting pain on their bodies, causing deep pain and humiliation (Bornman, Van Eden & Wentzel, 1998; Goldblatt & Meintjes, 1996).

Lawler (2015) reports on several accounts by political detainees, including Elaine Mohamed, who voiced how women, of all races, took pride in being women, where it is therefore difficult to accept the sad reality that women inflicted their torture. But worse than the physical pain was the hurtful words from another woman, who "*I felt like I had an alliance with*" (Lawler, 2015, p. 1). History through centuries, over the world, has often presented how women were used as perpetrators, traitors against their own, colluding with the oppressor, becoming spies for the system, very often for government, and particularly within the context of this study in corrections (Goldblatt & Meintjes, 1996). This phenomenon was not different for the corrections environment

of that time in SA, where FCOs of all races were employed. One can understand that the incarcerated women would ask how women become so institutionalised that they forget the virtues of womanhood and apply such inhumane treatment on fellow women.

Barbara Hogan, a political activist, and detainee voiced the predicament of the FCO in this dark world through her description of the metamorphoses of a “prison wardress” who starts off as a “sweet little thing”. She recounts:

For the first three days, her eyes would be standing out and be red because she'd been crying every night at having to lock people into cells... And in six months that little same wardress would be demanding to see sanitary towels soiled before she'd issue another [...] If you take a prisoner's side [...] you lose all your esteem [...] you are socially ostracised, and you don't get promotion (Goldblatt & Meintjes, 1996, p. 248).

One can share many sad, horror stories, but the value of these narratives is found from the reflections by those who offended. In trying to make sense, for example, Mokonyane attributed their acts, to acting out of survival, economic pressure, fear, being threatened and forced, or being raised in a society believing cruelty is an acceptable and maybe necessary response given the unfamiliar complexities of the situation and circumstances (Goldblatt & Meintjes, 1996). Jessie Duarte further explained that women reverting to these acts might have had legitimate reasons whether political or economic:

Politically they did not need to get involved, but economically they were not able to resist the kind of money they were receiving, especially in an era where black women were not being employed... yet the system was ready to employ them (Goldblatt & Meintjes, 1996, p. 246).

During women's month in August 2018, Barbara Hogan spent a day at the place she was detained, reminiscing over the course of her incarceration from 1981 to 1990 (South African History Society, 2011). She stated how one needs to deal with those who offended you with empathy, since a system can drive people to commit the unthinkable (Nicolson, 2018). She shared

that many of the female warders⁴ at that time often came from rural towns with the promise of work in corrections where they will assist to rehabilitate sex workers and drug addicts. These warders were all housed in hostels and soon became part of the bureaucratic system (Nicolson, 2018).

When you are in an institution that has strong rules and patterns of behaviour, as it can be in corporate, church or political parties, where evil persists in those institutions, people fall in line with it. It is very few who stand up against it" (Nicolson, 2018, par. 6).

It is Hogan's reflection in representing the other side of those who guarded them, that shed some light on the complexities of human nature, and the turmoil that these other women had to deal with. She shared how a wardress gave flowers to an inmate on death row, and as a result was isolated by her colleagues for trying to show kindness. Nicolson notes, "It's become so easy to say they're bad and we're good" (2018, par. 14). A former CO employed during those times, one of the few who was willing to talk, told how she felt the women were not supposed to be incarcerated and formed some sort of an alliance with them. Hlalethwa (2018) recalls how she tried to help by smuggling food, sanitary towels, and other necessities, to them from home in secret, for fear of losing her job.

2.7 The female correctional officer today: A call for unique attributes

The demand for a skilled and competent workforce, in particular the search for talented female employees, is increasing in many disciplines, but mainly in the traditional male-dominated occupations. The corrections fraternity, one of those fields, as with most other armed forces, such as the defence and police services, are mainly defined and structured by male attributes (Nink, 2008). The correctional system over the past decades was characterised by an escalating and increasing diverse offender population, resulting in various challenges, from overcrowding to stressful dynamics between the various role players. As these demands increase, a total reform of the correctional environment is required, where a necessary focus becomes diversity in terms of the demographics of correctional employees (Husseman & Page, 2011). Progressive reform

⁴ The term "warder" will be used in the context of the time when COs were still referred to as warders or guards.

initiatives were also required, due to international legislation for equity in terms of gender, where the corrections fraternity actively participated in those interventions (Newbold, 2005).

Corrections being a male-dominated environment over the past three decades, transformed this fraternity into a gender-diverse institution (Lambert, Hogan, Altheimer & Wareham, 2010). Initially, up to the mid-1980s, with a decline in well-paid blue-collar jobs, corrections posed an alternative form of employment for marginalised groups, such as women as COs (Chipango, 2016). Even though FCOs were still compared to their male colleagues and stereotyped as being physically weaker, always in need of protection, not being able to handle confrontations with offenders, and being vulnerable, they still made considerable strides in this male fraternity (Newbold, 2005). Statistics from over seven USA states showed that by 2014 the projected increase of FCOs were 10.9%, compared to 9.1% of male COs, which meant that FCOs represented 49% of the workforce (Nink, 2008). Female COs as well as managers increasingly became a source of educated, talented, and a highly skilled workforce (Nink, 2008).

The role of the CO, in general, is one of challenge and ambiguity, representing multiple expectations, not only from the institution or department but also from society. On the one hand, their role is to keep the public safe by ensuring the secure and humane custody of offenders, as well as to facilitate rehabilitation and enable offenders to live meaningful and productive lives outside incarceration. On the other hand, as a penal system, it remains an institution where offenders are punished for their offences (DCS, 2018a; House of Commons, 2009). Despite the regulations of a corrective environment, no two days present the same set of challenges. In a study with COs at the Whitemoor Prison in Cambridgeshire, England over a nine-month period, Liebling, Price, and Shefer (2011) discovered that a successful working day includes, where a CO could open the gates in the morning and the number of offenders is the same as when you locked up. It is also when no incidents occurred, or if there were it was resolved with no force required and without any injuries. Such a day will also entail that even if offenders protest at the gates, they are assured that notice is taken and no violence is necessary, and that even after a very challenging day filled with hostility, in the end, all ended well, and officers can put another day behind them.

The diverse challenges of the corrections environment are further complicated by the

demographics of its staff composition. As this fraternity increasingly employ FCOs, claims are made that they “threaten the close association between the prison officer’s job and the production of masculinity” (Martin & Jurik, 2007, p. 175). The norm of constructing the correctional fraternity as masculine has changed to a more gendered, diverse and balanced mediation between officers and offenders, as well as between officers and colleagues (Martin & Jurik, 2007).

These changes also assist in a shift in focus of corrections, where reactivity needs to be subordinated to a focus on rehabilitation, effective socialisation, and wellbeing (House of Commons, 2009). Not losing sight of the already challenging and often overwhelming responsibilities of the CO, one must recognise the value added to the change in demographics. It is in this regard that the role of the FCO is seriously considered a growing asset. Some aspects that have proven to support these statements are reported by Nink (2008), namely that the FCO regards their work as more than a job, rather, they see it as a professional career where they wish to make a difference. They almost get “hooked” (Nink, 2008, p. 2) on the daily challenges faced. The changes in the archetypes of corrections work from a model of punishment to a more interactional pro-active approach suited the profile of the FCO. The CO’s work is often referred to as invisible, and only observed by offenders, and some of the most underrated skills, that the CO need to apply daily, are decision-making, communication, and engagement with offenders (Liebling et al., 2011; Nink, 2008).

The demand for COs is the same for male or female officers in terms of knowledge, as well as an array of competencies and leadership skills. They are also required to acquire the necessary acumen, from administrative to technical skills, coupled with physical and mental stamina. Some further qualities for a good CO as noted by the House of Commons⁵ (2009) of Britain include aspects such as: an interest in people; fostering positive relations between officer and offender; honesty; integrity; humour; compassion; courage; and self-awareness; negotiating skills; patience; and discipline.

⁵ House of Commons: Justice Committee. A Report Ordered by the House of Commons on the Role of the Prison Officer 2008-2009.

Some significant attributes by the FCO, as reported in the study by Nink (2008) for the Management and Training Corporation Institute, are, among others: decision-making and problem-solving skills, where they are collaborative, open-minded, and considerate to various contributions from others. Where their male counterparts tend to take decisions quicker, the FCO has proven that their decision-making style, contrary to what is believed, displays her competence and adds value to the fraternity, where she is more open, collaborative, and receptive to stakeholder input. This also highlights her effective communication skills that are a further attribute the FCO possess, portrayed as non-confronting and having a natural calming effect (Nink, 2008). Some presentations by COs suggested that offenders displayed considerable respect towards FCOs. Cases have been reported where offenders will be in a confrontation with a male CO, but once they realised the presence of a female officer, they would restrain themselves and even apologise for misbehaving and being disrespectful in front of her (Nink, 2008).

The introduction of the FCO had a significant impact on the culture and nature of corrections. Where men tend towards aggressiveness and dominance, females tend towards caring and understanding, which is crucial for the efficacious operation of prison institutions (Crawley, 2013). A further report by a Director at Michigan Department of Corrections in the USA stated that in every study done on the effect of FCOs particularly into male facilities were very positive with a decline in incidences of violence and a positive effect on offender socialisation (Nink, 2008). A study conducted in the Israeli Prison Service, as reported by peers and commanding officers, showed that the FCO assisted in preventing confrontation and other daily difficulties, since they have an acute sense of possible challenges that might arise (Nink, 2008).

2.7.1 Role conflict and emotional labour experienced by the female correctional officers

One is, however, reminded of the unpredictable environment in which the CO operates and how it, most of the time, requires an instant transformation that can be quite demanding on the FCO. Work in corrections is regarded as “emotional work” (Nylander et al., 2011) since COs are daily required to manage offenders’ emotional ups-and-downs, outbursts, and turmoil, while they need to manage their own emotions and stress. Emotions, within the context of this study, as defined by Oatley (cited in Wood, 2015, p.13) refer to “multi-component responses” towards

challenges that enables a person to obtain specific goals. Ness and Elsworth (2009, p. 129) note that it is patterns of functioning, that shape and direct a person's "physiological, cognitive, motivational and behavioural" responses to adapt to certain situations.

Officers are in a constant mode of altering and reshaping their thinking patterns, emotional capacities, and ultimately their work identities. The one moment the CO is required to mediate empathetic interactions with offenders, within a split second, the next incident demands them to be the ruthless authoritarian enforcing boundaries. Crewe (2011) suggested that these transitions might not place the same demands on the male CO, due to their inherent nature, and facade of lower emotionality. The gendered expression of emotions is often normalised to describe males as somehow less emotional, more impulse driven, and more responsive to threats, as well as more inclined to meet anger with anger. Women are in turn somehow regarded as more nurturing and sensitive to the needs of marginalised groups, and those characteristics often form part of the inherent nature of certain jobs (Hochschild, 2012). In corrections facilities, such attributes are regarded as part of an officer's profile and are implicitly expected to be combined with masculine attributes, particularly for the FCO. However, the open display of nurturing and caring, is very much restricted.

This adds to the conflicting roles Hochschild (2012, p. 255) refers to as the "institutional self" and the "impulse self", where the first self, regards the emotions, actions, and reactions that are embedded within the organisational standards and the CO's defined roles. The latter refers to the self that the person regards as the true self, the individualised self, outside the institutionalised expectations. It is exactly here that further demands are placed on the CO, where emotional labour is required to constantly adapt, and change their emotions to suit their roles (Wood, 2015). FCOs are daily confronted with the emotional impact of hostile or violent incidents, whether verbal or physical, and experience the same frustrations and anxieties that their ambiguous roles require from them.

It is not uncommon that these conflicting roles cause stress among the COs. In these differing roles, as stated by Misis, Kim, Cheeseman, Hogan and Lambert (2013), job stress is linked to two types of CO orientation, such as those that are more punishment-orientated; and those who are

more in support of rehabilitation strategies. From extant research, as reported by Misis et al. (2013) it is postulated that COs with a more punitive approach experience higher levels of stress, due to frustration, tension, and confrontation with offenders. This often tends to be more characteristic of male COs. Officers with a positive and more interactional focus towards offenders, who are reportedly more often FCOs, tend to experience less stress, due to the CO and offender relations being less confrontational.

Job stress is not only experienced in terms of their own orientation, but also in terms of offenders' reactions to these role conflicts, and an often, sudden shift in role. The CO is expected to be strict, yet fair, authoritarian yet democratic. Within this volatile and unpredictable environment, it is often necessary to alter their demeanour, at which point they are accused by offenders of being dishonest, insincere, and deceitful (Crewe, 2011). Further stress and expectations are placed on COs by claims made that the relationships, engagements, and effective communication between officer and offender, mainly maintain and mediate the daily social order of a correctional facility (Crawley, 2013).

Given the above discussion, it is evident that the FCO in particular, are faced with challenges balancing the various roles and responsibilities they need to perform. A fine balancing act is required between offender, peer, and institutional expectations. In an environment traditionally gender-typed to be dominated by antagonistic, unsympathetic, and more aggressive attitudes, FCOs are required to shape their own identities. Being inclined to be more empathetic, relational, and rehabilitative, they are also required to embrace those characteristics often referred to as more masculine, to set a tone of authority. Nylander, Lindberg and Bruhn (2011, p. 469) refer to this as the "double commission" of custody versus orientation, safety versus fostering relationship, authority versus rehabilitation, that characterises the transitions of modern correctional services.

The masculine norm established in corrections, whether or not founded, is that any emotion, apart from a display of fearless authority, is often the reason COs do not seek assistance when challenging emotions or stress are experienced. As suggested by Bennett, Crewe, and Wahidin (2012), although FCOs are well-aware of masculine stereotypes of control, they are not under the

same pressure on the part of offenders or peers to enact them (Bennett et al., 2012). COs report that FCOs are able to “cut through the macho bullshit” men often are not capable of doing (Bennett et al., 2012, p. 140).

Officers’ work also entail administrative functions, submitting and reporting, conveying messages of for example visitation requests, outcomes of complaints, appeals on complaints, family matters, death in families, funeral matters, and many more. Offenders’ reactions to bad news are usually of anger, frustration, and discontent, and COs are the ones in the line of fire. In a study at a Swedish correctional centre, as reported by Nylander et al. (2011) these are daily occurrences. Reactions reported by certain FCOs during such outbursts from offenders are that of having to stay calm even though you are being insulted, screamed at and verbally abused; understanding the offenders’ outbursts as a normal reaction as a way to “let off steam”. Sometimes apologising later, however, the CO has the right to express their own anger or disapproval, although in a controlled manner (Nylander et al., 2011, p. 474).

Officers are very much part of the offender’s everyday lives in sadness and in joy, sometimes having to console them, and feeling overwhelmed as well, but having to control their emotions and remain professional. Many incidents can occur for an officer to feel overcome with emotion, for example upsetting incidents of violence or the death of an offender, whom the CO worked with every day, but COs must contain their emotions (Wood, 2015). As one CO commented on a severely depressed individual and emotionally charged situation, “How the hell is this guy surviving here?” (Nylander et al., 2011, p. 477). Nonetheless, a CO needs to keep their distance, and refrain from getting too involved or personal. Other measures COs apply to deal with offenders’ reactions of threats or aggression is to downplay these, as directed towards the CO’s uniform and what it represents, and not towards them as an individual (Nylander et al., 2011).

2.7.2 Rehabilitation

The correctional environment is often accused of being a place that “makes bad people” and re-offending a serious concern for most countries (House of Commons, 2009, p. 4). The outcry globally for decades, if not centuries, was that, apart from ensuring the safe custody of offenders

and protecting society from danger, corrections ought to correct behaviour and attitudes (House of Commons, 2009). With the promulgation of the White Paper on Corrections in South Africa in 2005, a new strategic aim was promoted that entailed transforming correctional facilities as centres of rehabilitation and reform, emphasising the greater role of society in this regard (Jacobson, et al., 2017). The White Paper on Corrections in South Africa defines rehabilitation as, “the result of a process that combines the correction of offending behaviour, human development, and the promotion of social responsibility and values” (DCS, 2005, p. 37). According to the DCS (2005), rehabilitation is achieved by providing essential services to offenders that comprise of programmes that assist in correcting offending behaviour and attitudes, and improving social conditions, as well as developing the individual concerned.

As stated by Muntingh (2012) plans had to be developed for all offenders based on their specific needs, to address their reformatory goals. Such strategies were already tabled in 1995 at National Cabinet, focusing on the promotion of restorative justice, to address illiteracy and further education, increase training facilities, encourage offenders to develop their technical skills in the production of various items, as well as opportunities to embrace their spiritual or religious convictions. Such projects would not only make time spent inside more productive, but also enable them to operate independently when on the outside, limit chances of re-offending and facilitate effective re-integration into society (Dissel, 2002; House of Commons, 2009).

The concept of rehabilitation was already known in South Africa during the 19th century with the appointment of John Montagu, Colonial Secretary of the Cape in 1843 (Van Zyl Smit, 1984). Montagu drafted a rule book that contained measures by means of which offenders would be reformed, that changed from being incarcerated in isolation, to a system whereby rewards could be earned for commendable work and good conduct. The bigger focus, as envisaged by Van Zyl Smit (1984) was that the corrections would transform offenders’ beliefs, behaviour, morals, and attitudes that in turn would influence the community as well. Rehabilitation programmes were well structured, irrespective of ethnicity or race. These programmes included construction, the building of roads, bridges, and farms, where individuals could also earn a stipend. Two groups were established, named the “chain gang and the road party”, and upon good behaviour, offenders could

be promoted to an unchained group (Van Zyl Smit, 1984, p. 152). With these new interventions, the focus shifted to reform rather than punishment.

The rehabilitation of offenders has also undergone changes worldwide, where the focus shifted to the offenders taking responsibility for his or her own rehabilitation (Franzén & Holmqvist, 2014). It is not a matter of mere unwilling compliance with what an institution prescribes, but it has become a process of self-regulation and introspection. The goal is to enable individuals to realise their transformation is dependent on their own “self-directed action and moral agency” (Garland, 1997, p. 191). Correction facilities are designed and re-designed to encourage offenders to become active participants in the rehabilitation goals (Franzén & Holmqvist, 2014).

The responsibilities of rehabilitating and reforming offenders added to an already loaded job description of the CO might seem an unfair tall order on the CO. In a highly challenged environment with the numbers of the incarcerated population not declining, overcrowding, understaffing, limited resources, inadequate and ill-maintained facilities, and more than often a culture of hostility, COs are expected to make significant changes in the life of the offender. Even adequately resourced correctional centres in other countries find it difficult to achieve these goals, and these objectives are difficult to attain (Dissel, 2002; Muntingh, 2012). This is possibly why the responsibility of reform is placed in the CO to facilitate the process, since they are the first line of contact with the offender and assumed to be ideally positioned to fulfil this role (Halsey & Deegan, 2017). As discussed in the previous section, COs are already emotionally over-stretched and inevitably also experiencing the physical demands of the job. The burden of feeling responsible for offenders’ ultimate transformation is a heavy load that requires specialised skills.

It is not surprising that COs might feel cynical and negative about the aims and expected outcomes of rehabilitation, given the highly challenging environment in which they operate, and which are not always conducive for such interventions (Halsey & Deegan, 2017). As also highlighted by Singh (2014) many views are held that “prison is not the most suitable place for the rehabilitation of offenders” (Singh, 2014, p. 255) although not impossible. A further suggestion made was that it is ideal to embark on programmes with offenders that have already been

sentenced, and to be truly effective, this process ought to be able to take place for periods longer than two years (Jacobson, et al., 2017).

During 2015, Halsey and Deegan concluded a longitudinal study with male offenders across five correctional centres in South Australia, regarding their views on the role of COs in contributing to the aims of rehabilitation (Halsey & Deegan, 2017). The initial study was conducted with 14 male offenders. To explore these findings further, this research was followed up by a study with 40 COs, to explore the attitudes, challenges, and constraints of true rehabilitation. Their findings revealed that there are indeed portions of COs that are positive about rehabilitation, and it is those who go beyond what is expected that face the challenges posed. Often, COs embark on initiatives outside of their own will. As remarked in some of the responses, it is those “informal and spontaneous interactions” that are often not recognised and does not form part of any formal programme, that makes an impact (Halsey & Deegan, 2017, p. 66). It was also suggested that positive attitudes from COs encourage offenders to participate in programmes with the additional outcome that it assisted in maintaining security and order in facilities.

As discussed in the previous section on the role of the FCO, it was highlighted that they tend to be more rehabilitative versus punishment orientated, more interactional, inclined and empathetic (Nylander et al., 2011). In research conducted by Lambert, Paoline, Hogan and Baker (2007) the views supported by findings from their study were that women prefer a career in corrections, since they prefer to work with people, and among others. They are also interested in contributing in the rehabilitation of offenders. Measuring job satisfaction as another index of their study, it was found that the FCO scored exceptionally high on this, as it is closely linked to COs attitudes on offender rehabilitation, involvement in such programmes, and their moral commitment towards making a difference.

2.7.3 Resilience and vigilance: A tougher exterior

The CO is in a continuous battle to balance often relentless expectations with their own identities in their endeavours to show empathy but remain distant; to see to the well-being of the incarcerated but not as a caregiver; and to uphold security but promote open communication. Trying to maintain this balance often transpires in the CO creating an identity perceived as too

distant, neutral, and emotionally suppressed (Nylander et al., 2011), that conflicts with their true self, nature, or feelings. In attempts not to show compassion, COs often acquire the skill not to openly display any emotion, and “learn not to feel”. In a Prison Service staff attitude survey conducted in the mid-1980s by the British Home Office in London, the “social costs” of correctional work is that officers reported a change in their attitudes in them becoming more cynical, distrusting, and displaying a much tougher exterior (Crawley, 2013, p. 36).

As for the role of FCOs within this framework, an Israeli Prison Service study noted offenders’ reviews showed that 80% regarded the contributions of FCOs as positive, as equal, if not more competent in dealing with offenders, even the maximum security offenders, and that offenders would discuss matters of a medical or educational nature, and they were regarded as “tough but okay” (Nink, 2008, p. 9). The work of a CO is not easy, often filled with adversity, at times contradicting and ambiguous, and often a “dirty nasty job” (House of Commons, 2009, p 24). The FCO, more so need to apply a tough exterior to cope, and competently perform her role.

Corrections by its nature is a stressful, hostile environment given its population and the role required of the CO to ensure safety and security. The stress to which COs are exposed presents itself in many forms, but it is, however, suggested that officers are reluctant to indeed acknowledge that they experience stress (Bennett et al., 2012), where they appear to merely harden up their image. Several studies on workplace stress, as stated by Lewis, Lewis and Garby (2013), often focus more on various forms of systemic workplace stress, that can include any stressors related to organisational demands such as work overload, administrative burdens, and as mentioned earlier, ambiguities and conflict with regard to roles and responsibilities. The focus for purposes of this study is, however, on primary and secondary traumatic workplace stress, of which limited research has been conducted. With primary traumatic stress, as explained by McCann and Pearlman (1990), a person experiences a severe, life-threatening incident. Typical responses to such stressors are hyper-vigilance, where a person becomes overly protective and security conscious and distrustful in most situations and around most people, isolates themselves; avoids general socialisation; and becomes emotionally disengaged and numb.

Secondary traumatic stress refers to when individuals experience the symptoms of trauma due

to continuous exposure to other's misery or grief, also referred to as "compassion fatigue" (Lewis et al., 2013, p. 70). The results thereof are a form of vicarious trauma, where a person's belief in human nature, personal motives, or agendas and personal safety are severely affected. Typical reactions would also involve becoming hyper-vigilant, cynical, desensitised, experiencing episodes of dissociative behaviour, chronic fatigue, and reduced empathy.

Traumatic events in the context of the CO, either by mere observation or self-being involved, can range from physical confrontations, assaults, to offender self-harm and suicide (House of Commons, 2009). COs are expected to be non-judgemental, non-confrontational, dependable, and to portray resilience and vigilance. However, due to a very strenuous work environment, it is often the case that officers become withdrawn, apathetic, and lose interest in their work. It is paramount that care be taken to provide support, and where necessary, professional interventions are made to promote their well-being, not only for the functioning of the facility, but also for the safety of the officer, their colleagues, and offenders alike (House of Commons, 2009).

Resilience is often referred to as a more reactive approach towards recovering from traumatic experiences. The importance, however, of a more proactive approach has been realised and researchers suggest that resilience should be applied more as a preventative mindset to handle trauma (Everly, Welzant & Jacobson, 2008). Resilience is very much a conscious cognitive process, whereby the individual is aware of the environment he or she functions in, what is required, what the daily challenges are that might be faced. Within corrections, this is a crucial aspect in such a volatile, unpredictable environment. In the CO's everyday functioning, operations are quite routine and regulated, and their behaviour and actions become almost habitual, in terms of remaining highly vigilant. As explored by Liebling and Maruna (2011), COs reported how a constant awareness of their workspace, the occupants of the facilities, sounds, behaviours and even colleagues, is not only limited to their work 'on the inside'. They find themselves displaying the same vigilance outside their work, continuously assessing their location, people around them, highly suspicious of anything or anyone. As in their daily operations when outside, in public spaces or even at home, they position themselves in typical surveillance mode, in the best vantage point (Liebling & Maruna, 2011).

It is almost unlikely to imagine the FCO, stereotyped as nurturing and empathetic, operating as an armed soldier; focused, hyper-vigilant, and always on the lookout for any attack. But, for survival, it is an essential persona or identity they shape. To sustain their own psychological and physiological well-being they acquire and apply the necessary tools to face, endure and bounce back from distressing situations. This is often a matter of keeping up appearances as coping and survival mechanism. What is important is that the FCO knows their true selves, and becomes aware of triggers that shape their behaviour, particularly in the workspace. As expressed by Oyserman, Elmore and Smith (2012, p. 70) this process is kind of a “self-project” and journey taken to gain self-knowledge, as well as to take care that a balance is maintained. The self and identity are predictors of a person’s actions, behaviour, their thoughts and how they manage themselves and their emotions. Identity formation, as a cognitive construct, is not static, but is dynamic and flexible, and for the FCO particularly in fulfilling various roles, dependent on circumstances, environment, and interactions, this promotes and develops an efficient, operational self (Oyserman et al., 2012).

2.7.4 A Uniformed Force

Appearance and attire are well known to be a process of forming and expressing one’s identity and conveying often complex meanings and messages that are not easy to translate in words (Kaiser, Nagasawa & Hutton, 1991). In everyday life, clothing serves as a silent language that communicates visual cues of our values, relationships, and selves, open for interpretation whether by group members, society, clients or colleagues (Craik, 2003; Hertz, 2015).

As expressed by Tajfel and Turner (1986), through their structure of the Social Identity Theory (SIT), individuals acquire multiple selves and identities that are shaped by associations and affiliations in the environment in which they operate. Given the history of the development of corrections as an institution, the environment within which COs operate, and their group affiliations, they continuously need to establish new identities. This requires the CO to realign, adapt, and attach new meanings to their experiences and work lives. Within an organisation, individuals form part of various groups that perform different roles, such as Officer, DCS employee, FCO, and they need to express themselves and project their organisational sense of self

(Hatch & Schultz, 1997; 2000). Operating *within* a group, and as a group, each performing different roles, members are in a continuous process making sense of themselves within the system (Little & McGiven, 2014).

Managing the different roles, the CO's need to perform strongly relies on how the group, within which they operate cope. The success of an organisation rests on how effective its members can be managed and controlled in order to achieve the set objectives (Joseph & Alex, 1972). As a member of a group, all role players, colleagues as well as the public need to be assured that the duties assigned to the CO will be consistent with that of their organisation, and not that of any other social grouping or affiliations to which they belong. As an individual, one cannot divorce oneself from with the different affiliations, groups, and statuses we form part of, and this is where the challenge lies. The CO, in particular, is continuously faced with several different demands, often conflicting in nature. Joseph and Alex (1972) claimed that the uniform serves as a meaningful tool to resolve various challenges and conflicts often faced by multifaceted organisations, such as corrections. The uniform defines boundaries, ensures that organisational goals will be attained, determine priorities of the group, and eradicates conflict between members. Wearing a uniform enhances group uniformity and group membership, as well as creating a distinctiveness, excluding others from the group (Bunyawanich, Järvelä & Ghaffar, 2018).

For centuries the masculine image of tailored jackets in royal blue, black, red and white, rounded off with epaulettes, gold trimmings, insignia and braid, gathered by shiny brass buckle and buttons, worn with polished laced-up black boots and prominent hats, intrigued men, women, young and old (Craik, 2003). Many of our first encounters and memories with uniforms were at school, in the church choir, a police officer, firefighter, or pilot, and possibly serving in the military. In each environment, uniform has represented virtues of human uniformity, courage, trust, obedience, care and protection (Fussel, 2002). Many young men and women share a fascination with the masculine and authoritarian image the uniform portrays. One such man, Paul Fussel (2002), shared this dream and decided to take up a job in uniform as a soldier. He reminisced about General Colin Powell, retired United States Army general, his attraction to the uniformed forces, and how on the first day Powell put on his olive pants and jacket, brown shirt, brown tie,

brown shoes, with a brass buckle and belt, he looked in the mirror and said “I liked what I saw” (Fussel, 2002, p. 3). Fussel, himself very excited, joined the armed forces and told of how his fascination turned into harsh reality while all dressed up in heavy, baggy full-kit and gear, during basic training in the scorching hot sun. He never really escaped the uniform and the uniformity it produced, ranging from light green overalls and helmets, to war attire stripped from any identifiable insignia, to another form of uniform as college professor, more of a practical obligation, everyday dressed in tweed jacket, grey flannel trousers, brown shoes, and a brown belt (Fussel, 2002).

Women in uniform were not that common and the images we share is more of our own school uniforms, the Red Cross, nurses, and the odd lady police officer. In the mid-fifties, however, Europe and the USA started employing women in the armed forces. One such story was shared by Katie Adie in the introduction of her book *Corset to Camouflage: Women and War* (2003) of a girl who attended an all-girls’ school in north-east England. Her exposure to the outside world was mainly by visits from various speakers to the school. Adie reflects on a visit where ladies from the Women’s Royal Army Corps and Royal Air Force were invited for such visits. With a picture of all the impressive men in uniform, the girls waited with anticipated enthusiasm. They were, however, confronted with a picture of ladies in skirts hanging like cardboard, “upholstered” in jackets in the most “unforgiving cut, boxy and mannish”, restraining their bosoms, with “starched collars and ties that concealed what necks there might have been”, and in shoes suitable for a march in Moscow (Adie, 2003, para 4). For years, these girls were planning their future, and after years of wearing their boring and unflattering school uniform, had an image of wearing beautiful coloured dresses with shiny, pointy, black high heels. However, in this day, a totally different image confronted them of what they might have to face entering the workforce. More disturbing to her was the image of these women, who undoubtedly achieved so much, “the enviable womanhood, we yearned for” (Adie, 2003, para 4), were now covered in a greenish and blueish colour, constrained and boxed-in, and just there she decided the uniform was not for her.

As a women dressed in uniform was quite an uncommon picture when on street, the general public was not sure what they were, and the ladies had to display some courage to be seen walking by themselves, often feeling like they stood out (Adie, 2003). The nurses’ uniform was well

known, but the image of women on horseback in the battlefield was one of her doing that “which tradition had supposed they were incapable” (Adie, 2003, chapter 2, para 3). Women who chose a career in any job that required the wearing of a uniform was indeed an uphill battle, with many contradictions. For a police officer serving as a volunteer or a soldier during the 1st and 2nd World Wars, uniforms were a mere reproduction of the male military uniform. Made of the same heavy, starched material, long heavy skirts, pants, tunics buttoned to the neck, flat lace-up boots, thick black or brown stockings, the same shirts as men and even ties with tie pins, it removed any femininity (Craik, 2003). Hair often cut short or tightly tied to the back, and of course, no make-up or jewellery, appearing more masculine.

Later attempts were to feminise the masculinity of the male uniform, but the growing battle was more regarding the increase of women in those professions traditionally performed by men. By allowing women in these roles, it was feared that this attire, aimed at unifying members of a particular organisation or task force, would also unify the uniformed women, that might result in them altering or “reconstructing their real selves” (Craik, 2003, p. 142). But the real threat was that women might be empowered by the male attributes of authority and strength that the uniform portrays. Vogue magazine during those times felt obliged to display female soldiers or recruits actively involved the more masculine jobs, working in factories and operating machinery, who faced the same adversities and risk, can still be feminine, and well-groomed, whether in or out of uniform (Craik, 2003). Post-war campaigns, however, were lodged by governments, for women to rather revert to more domestic roles, supportive of their husbands and families.

Starting his studies on *why we are what we wear*, with employees in jobs where the wearing of a uniform is compulsory, Fussel (2002) reported that he assumed that he would mostly find employees in low paying jobs, resenting their uniform, feeling subordinate and inferior. His findings revealed the contrary, that irrespective of where they fell into the hierarchy of rank, remuneration or status, employees expressed the pride that he or she occupied a permanent position in an established organisation. They regard it as an honour to wear a uniform and are strictly regulated and highly attuned not to dishonour the uniform (Joseph & Alex, 1972). It represents an interesting interplay of meaning and interpretation, and provide clues between wearer and viewer,

where the wearer earns respect and social standing, but also is also expected to behave in a particular manner (Hertz, 2015).

Choosing a uniformed career is not merely wearing brown, white or blue, it is a choice of membership and identification with a specific group. By accepting membership, individuals share the symbolic messages and traditions that the prominent colour, forms, emblems, and tokens portray and regulate, such as authority, integrity, and conduct (Joseph & Alex, 1972). The known expression *a picture says a thousand words* cannot be more appropriate in this discussion, since uniforms, silently communicate various messages in a physical or visual form, operating on a symbolic level. These symbols are socially constructed, through interaction between individuals and groups, whereby symbols are infused with multifaceted meanings (Hertz, 2015; Pratt & Rafaeli, 2001). Uniforms remain intriguing, often sending mixed, subconscious messages. This represents a form of social control, but also of the construction of the inner, personal self.

For women entering the uniformed fraternity, as discussed earlier, posed other intricacies of identity formation within the working place. Providing the FCO with suitable uniforms that were designed as for menswear, apart from their skirts, was not the only challenge. The issuing of clothing, for example, shirts are issued by asking a lady her collar size, as for men's tie shirts. The effect would be similar to asking a man whether he wears a size 10 or 12 trouser (De Camargo, 2017). Such incidents put the FCO in a very uncomfortable predicament, with shirts being too tight and revealing, resulting de facto in contravening an organisation's dress code. Women, particularly the COs, are confronted with so many mixed messages and reminded from when they leave home that they are entering a male-dominated fraternity. As Young (cited in De Camargo, 2017) has reiterated, the wearing of a uniform in its design discounts any sign of femininity, giving women permission to be some sort of substitution for men.

History, as still today, revealed that these attempts of almost defeminising the female officers just made women more determined to take up and progress in their new roles. Craik (2003) interprets that the uniform was used as tool to discipline, almost control the mind and bodies of members of an organisation, which had the opposite effect on female officers. These attempts of

control rather encouraged women to claim a new uniformed identity and what it represents, namely status, integrity and respect.

Studies on costume and uniform abound internationally on the universal role specific attire portrays in upholding organisational, as well as societal values and its culture. As Hertz (2015) explained, it functions both externally, identifiable by outsiders, and identifiable and shared by the in-group or group members. Wearers consciously display their conformity and constructed identity through a semiosis of symbols, emblems, colour, and shared meanings to the out-group. Depending on the context and relationship between wearer and viewer, different meanings can be produced, where, since meaning is socially constructed, it cannot be objective (Hertz, 2015; Pratt & Rafaeli, 2001). Wearing a uniform portrays allegiance with members of a specific group and the guidelines that regulate their conduct, distinguishing members visibly from outsiders. Working in corrections and similar uniformed forces, uniforms are, apart from being highly recognisable, members of a particular in-group cannot escape the expectations imposed on them. Some researchers posited that a uniform can create a sense of anonymity, resulting in a counter-effect that encourages certain individuals to assume different roles in conflict with organisational norms so as to behave inappropriately (Hertz, 2015). The contrary is found to be the case since, for outsiders, the men and women in uniform represent specific responsibilities by the public, that is, to comply with at all times, also when outside of the working environment (Joseph & Alex, 1972; Rafeali & Pratt, 1993).

Further to the discussions on the complexities of uniforms and organisational principles it imposes on its members, and individuality, Joseph and Alex (cited in Hertz, 2015), reported that their research revealed a theory of de-individuation has been developed by psychologists. This behavioural theory explained how individuals wearing uniforms experience a feeling of protection from “individual identification” (Hertz, 2015, p. 55). For a CO, the uniform serves as a safeguard, whereby individuals resort to the safety of the uniform to avoid the multiple demands of their ordinary everyday lives. It also shields the officer from temptations and serves as a reminder that they are always visible, not only to offenders and fellow employees, but also to the outside world. It is as if the uniform follows one, even after hours of wearing it. An officer and his or her

reputation are known by the community they live in, and regarded as a protector, who deserves respect and can rely on the support from the community (De Camargo, 2017; Joseph & Alex, 1972).

In today's call to 'seek and be oneself', in an environment where conformity and uniformity is required by consciously abandoning one's individuality (Craik, 2003), as in the correctional and police services, the question is how a uniform creates and portray a specific social identity and symbolic connotation. In this regard, uniforms as symbols of authority, discipline, and conformity become the shared identities of individuals (Craik, 2003). Members of a group consciously create, organise and use these symbols in constructing and shaping their identities. A uniform mediates the interaction between individuals on many levels, whether on an individual or organisational level, between employees and groups, and within groups (Hertz, 2015). In the choice of a career as CO and consequent wearing of a uniform is a conscious demonstration of the constructed identity of that particular group. The uniform fosters an *esprit de corps* and professionalism that justifies the status of a wearer, within and outside an organisation. This, in turn, assists in shaping and changing their self-concept, as well as work and social identity (Hargreaves, 1961; Hertz, 2015).

2.7.5 The correctional officer's image through a magnifying glass

Today researchers and the public often only have the media to rely on for information on law enforcement, corrections, and the broader criminal justice system as echoed by Vickovic, Griffin, and Fradella (2013). Unfortunately, with the limited resources particularly on the part of the FCO, the representations made by the media of them are not always accurate or balanced and the outside world often only sees a distorted picture of them. It is also sad that more than often, their work is acknowledged or highlighted by what they do wrong, and not by what they contribute (Lombardo, 1989). The media also portrays the harsh realities in which COs operate globally, where they daily face adversities and risk, as the following media citations aptly illustrate: "Prisoner in solitary confinement after female guard killed, another allegedly raped in hostage situation" (Phakgadi, 2019); "CA Correctional officers at high risk for depression, PTSD, suicide, survey finds" (Fremon, 2018); "Brits prison official kills herself after intimate photos with inmate go public"

(De Villiers, 2017); “St Albans prison guards stable after stabbing” (Dlamini, 2019); “Two more prison officers suspended after Sun City jailbreak” (Mashaba, 2018); “More women commit suicide and self-harm in prison than men” (Walker, 2018); “Prison staff failings contributed to death of 21-year-old woman who took her own life behind bars” (Bulman, 2018); “Prisons watchdog condemns lack of action on rising female suicides” (Taylor, 2017); “Inside Leeuwkop prison: ‘It’s war’” (Hosken, 2018); “Officials: Inmate with Weapon Assaults 4 Prison Officers” (Hookerton, 2017); “Filth, disease, sex and violence for Pollsmoor’s female inmates- Pollsmoor female unsentenced section is controlled by mafia-style ‘kitchen ladies’?”. It goes on to say: “Two things can buy you anything in this prison, and they control both: food and tobacco” (Hopkins, 2016); “Former inmate sues Prison Guard for raping her” (Aron, 2016); and “Inmates accounted for after fire at Sun City prison” (Tandwa, 2016).

I am sure that COs often wonder about what images or views the incarcerated population, the outside world, and their families have of them and the work that they do. Limited research has been conducted on how COs assume they are perceived and whether such perceptions indeed shape their work identity and views of themselves. For some time, social theorists were curious as to how this so-called “symbolic interactionism” (Mistry, 2017, p. 2), that is, how individuals perceive themselves in relation to the assumed perceptions of outsiders, affects their work and identities. Our social relations offer various cues as to how we are viewed, which in turn informs our sense of ourselves, or as noted by Cooley (cited in Mistry, 2017, p. 2), the “looking glass self”. This concept compares the shaping of ones’ identity to that of looking in a mirror, and upon that reflection as a representation of how others perceive him or her (Jones, 2015). Through socialisation and interpersonal relationships, these self-images are further developed. Role players in this regard for the CO will typically involve offenders, peers, colleagues, family, the public, and the media.

The challenge for the CO lies in that they are limited in the extent to which they are able to interact with others as their true selves, given the most unpredictable working environment, and the different personas officers must apply daily. This inevitably results in stereotypical representations, images and perceptions made by the media, offenders, and even offenders’ families (Mistry, 2017) that may be detrimental to the CO’s image (Jones, 2015, p. 105). Such

often unfair perceptions are, however, evaluated by what the individual believes to be the representation of his or her true self. Every outside influence, assumption, or perception is not merely accepted, but weighed against a person's own values and norms (Jones, 2015). Each situation requires a revision of ones' self-concept and behaviour, particularly considering the constant scrutiny in the public domain. The challenge for the FCO is to reach a balance or alignment between the projected or real self and work identity, and the published or perceived representations. A person's concept of themselves is therefore not merely an unconscious reaction to situations, but consists of cognitive constructions of attitudes, opinions, and assessments of the environment in which we operate and live. It serves as a shield against negative perceptions and enables the individual to focus on their goals, and continue shaping their best self (Oyserman et al., 2012).

2.8 Conclusion

In the literature review, I aimed to provide structure and insight into the phenomena studied. It is essential to explore the historical setting that shaped correctional services, both within the South African context and globally. Factors relevant to evoke further understanding of the correctional setting included a discussion on correctional centres operating as total institutions, and correctional centres operating as separate communities. I further explored the role of the FCO's and her journey in the corrections fraternity, by discussion aspects such as a history on shaping the FCO, and on the FCO today. Important aspects of her work reality were then highlighted that contribute to shaping her work identity and making sense of her work reality, as well as, amongst other aspects, role conflict and emotional labour experienced by the FCO, aspects of resilience and vigilance, the role her uniform plays in shaping her work identity, and the image of COs as portrayed by the public and media.

The relevance of the literature discussed, and studies explored will be illustrated in later chapters, after identifying themes and discussing findings. Chapter 3 presents the research methodology, method and design applied, the selection of participants, data collection and the analysis of the data collected.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The motive for researchers in the social sciences to continue in their endeavours is their search to explore and understand human nature and behaviour. Through a combination of various processes of experiences, observations, reasoning and sense-making, researchers uncover what humans perceive as their truth, and how this gives meaning to their lives. Research requires a methodical approach, whereby certain phenomena are investigated so as to understand the FCO and her lived work experiences, to find answers, acquire insights, and possible solutions to question and problems. Ultimately, the aim is to accumulate knowledge and to add to what has already been discovered, or to uncover new information and thereby expand on our existing understanding of human beings, their lives, and their world (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; Shah & Al-Bargi, 2013).

This chapter outlines the research methodology, method, and research design that was applied in conducting the current study. The methodology of a research project refers to the model applied in conducting a study within a chosen context and paradigm. Method refers to the practical execution of the study in terms of the techniques, tools or processes applied to gather information or data for a study (Wahyuni, 2012). The research design of a study serves as guide for the planning and execution of a research project. The research design forms the connection between the methodology and method to enable the researcher to address the objective of the study and the research questions in the journey of exploring the different phenomena of a study (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2012; Wahyuni, 2012).

As a researcher, various considerations need to be taken in account in the development of such a design, such as the purpose of the research; the theoretical perspective from which a study will be approached; the context, environment or situation within which the research is conducted; the strategy or method of enquiry; and the techniques applied in the process of data gathering and analysis (Creswell, 2003, 2013; Crotty 1998; Terre Blanche et al., 2012).

In the current study with female COs on how they experience their work life and how this, together with the environment they operate in shape their identity, an interpretive phenomenological methodology, following a qualitative method, was applied. Information was gathered by means of face-to-face interviews, using an interview schedule with semi-structured, open-ended questions. In the following discussion, I elaborate on these aspects, as well as the selection of the sample and method of data analysis. Issues pertaining to ethical considerations and measures applied to ensure trustworthiness will also be elaborated on towards the end of this chapter.

3.2 Research design and method

The choice of research design and approach applied to elaborate on the four dimensions of Terre Blanche et al. (2012) mentioned above, requires that as a researcher, one responds to the question of the specific knowledge claims that can be made regarding the topic of study (Creswell, 2003). This means that one starts a study with certain assumptions about what knowledge will be acquired, and what information will be revealed during your inquiry. In this regard, I was initially guided by general information acquired from literature, the media, from friends and acquaintance, and to a large extent, my networking, involvement and experience gained from the *Inside-Out Outside-In South African Corrections Interest Group* (<https://sites.google.com/view/insideout> wikipage/home, 2019), on COs and the corrections environment. An initiative initiated by the Department of Psychology at Unisa, with Prof Eduard Fourie as project leader. From that, my knowledge expanded as I focused on my research topic, namely that of the FCO, through extensive literature research regarding their work experiences and work identity in the male-dominated corrections fraternity. The second aspect that required attention is what theoretical perspective informs my research, or best assists in addressing my research question regarding the shaping of their work identities as female COs (Creswell, 2003).

The strategy of enquiry chosen for this study, is a qualitative research method, that involves a naturalistic, holistic approach of data collection. In qualitative research, information can be collected by means of the spoken, written word and observations, where after it is analysed, and main common topics, opinions or themes are identified (Terre Blanche et al., 2012). This method

serves the purpose of the current study, since it concerns exploratory research that aims at explaining or describing phenomena, such as in this case the FCO, its lived work experiences, and the shaping of identity (Horrigan-Kelly, Millar & Dowling, 2016). This method primarily concerns exploratory research applied to understand underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations of individuals in various disciplines in life, often conducted in the community, health, social, and educational services, or as in this case, corrections (Terre Blanche et al., 2012). The aim of qualitative research is to understand the different aspects of people's experiences and attitudes, and to obtain answers to questions about the what, how and why of these life experiences (Bricki & Green, 2007; Daher, Carré, Jaramillo, Olivares & Tomicic, 2017).

Qualitative research methods differ from quantitative ones, in terms of the techniques of gathering of information, as well as the processing of data. Quantitative research starts with a pre-assumption about phenomena or variables and is mostly concerned about the causal relationship between variables, in order to make generalised conclusions. In this study, phenomena were researched as integrated parts, as they unfold in the real world of the female CO, without manipulation of variables or making any generalisations (Terre Blanche et al., 2012). This process allows the researcher to explore the different meanings attached to topics or themes, in order to relate it to a specific context and individual experience (Brown, 2008). Using a qualitative method, I did not aim to describe norms, but to gain understanding and knowledge, and add to the "richness and complexity of life" (Manning, 1992, p. 133) and illuminate the work lived experience of the FCO (Horrigan-Kelly et al., 2016).

3.3 Research approach: Paradigmatic perspective and interpretive phenomenology

In the commencement of a study project, researchers make certain knowledge claims, or assumptions about their field of inquiry, regarding what might be discovered and how this might take place (Creswell, 2013). These claims, called paradigms, consist of various components, such as claims that researchers make about what knowledge is, or what they regard as their reality, or "what is", also referred to as ontology (Scotland, 2012, p. 9). In this regard, as researcher I had to acknowledge that multiple realities exist when it came to the phenomena to be studied, which was also revealed in my findings and themes identified to be discussed later in this dissertation (Creswell, 2013). A second component is epistemology, or how we know what we know, or make

claims to knowledge. It is further concerned with how we acquire this knowledge and how this is communicated, or “what it means to know” (Scotland, 2012, p. 9). When it comes to epistemology, we want to explore the relationship between, the “would-be knower and what can be known” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 108). Thirdly, paradigms consist of the methodology or process whereby these claims are studied, and as researcher, one is concerned with the why and what, as well as how data will be gathered and analysed (Creswell, 2003; Scotland, 2012).

Phenomenology is rooted in a philosophical tradition and is regarded as an inductive or descriptive qualitative research approach, founded by Edmund Husserl, who argued that our experience of perceptions, thoughts, memories, imagination, and emotions, involves an intentional, conscious awareness of our lives and events. Husserl further proposed that researchers are mainly objective and bracket their preconceived views or beliefs of a phenomenon (Reiners, 2012; Tufford & Newman, 2010). Martin Heidegger, a student of Husserl, however, rejected this approach, and developed the interpretive phenomenological approach focusing on the concept of *being in the world* or *Dasein*, rather than merely knowing the world (Heidegger, 1927/1962). His approach moved beyond a mere description of concepts of an experience, to a search for meanings embedded in individuals’ everyday lives (Reiners, 2012).

Multiple realities exist, formed through our daily interactions, which are not predetermined, but we have the freedom to choose how we make meaning of our lives. Reality is also subjective in the sense that it is influenced by an individual’s social, cultural, historical, and ideological understanding of reality (Giorgi, 1992; Krauss, 2005). Heidegger (1927/1962) further disregarded the concept of the researcher as a mere spectator of the process and argued that both researcher and participant are inseparable. This engagement represents a partnership of the individual’s subjective and objective experiences, as well as the views of the world in which they live. Total impartiality is therefore impossible, since one becomes enmeshed in a shared world of experiences and knowledge (Heidegger, 1927/1962; Horrigan-Kelly et al., 2016).

An interpretive phenomenological paradigm proved an apt fit. With phenomenology, its philosophical approach regards the study of human experiences and phenomenologists share the

view that human beings are “sense-making creatures” and share an interest in people’s lived experiences (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p. 3). This approach allowed me as researcher to pay close attention to the participant, what is said, written, or observed.

In making sense of the FCO’s work experiences, the meaning she attaches to it and how this contributes to shaping her work identity, the researcher plays an active role in this very dynamic process (Smith & Osborn, 2008) and is strongly connected to the interpretative or hermeneutic tradition. During this process, both parties are engaged in a dual interpretative relationship, or a so-called double hermeneutic. As researcher, during my exploration, I make sense of, and interpret the experiences and stories shared by the FCO, while she is also making sense of those experiences in her lived world (Alase, 2017; Smith & Osborn, 2008; Smith et al., 2009). Sharing in a day-in-the-life of the FCO, it was imperative to carefully navigate between the worlds of researcher and officer. Applying an interpretive phenomenological approach in my study, I was continuously discovering how the FCO experienced, observed and engaged in her world, life and events. This approach, as explained by Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014), does not intend to describe a phenomenon according to set scientific criteria, categories, or concepts.

3.4 Selection of participants

In the sampling of participants in qualitative research, the aim is to make selections, not in terms of numbers, but to select a broad enough sample to enable me to collect adequate, varied information of the phenomena studied (Elliott & Timulak, 2005). The criteria mostly used to determine sample size with this method is referred to as saturation. This stage is reached when the researcher determines that sufficient data is gathered and that no new findings will be made by adding new participants (Elliott & Timulak, 2005).

Participants for this study were selected by means of purposive sampling, that requires the application of inclusion and exclusion criteria for selection of participants suitable for the study (Terre Blanche et al., 2012). This sampling technique allows for a homogenous and a diverse group, to whom the research question is relevant, and who attaches similar meaning and significance to the phenomena studied (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Willig, 2013). As a researcher,

this provided me adequate opportunity to explore the lived work experiences of the FCO (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003; Smith et al., 2009). This means of sampling also best meets the criteria for saturation (Elliott & Timulak, 2005).

The inclusion of criteria for this study included female COs, employed at DCS, involved in the direct supervision of offenders, and would preferably be able to communicate in English. I was aware that the ability to communicate effectively was specifically stated as an appointment requirement for officers, and therefore did not foresee any challenges in this regard. No language barriers were experienced during the interviews, and participants were free to respond in either English or Afrikaans. This assisted in my selection of participants, where no translator was required. Most of the participants had tertiary qualifications, were very articulate, and spoke with confidence in English. Initially, the criteria proposed was that participants ought to have between three to five years' experience in a South African Correctional Centre. The motivation behind this was to obtain data from participants who are relatively new in the profession and not yet too institutionalised. Upon discussion with the relevant managers, it became apparent that this would be impractical, since it would limit my selection, due to the current composition of the female COs at the Centre that also need to fit the rest of my profile. This posed no negative impact on my study, since the contrary was rather experienced. The maturity and professionalism of the COs, with less than three years to 20 plus years' service astound me. The diverse profiles further provided the opportunity to collect broad and rich data.

Literature on research from a phenomenological stance seldom addresses matters of sampling size or procedures, but do, however, emphasise the aim of phenomenological studies, which is to gain insight and a deeper understanding of phenomena (Marshall, Cardon, Poddar & Fontenot, 2013). This cannot be achieved without significant interaction with subjects or participants that are exposed to experiences that will highlight the essence and objectives of the study (Norlyk & Harder, 2010). As a general guideline, the matter of sample size depends on the depth of analysis required; the richness of cases; whether the researcher will be comparing cases; the practical restrictions of participants that include time and access constraints of participants (Pietkiewicz &

Smith, 2014). Sample size, particularly in qualitative research, cannot be predetermined, but as researcher, one is guided by the information required to explore the phenomena of the study as extensive and efficiently as possible.

The ethics committee of DCS oversee research projects that are registered and approved and allocate correctional centres they deem suitable for a study as well as for the researcher. The operations of this committee and a researchers' conduct is regulated by the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) (DCS, 2019d) of which strict adherence is paramount. This committee is responsible for the appointment of an internal guide at the specific correctional centre ,as point of contact for the researcher and to monitor the process. Aspects such as research objectives and demographics required for the study, as well as location of the researcher is considered. In this regard, Kgoši Mampuru II Management Area (hereinafter referred to as Kgoši Mampuru or KM interchangeable), located in Pretoria, Gauteng, South Africa was recommended. Kgoši Mampuru consists of one or more correctional centres or offices, under the control of a National Commissioner (Correctional Services Act, 1998 [CS Act]). Correctional centres refer to any place established under the CS Act for the incarceration, detention, confinement, protection, training or treatment of individuals liable to detention in custody or to placement under protective custody, as defined earlier in paragraph 1.5 under definitions (CS Act, 1998). Such centres also include any land or buildings adjacent to the area, and all quarters of correctional officials used in connection with any such correctional centre (CS Act, 1998). KM, previously known as the Pretoria Management Area, was renamed to honour the warrior Kgoši Mampuru II a 19th century local chief of the Bapedi, symbolising his resistance of the colonial rule, but also other warriors who had stood up against repression. Kgoši Mampuru II was executed in 1883 at the then Pretoria Central Prison (DCS, 2019c). This centre, housing the largest number offender population in RSA, consists of six main areas, as explained to me during my study, among other, the Female and Pretoria Local Correctional Centre, the Remand or Pre-trial Detention facility, Atteridgeville Correctional Centre and Odi in Mabopane.

The infamous 'C-Max', a maximum-security division established after the death sentence was revoked in 1995, was established at KM (Singh, 2005). A division known as 'the Gallows' also forms part of KM, where, between 1960 to 1989 (South African History Online, 2012) were the

main designated area where death sentences were concluded in South Africa. After 1995, this area was restored and established as a heritage site, renamed the Correctional Services Museum (Gauteng Tourism Authority, 2019; SA Tourism, 2019).

Upon the appointment of an internal guide or primary gatekeeper for this project at Kgoši Mampuru, meetings were scheduled to discuss the required protocol and the way forward in conducting the study and the selection of participants. Access was secured to Kgoši Mampuru's male correctional centre, where an office was provided at the psychological and social services section to conduct interviews. During the first week at the male centre, secondary gatekeepers facilitated meetings with relevant managers. I was introduced as researcher, where the aim, objectives, and relevant study sample was discussed, as well as the relevant approval and ethical clearance obtained. To fast-track the process, I was granted permission to attend two early morning parade meetings to present the study and offer an invitation to female officers that might be interested in participating. The rest of the week, I was escorted to different sections to further introduce myself and the study, and to pose personal invitations to female officers.

By means of purposive sampling, candidates could be identified and selected in terms of the set criteria. Candidates approached me cautiously in the beginning, which was understandable given their environment, and that most had never been part of any research project. It was, however, after interviews commenced that participation was encouraged, by means of snowballing, by those who already participated, and the study gained momentum. This assisted not only in increasing the sample size, but also the suitability of participants, since FCOs invited their peers, who shared their sentiments and experiences. This proved highly effective, particularly since locating eligible participants is difficult, given their work environment, availability, locality, and the possible sensitivity of information shared (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Arrangements were also facilitated that enabled me to interview candidates at the female centre at Kgoši Mampuru.

Since limited information exists on this specific topic, particularly in the South African context, I embraced the opportunity to interview a larger sample of participants of 17 FCOs. For this study, being interpretive and phenomenological in nature, an adequate number of participants were reached when the data collected during the interviews revealed sufficient rich information to

address my research questions. Saturation, as discussed earlier in this section on the selection of the participants, was reached, as no new themes transpired that could make any significant impact on the data collected (Bowen, 2008; Sargeant, 2012).

Due to the sensitive nature of the work of the FCO, as well as some of the personal reflections shared, participants reiterated the matter of confidentiality, to be discussed in detail later in paragraph 3.8 on ethical considerations and requested that their identity be protected as far as possible. As this was also considered during the consent process and information sessions conducted before the research project commenced, a detailed discussion on the matter of consent follows later in par 3.6. As a researcher I am committed to the ethical guidelines that regulate research as contained in the policy on research ethics (Unisa, 2016).

In this regard, to provide context to findings of this study and the discussion thereof, some relevant information regarding the distribution of demographics of the participating CFOs will be provided. Participants' ages range from 22 to 63 years old, with years of experience ranging from three to 31 years. In terms of race, the sample was very well distributed, and representative of the South African composition, with 10 African, four White, two Indian, and one Coloured FCO. Of the 17 CFOs, eight had experience working with female offenders, of which five are still working at the female centre. Nine of the 17 participants were in possession of a tertiary qualification, as indicated in diagram 3.4.1 below. Only three indicated that due to them being close to retirement, they are not interested in pursuing further studies, however, the remaining five were busy with studies or planning to start with their studies.

Further statistics on, for example, marital status, include seven CFOs who were married with children, with six being divorced, with children, and the rest either unmarried or without children. Some insightful information shared by seven of the participants, were that some have spouses, partners, family members, and even children who are, or were in corrections or similar regulatory uniformed forces, such as the South African Police Service or the South African National Defence Force.

A distribution of some of the demographics of the participants are reflected in diagrams 3.4.1 below, to provide a more visual representation of the data.

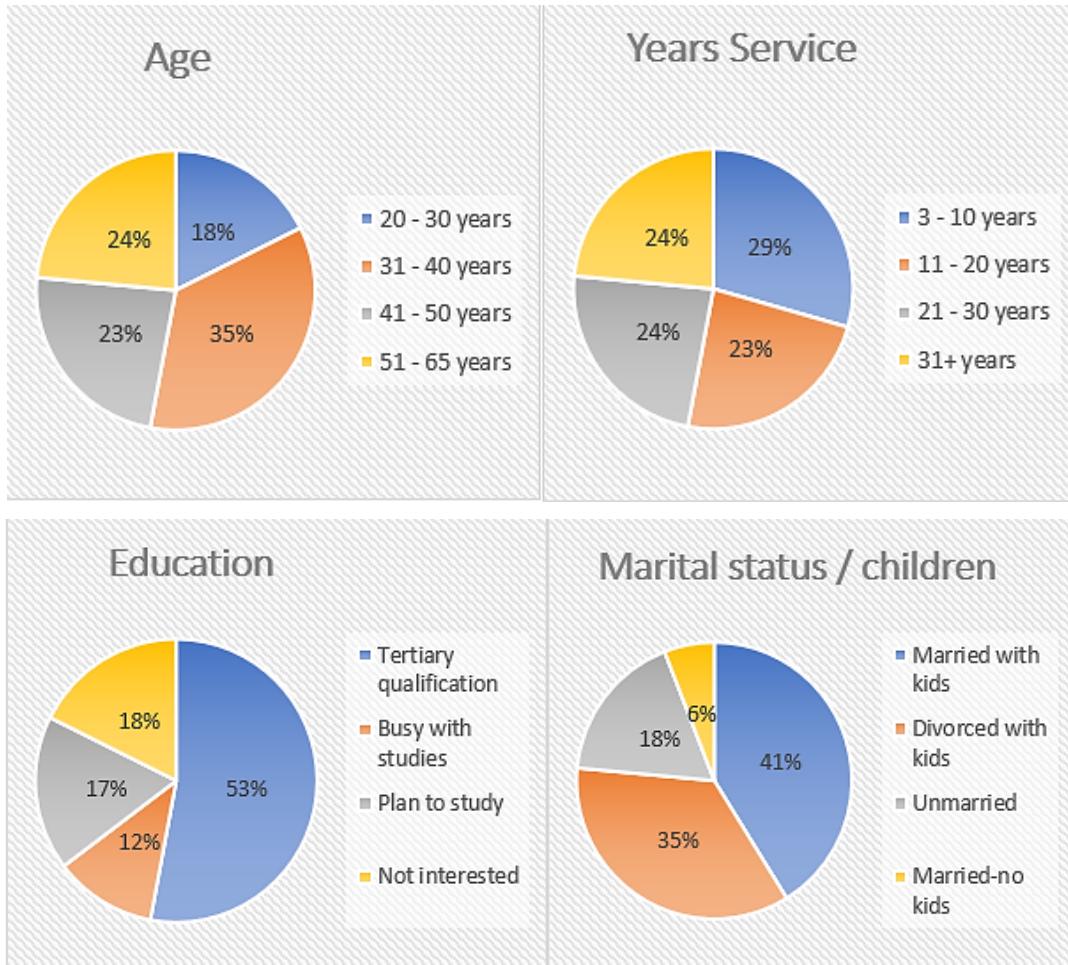


Diagram 3.4.1 Representation of demographics of participating FCOs

3.5 Data collection

Data were collected over a six-week period by means of semi-structured interviews with 17 female COs, using an interview schedule that comprised of a list of open-ended questions according to predetermined categories or themes (see Appendix E). This schedule was verified by the internal guide appointed by DCS beforehand, to ensure that questions were relevant, fair, not misleading, and would not cause any prejudice or harm.

The presentations I conducted during the parade meetings offered an opportunity to

communicate the aim and significance of the study, and to encourage participation. Thereafter, information was circulated, and further invitations were extended to interested participants via supervisors. The assistance of the gatekeepers from the Psychological and Social Services section were essential, since I was introduced to the Regional Manager/relevant Managers/Directors of the Centre, who required acknowledgement.

The nature of the CO's duties is regulated by shift rosters, and they are restricted to specific areas where such functions need to be performed. The assistance of relevant role players is paramount to assist in accessing research participants and the logistical arrangements. One cannot merely interview employees at DCS without supervisors' knowledge, however, they also respected the process and the ethical issues to be considered regarding confidentiality, as discussed later in this section, and the protection of participants. Although the environment is very restricted and regulated, visibility was further ensured by visiting various sections of the Management Centre to engage with possible participants. Such movements were always strictly controlled and coordinated by secondary appointed gatekeepers of a section.

3.6 Interview Process

Access was secured at Kgoši Mampuru at both male and female correctional centres. An office was provided to me at the Psychological and Social Services section, where most interviews were conducted, and served as contact point for potential participants to enquire about the process, schedule dates, and time for interviews. At the female centre, an office was also arranged, and in both instances, the venues were conducive to a safe and comfortable environment for the CO to partake in the study. The reality and practicalities of the officers' work environment was soon realised when some participants could not visit the offices provided to be interviewed. They indicated their eagerness to participate, and the necessary arrangements were made for me to interview them at their sections within the different Centres, where they supervise offenders. As a researcher, it is important that one can adjust, adapt, and prepare oneself for any eventualities. This posed valuable opportunities to gain insight into their actual work lives and interaction with members, as well as offenders, that I embraced without hesitation. In the course of research, this kind of flexibility in engagement often transpired and contributed tremendously to the richness

and expansiveness of data collected. It offered valuable support to the interpretive phenomenological paradigm as a chosen approach, in the sense that it provided ample opportunity for an inductive enquiry to allow topics or themes to emerge that were unanticipated (Smith, 2004).

The interviews were conducted by means of face-to-face interaction with the female COs that allowed me to explore and gain deeper insight into their work life experiences and how they make meaning of this challenging environment. The semi-structured schedule, compiled to use during the interviews, assisted in that the open-ended questions provided the opportunity for more in-depth discussions. Participants did not experience it as a question and answer session, but more of a conversation that allowed them to think about their responses and to elaborate on them. As researcher, I experienced this approach to be highly effective, since through the open-ended questioning, participants could reflect deeply about how they wished to respond, who they were, their identity as female COs within this context, as well as the meaning/s they attached to their work situation and environment (Creswell, 2003; Smith, 2017). The interview schedule guided the process, but also provided a framework within which I could manoeuvre, to ensure the gathering of valuable, rich data (Wahyuni, 2012).

Before any interview commenced, the purpose of the study was again explained, and participants were provided a letter (Appendix C) containing the background, objectives, and process. All participants were given a letter of consent to be studied, to which all consented, although some were hesitant to disclose their identity. Most participants requested that their anonymity be upheld without any identifying information to be disclosed during the interviews. They were again reassured of confidentiality and anonymity of the process, data and letters of consent. This posed no challenge, since it was envisaged that this would be the case, and is also the preferred practice, especially in this environment. In the reporting and discussion of findings, discussed in paragraph 4.5, numbers are used as anonymous references, for example, Participant 1, Participant 2.

Approval was granted by DCS that interviews may be audio recorded, and each participant was asked whether they felt comfortable with this mode of data collection. Most consented,

however, some indicated that they preferred not to be recorded, and comprehensive notes were made during those interviews. Recordings, transcriptions, and notes are secured by password protection on an external hard drive stored in a safe. Confidentiality of all information and participants are paramount and entails that information will not be used for any other purposes than for this study. No real names, details or any identifying information of the participants, of any persons related or otherwise, will be used in any written reports, projects or publications.

Apart from the audio recordings, data were supplemented by notes made during our sessions. It was important to actively listen to the stories told by participants, therefore note-taking was limited to using key words to record observational cues, thoughts and ideas. It was soon realised that this required some skill, which I soon developed, in not interrupting the flow of the dialogue. This assisted me during the data analysis, in the sense that each cue word corresponded with a specific part of the conversation recorded. Key words were also used for aspects meaningful to explore after a part was discussed, or to remember to address in next interviews. These notes, also referred to as field notes, are subjective reconstructions of events, behaviour and experiences observed during the study (Manning, 1992). During this process, key words were noted as part of my own reflection and experiences. This reflected some of the dynamics and other relevant cues observed. This assisted after each interview, when reflection was done, to remember what had impacted on me. This proved very valuable during the transcribing and analysis process, to remember key words, experiences, dynamics and meaningfulness, that added a richness of the data collected (Hunter-Revell, 2013).

In the process of gathering information, interaction was not only limited to participants, but also involved interaction with the broader population of the Centre, that included management, other COs, Correction Officials, as well as offenders. It was always imperative to uphold professional and ethical conduct. The required protocol, as prescribed, must always be observed, particularly in this environment. Guidance by the gatekeepers was invaluable, since every space that was entered required specific regulations and protocol that had to be followed.

To first-hand experience, the harshness of grey cement, iron gates and lack of light through small windows comes as a certain shock. I realised that the many articles and media reports on the

environment within which offenders must live, also forms part of where officers spend most of their working day. Officers are also locked up, with no right of passage. They cannot freely roam around or leave when they want. The many registers are visible at all desks and officers are constantly busy writing and recording. There is an ever-present hum of conversations, instructions, where officers are interrupted by men in orange at the male centre, and women in blue and white at the female centre, where everyone with different requests, enquiries, questions and complaints. At all times, movements are monitored and recorded, where I observed these female CO's vigilance first-hand. Many offenders have appointments, whether with a chaplain, doctor, social worker, or psychologist, and often an inmate comes with some odd request. The professional manner in which officers handle the numerous requests and demands was interesting and admirable, and somehow reminded me of a teacher, who is responsible to manage a large group of busy, demanding children, but also a vulnerable group of the population, in a confined space.

The above echoed the reality of what has been shared by participants during the interviews of their working environment, conditions, challenges and interactions. Their professional conduct and posture in their brown uniforms, displayed during the interviews, were very much observable at their sections as well. This underpinned the rationale of my study in terms of "keeping up appearances", as referred to in chapter 1 and discussed in chapter 2 of the dissertation. Steadfast and composed is how I have observed them in action when dealing with offenders. Firm and assertive, though approachable, in various situations that transpired just in the short periods I was part of their space. Never letting their guard down. They operate within a large crowd of offenders, in a cold and impersonal environment, but had a confidence about them. My thoughts inadvertently went to so many media reports portraying all COs as stern, ruthless, with no empathy or ethics, but over the period of interacting with many of the female COs found it to be totally unfair. Within the confines of the respective offices where interviews were also conducted, I often got a glimpse of the ordinary women, mother, sister, daughter, friend and the vulnerability that seems to form part of their different personas. That made me think of how they manage to navigate between law enforcer, where they know they are not particularly everyone's favourite, and a loving, devoted human being outside these high walls. How do they break down the walls that they have to build around them to survive this space, and construct it again the very next day?

Moving between interviews in the safety of a designated office and directly within their work environment demanded flexibility in process, as well as in my thought processes. During the proposal stage, before the study commenced, as well as during the study, quite an extensive literature search was conducted to capacitate me in terms of knowledge of corrections as discipline and environment. It was also necessary to get acquainted with the different employees employed such as officers and officials and their respective responsibilities. Through my research, vast literature on offenders and their lives and stories, were found, which is essential to have background on and to provide context. It was, however, surprising how little is covered on COs, and particularly female COs, even more so in South African literature. My concurrent involvement in the research project at Zonderwater also provided some first-hand insight towards COs, in liaising with them, as well as from offenders' viewpoint. Unfortunately, many of the information and media reports portrayed, I viewed as not very balanced and more than often very negative, both international and nationally.

All the conflicting information posed quite a challenge as to set a certain frame of mind that emphasised the importance of the process of bracketing. For me as researcher this, however, also posed an ideal opportunity to test my biases, perceptions, reflexivity and views (Tufford & Newman, 2010) By determining, acknowledging and addressing such opinions beforehand, assisted me to remain objective throughout the process (Creswell, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To be aware of any possible factors or biases that might impact on the objectivity of the study, I decided to have a structured approach to ensure that the process will not be jeopardised in any way. This was done by using the interview schedule and notes what I know about the topics, the different views about it, my opinions, what I wondered about and what it is I want to know about a topic or theme. This is an important step, since as Creswell (2013) elaborated, this often highlight assumptions and questions others may also have on the topic. Thereby it directs and informs a researcher of the philosophy around the phenomena, and theoretical framework on the subject matter to be studied. Although this was quite extensive, it assisted in reminding me of my objectives and research rationale and to remain focussed. It also provided additional information for possible probing on matters that might arise. Although the corrections environment is not totally new to me, the officer fraternity is more unknown, and this preparation was very useful.

During the interviews at their respective stations and the office provided, this research approach provided me with cues to explore more. This relates closely to so called ‘responsive interviewing’ (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 5), a technique forwarded according to interpretive research philosophy. By listening actively to participants’ responses, the researcher can build on insight and information that unfolds during interviews. Using in-depth interviews involves unique processes and related skills, as referenced by Rubin and Rubin (2012, p. xv) as “the art of hearing data”. Given the complexities of the work lives of, and the highly unconventional setting in which FCOs operate, I can confirm that this was indeed what was required from me as interviewer and researcher in my search for how the FCO makes sense of her world. It contributed greatly to facilitating a flexible process, where, as researcher, I could adapt my approach and questioning as new information, topics, and themes emerged.

I believe the effective use of the open-ended questions and one-on-one interviewing during this study contributed to empower the participating FCOs. By sharing their stories, they were granted the opportunity to freely express their opinions and lived experiences (Kvale, 2006). The safe space created for them, together with the relationship built between me as a researcher, and the FCO, were highly conducive during this process. Not only did they feel comfortable to engage in the conversation freely, but also to share highly personal experiences. When using the terms conversation or dialogue, by no means does conversation reflect a mere informal sharing of ideas. Nor does dialogue refer to a deeply philosophical process of engagement (Kvale, 2006). The hierarchy according to which the interview plays out, is indeed acknowledged, in that the researcher are instrumental in setting the stage of the power play between researcher and the researched (Kvale, 2006). I did discover though, that the process that transpired very much represented, what is referred to as a platonic dialogue. As explained by Gadamer (1975/2004) Plato used dialogue as a process whereby both role players search for meaning and truth, in keeping with a double hermeneutic. Through dialogue, truth or meaning emerges that transcends that which is “neither mine nor yours” (Gadamer, 1975/2004, p. 361). It is through this collaborative interplay, between myself and the participants of this study, that valuable knowledge and sense-making was co-produced (Kvale 2006).

Throughout our sessions, I realised what some of these officers have mentioned to be true,

namely that they do not often have an opportunity or platform to share what is on their hearts, either at home, or at work. The understanding of and respect for the research process displayed by these officers, indicated that their knowledge spans further than merely their immediate vocation. Indeed, the relationship established was handled with integrity and such high level of professionalism that my respect for these special women grew even more.

3.7 Analysis of data collected

Choosing the Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as method of analysis proved ideal in achieving the objectives of this research. Through my interactions and interviews with the participants, the data collected provided valuable insight into how the FCO might make sense of her work life. True to the nature of an interpretive phenomenological approach, as posited by Heidegger (1927/1962), the research in this case involved a journey of being in the participant's world, providing the opportunity to explore details of the FCO's multiple realities, and a shared search for meaning in their lives and work experiences (Reiners, 2012). This also contributed to acquiring information on how the FCOs as a group operate within the corrections fraternity more broadly. In the analysis, data were perceived through a psychological lens, by applying psychological concepts and theories (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). In my search for how the FCO shapes her work identity, the Social Identity Theory (SIT) by Tajfel and Tuner (1986) was applied. Concepts such as personal identity were explored that include the personal attributes and competencies of the FCO. Social identity as concept, such as the FCO's sense of belonging to a collective through group affiliations and interactions were also explored (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Smaldino, 2019).

From representations by the participating FCOs, it became apparent that the social context within which an FCO operates plays a crucial role in shaping her self-concept. The different groups with whom the FCO interacts, from other COs, correctional officials, as well as offenders, were further explored. The role of differences, as well as similarities between groups the FCOs interact with, was noted as factors contributing to group formation. The formation of a social identity and group formation further corroborates with the "social reality and social comparison" (Haslam et al., 1995, p. 141) made by the world outside the corrections landscape, and how its population is viewed and stereotyped. Haslam (2004) refers to a process of self-categorisation whereby, in terms

of group formation in the context of this study, the FCOs share similar objectives, views and experiences that categorise them as a group. This in turn constructively contributes to construct the FCO's social identity (Haslam, 2004). Through this study it became evident that the group affiliations of the FCO, extend beyond colleagues and peers, but include unanticipated similarities with the offender population. The environment in which she finds herself and which she shares with different groups, as an important concept of the SIT (Smaldino, 2019; Tajfel & Turner, 1989), was also explored, and valuable knowledge were gained regarding this factor in shaping the FCO's work identity.

In terms of sample size, for this study, 17 participants were selected, of which the process as discussed earlier in paragraph 3.4. For a phenomenological study, a smaller sample size is often advised, due to the rigour of the research method, resulting in a large amount of data collected (Smith & Osborn, 2008). This study was, however, also informed by the environment, practicalities of a corrections facility, its time constraints, and processes (Khan, 2014). The complexity of the population studied, as well as the research question regarding the phenomenon of shaping work-identity guided the process and resulted in a sample size of seventeen. The data collected from this bigger sample was voluminous and added to time spent on transcription, reading and rereading, and ultimately the explication of data. This, however, contributed to the depth of the research and allowed for greater insight into the work life of FCOs as unique population.

The raw data to be analysed took the form of audio recordings, transcripts and fieldnotes. Analysing this data was a process that involved rigorous, detailed, and time-consuming action (Smith & Osborn, 2008). Although IPA does not prescribe rigid steps of data analysis, it however required that during the analysis process, as researcher I applied and presented the following features, namely to: (i) capture the essence of each participant's personal experiences and journey, and identified shared concepts between the FCOs; (ii) to describe the experiences shared by participants and as researcher provided an interpretation thereof; (iii) to acknowledge and respect each participant's opinion and unique stories; and (iv) to apply a psychological lens in making sense of each FCO's own sense-making of their lived work experiences within the context of the corrections fraternity (Cooper, Fleisher & Cotton, 2012; Smith et al., 2009).

To achieve the above, it was necessary to be mindful of the views that I hold towards the phenomena studied, and to acknowledge that total subjectivity, as emphasised by Heidegger, is not always attainable while conducting social and human sciences research (Horrigan-Kelly et al., 2016). This does not only apply during interviews, but also during the data analysis phase. It is important in this regard that I bracket any bias, and take a neutral stance, in the form of an almost “presuppositionless attitude” (Broome, 2013, p. 224). The issue of bracketing was referred to in earlier in the dissertation. As researcher, I could not merely ignore my experiences and understanding of the phenomena I studied, but consciously bracketing during the interviews assisted in managing often emotive recollections on the part of FCOs regarding their work lives and world. This also assisted during the analysis phase to remain objective, when as researcher I was once again confronted with various emotional scenarios (Horrigan-Kelly et al., 2016; Tufford & Newman, 2010).

An important aspect applied during both the interview and analysis stages was not to form any opinions or conclusions prematurely (Horrigan-Kelly et al., 2016). By sharing a day in the life of the FCO, I could experience first-hand the challenging environment in which she operated. Many perceived misconceptions held by the public, particularly of COs, were regarded to be unfound and unfair. By reading and listening to their stories, emphasis was lent to the exceptional attributes each FCO brings to the corrections fraternity, and how uniquely the FCO shapes her work identity.

Although IPA can be approached in various ways, I chose to shape my analysis according to three main features. Firstly, IPA is *idiographic* in nature, requiring me to conduct a case-by-case analysis of every interview. I was concerned with the meaning the FCO attaches to her work, life experiences, and consequently identifying themes (Larkin & Thompson, 2012). As a researcher, I continued until specific conclusions were reached of each case, the phenomena, as well as the population studied. This detailed process provided the opportunity to gain a better understanding of the work lives, lived experiences, and way in which these aspects shape the FCO’s work identity (Smith, 2004).

Secondly, the *inductive* technique applied in IPA proved valuable in this study, because it allowed for a more flexible approach to data analysis, whereby topics or themes emerged during

the study that were unanticipated (Horrigan-Kelly et al., 2016; Smith, 2004). The research rationale of this study was not to test a specific hypothesis, but by exploring and collecting comprehensive data, to provide rich descriptions of the FCO's lived work experiences (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Smith, 2004). The aim was, furthermore, to answer the primary research question of how these experiences contribute and impact on the shaping of her work identity. The rereading of transcripts, and often re-listening to the audio recordings assisted me as researcher to explore what, in her work life events, 'matters' to the FCO, and what this 'means' to her (Larkin & Thompson, 2012, p. 105).

A third aspect of IPA regards its *interrogative* nature, also referred to as the hermeneutical or interpretative approach (Smith, 2004). During this stage, while closely interacting with the participating FCO, as she made sense of her shared work life experiences, I came to an understanding of these lived experiences, the meanings she attach to it, and the influence on her life and work identity (Alase, 2017; Smith & Osborn, 2008; Smith et al., 2009). At this stage the analysis is extended to identify and highlight concepts that, within the context of the study, link or relate to the theoretical frameworks used in this study, such as the SIT. The theories or schools of thought applied in this study did not lead to preconceived ideas about the subject matter, but rather contributed to a better understanding of the phenomena studied (Smith & Osborn, 2008), such as FCOs, the corrections environment, factors shaping the FCO's work identity, and sense-making of lived work experiences.

To achieve the three features of IPA mentioned, certain actions or steps had to be followed. Even though no formal set of steps are prescribed, literature and research describe some general processes (Smith et al., 2009), and I applied the following actions:

Multiple listening to recordings and reading of transcripts: due to the large data set of 17 participants' recollections of their lived work experiences, this was quite a time-consuming process. It required listening to the audio recordings several times, not only to identify concepts, ideas and possible themes, but also to recall the tone and mood captured during the interviews. After listening to a recording, I read the transcript of the interview. As I listened, I made notes of aspects, emotions and information relevant and of importance to my study. I did not move on to a

next transcript before the previous one was assimilated as thoroughly as possible. This does not mean that I did not often refer to the transcripts or recordings. During this stage, the notes were numbered, as I have started to identify topics or categories, and quotes of importance, for example 1 - career started; 2 - training; 3 - environment; 4 - interaction with offenders; 5 -interaction with co-officers; 6 - emotions; and 7 - uniform. When reading the transcripts, I also made notes in the right margin on the transcripts using corresponding numbers, and added numbers to new relevant information, for example 3 - environment with a sub-topic 3.1. correctional space; 3.2. social space, and so on. This was mainly done in Word, but I often worked from printed transcripts as well. Afterwards, the written notes were transferred to the transcript. Having printed copies assisted in times of power outage, or where working on a computer was not practical.

Through the interviews conducted, relevant and related topics could already be identified which formed part to my field notes. These notes assisted a great deal when listening to the recordings and reading the transcripts. On a separate notepad I made columns with all headings for the corresponding numbers with the relevant participant number, for example, 3-P1. Coloured highlighting was used to accent significant phrases, opinions or reflections by the participants. This process allowed me to immerse myself with the data on multiple levels. The detailed notes made during the interviews that I couldn't record, proved more than adequate, and I also transcribed these in transcript format for purposes of analysis. This was done as soon as possible after each interview, in order not to lose any important information that could not be recorded.

All the notes on the transcriptions were compared with the fieldnotes made during each interview as well. This process is also regarded as a form of pre-coding whereby significant stories, phrases, quotes and moments were highlighted, noted or marked as significant (Saldaña, 2015). This also assisted to identify a trend of similar topics addressed that addressed the phenomena I set out to explore, and possible themes that started to emerge. This process assisted in highlighting incidents and information shared by participants that provided valuable insights into the phenomena studied (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). It was important to reflect after each read of a transcript or listening to a recording. This not only allowed for reflection, but further assisted in the bracketing of my personal views. It also added to the dual hermeneutic process of the meanings

I attached to the findings made, and how I understood the meaning-making process (Larkin & Thompson, 2012) of the FCO, in order for her voice to best be heard.

Identifying units of meaning: While immersing myself in the data it was necessary to be mindful of units of meaning that emerged from the participants' stories. These units are parts or phrases of text that serve as particularly meaningful. A meaning unit often contains the psychological essence of the FCO's representations. Each meaning unit was examined to determine its "psychological meaningfulness" (Broome, 2013, p. 224), and related to the larger scope of the phenomena studied. An example of a meaning unit from the transcripts from P2 is the following excerpt: "*You have to use the very same entrance. There's no other exit.*" As category this was placed under 3 - environment, and 3.1. correctional space. On a psychological level, the significance identified was the shared, isolated space the FCO and offender share, and the difference, but also the similarities between these two groups. Upon further analysis and similar emotions shared by other participants this became a significant meaning unit. Meaning units are often interrelated, where further codes transpired, for example, the environment in which the FCO finds herself becomes significant as shared space in a professional and social context. While engaging with units of meaning as research, I had to remain mindful of the research question, namely, what factors and lived work experiences shape the FCO's work identity. Therefore, these units must contribute to the objectives of this study.

During this stage, the units of meaning contributed to identifying more prominent overarching topics or codes. These categories are also referred to as labels that suggest specific extrapolations that can be deducted from the coded text and provided some insight into the phenomena studied (Larkin & Thompson, 2012). Two main labels identified which as researcher I regarded as significant and reflective of the context within which the FCO makes sense of her work life are the corrections environment shaping the work identity of the FCO, and the FCO representing corrections today.

Transforming notes into emergent themes: Following IPA as method of analysis allowed themes to emerge through my conscious interaction, in journeying together with the FCOs in this process. This was also an iterative process, whereby cases were repeatedly referred to, until units

of meaning, main topics, themes, and subthemes emerged (Tufford & Newman, 2010). During this process, coupled with the above processes, the notes made and identified units of meaning translates to identifying themes and subthemes. The mindful, purposeful and detailed process as discussed above is crucial, where the intention is to identify concise, but adequate expressive themes, and not just mere abstract codes. The identified themes (Creswell, 2013) are grouped together and supported by significant statements made by participants and forms part of a larger unit of information (Jeong & Othman, 2016; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Smith et al., 2009).

For purposes of coding and analysis, I also made use of Atlas.ti, a computer software programme that assists in the analysis of qualitative data, by organising data in a systematic manner and provide auto-coding (Friese, 2018; Saldaña, 2015). One of the reasons I used this tool is that it is specifically designed to save a researcher, analyst or coder valuable time in identifying similar text or phrases. It further assisted in managing a large set of data and ensured that no significant data was missed, whereby my notes, units of meaning, and quotations could be double checked. Using Atlas.ti also served as verification of the codes and units of meaning I have manually identified (Saldaña, 2015). Another useful function it provides is that it allowed me to explore related codes, as well as evaluate possible relations and quotations the tool highlighted that may have been overlooked (Friese, 2018). Additionally, this programme was applied because many different terms or descriptions are used by COs for the same subjects or topics. Some instances are, for example, where an offender can be described as inmate, prisoner or lifer; and where an officer can often be referred to as member, warden, guard, or uniform. Using this tool only served as alternative or additional quality control measure in my process, which in my view, cannot replace manual coding.

Seeking relationships and clustering themes: this stage required an intensive evaluation of the findings and the initial themes and subthemes I identified. In this regard, the overall contribution of my understanding of the FCO's lived work experiences, the meaning they attach to their work experiences, and how this shape her work identity was emphasised. This process supported the double hermeneutic or interpretive approach of analysis applied in my study (Alase, 2017; Smith & Osborn, 2008; Smith et al., 2009). It was also necessary to identify patterns or correlation between topics or themes between the different participants' responses (Larkin & Thompson,

2012). The themes identified were grouped together, according to conceptual similarities, for example, by sharing similar meanings and context, where after larger superordinate themes were grouped into subordinate or subthemes. The final table consists of the main or overarching labels or topics, a number of superordinate themes, followed by subordinate or subthemes (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Willig, 2013). Table 3.7.1 below illustrates these themes and provides a framework for the discussion of findings in the chapter to follow.

Table 3.7.1 Emerging Topics, Superordinate and Subordinate Themes

Overarching Labels/Topics	Superordinate Themes	Subordinate Themes
The corrections environment shaping the work identity of the FCO	Correctional centres as social institutions	<i>My institutionalised self</i>
	Correctional centres operating as separate communities	<i>The social spaces we share</i>
The FCO representing correctional services today	Being different becomes her saving grace	<i>Emotional labour</i>
		<i>Vigilance as my armour</i>
		<i>My Uniform ... the fabric of which I am made</i>

Integration of themes to form an understanding of the essence of the phenomena: Once the summarised tables have been compiled for each transcript, they were integrated into a table of themes, as illustrated above, that captures the essence of the phenomena studied (Willig, 2013). An important aspect of this stage was to be able to describe or demonstrate the significance of an identified theme by adequately interrogating quotes or representations from the participating FCOs. This is followed by an analysis of themes by elaborating on the contribution of shared experiences in reaching the objectives of the study. Quotations were selected with caution to represent the authentic voice of the FCO and her lived story. In this manner, the FCO contributes to an understanding of the phenomena studied from her viewpoint, complimented by my interpretation as researcher (Wu, Thompson, Aroian, McQuaid & Deatrick, 2016).

By allowing the participant's voice to be heard, both researcher and reader forms an interpretation of the FCOs shared work experiences (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). This process aligns with the aim of the IPA, as well as qualitative studies, by applying exploratory research to reach some understanding of the different aspects of the FCO's lived work experiences and their reality. This, in turn, provides insight into the questions as to the what, how and why of their work-life experiences and making sense thereof (Bricki & Green, 2007; Daher et al., 2017).

3.8 Ethical considerations

During the study, as researcher, I was in close interaction with the FCOs as participant, journeying through their world, engaging in personal stories, and lived experiences they shared. Research in the social and psychological field involves processes where human behaviour, attitudes, and their existence are explored, aimed at understanding the person as a social being (Brinkman & Kvale, 2008). The personal reflections and experiences shared by participating FCOs were for the most part emotionally loaded, and as researcher, my first priority was the participant. Therefore, I was continuously mindful to adhere to strict ethical principles to protect the welfare and dignity of the FCO (Terre Blanche et al., 2012).

To conduct this research required me to obtain the prescribed ethical clearance from the Ethics Committee of the Department of Psychology at Unisa, as well as the DCS Research Ethics Committee (Appendix A and B). Strict regulations, as mentioned earlier, are prescribed by the DCS (2019d), since liaison often involves working with what is regarded as a vulnerable population, albeit employees or offenders. Research in DCS is encouraged, as echoed in the DCS magazine, Corrections@WORK (Mashabela, 2016), published by the DCS Research Directorate, where it is emphasised that studies in the corrections fraternity remain an important practice to generating new knowledge, which in turn benefits the department. With the approval granted to conduct my study at Kgoši Mampuru, an Internal Guide and primary gatekeeper, as previously discussed under the section on the selection of participants, were appointed to oversee this project, ensuring that ethical standards were always adhered to.

Research in the human sciences field in SA is also regulated by the ethical guidelines of the Health Professions Council of South Africa (2008) and due cognisance was taken thereof during

this study. The principles guiding ethical research, as described by Terre Blanche et al. (2012) are: autonomy, where respect is expressed for the dignity of the FCOs that participated in this study, recognising their rights, such as to be informed of the aim of the study. In this regard, the opportunity I was granted to share information on this study during some morning parades was very valuable. Not only did this encourage participation, but managers and other role players present were informed of the study and the benefit to DCS and its wider population. Possible participants were provided with a Letter of consent (see Appendix D) that explained the aim and objectives of the study, the method of the study, the essence and aspects of their rights and autonomy, as well as the issue of confidentiality. The consent letters stated that the participant has the right to choose, or not to participate in a study without restriction, and will be able to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences or penalisation (Orb, Eisenhauer & Wynaden, 2001). Officers who volunteered to participate signed a consent letter that was handed to me during the interviews. Before an interview commenced, these aspects were once again explained to every participant, and opportunity for any uncertainties and questions were granted.

Non-maleficence supplements the autonomy of a participant and refers to the steps required to ensure that the outcome of the study will, neither directly nor indirectly, result in any harm or wrongdoing of a participant (Terre Blanche et al., 2012). In this regard, as already explained in the previous section, adequate information was provided regarding the purpose of the study, how it will be conducted amongst potential participants, as well as the relevant ethical committees. An interviewing schedule was also submitted for prior approval by Unisa and DCS, detailing possible questions I planned to ask (see Appendix E). During interviews, the well-being of the FCO was paramount and as researcher, I explained that should she feel any question or reflection made her uncomfortable or triggered any emotional memories, she could be asked to be excused, or ask for time to gather herself. This proved very effective, and throughout I made attempts to make the participant feel at ease. This is evidenced by the way in which the FCOs enthusiastically embraced the opportunity to participate.

Beneficence involves a process where the researcher determines the possible risks versus the benefits of the study to the DCS, its total population of officers, officials and offenders, their families and the wider community (Terre Blanche et al., 2012). In the SOP by the Research Ethics

Committee of DCS (2019d) the requirements on beneficence and limiting risk for research participants is prescribed. These requirements contained in paragraph 4.2 of the SOP entail among other providing psychological services during and after the research study. In this regard participants were alluded to the services at the Unisa Psychotherapy Clinic as well as the contact details of the clinic, addressed in the consent letter provided to all participants (Appendix C). Although my study is not regarded as a high-risk study (refer to the SOP, p. 10) (DCS, 2019d), adequate gatekeepers were assigned at the different units and respective centres, to assist me, as well as participants to minimise any risk. All participants were also informed that the results of the study will be available to them, a further requirement set by the ethics committee. The matter of incentives or compensation was also addressed in the consent letters and no participant received any incentive for participating in this study. I believe that the benefits that the insights, and new acquired knowledge of the unique role and contributions the FCO offers to the corrections fraternity this study yields, outweighed any possible risks.

Justice refers to the principle of equality and fairness, which includes avoiding any exploitation or abuse of participants as well as recognising their vulnerability and contributions to the study (Orb et al., 2001). As researcher, I acknowledged and remained mindful of my participants as female, that they were from a marginalised sector of society, the same as children, the elderly and disabled, as well as the incarcerated population (Chipango, 2016; Hochschild, 2012). It was, therefore, paramount that their voices be heard so as to promote their rightful place in the corrections fraternity and society. Justice also regards the fair selection of participants. In this regard, by applying purposive sampling, I ensured that the population selected is relevant to the current study, with adequate diversity, as well as homogeneity for whom the phenomena studied carried similar meaning (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). In this regard the inclusion criteria for the selection of suitable participants contributed to the principle of fairness (Terre Blanche et al., 2012) by stating clear selection criteria of female COs, employed at DCS, involved in the direct supervision of offenders, and preferably able to communicate in English. Language posed no barrier, since it is required of COs to be able to efficiently communicate in both verbal and written English. The appointed Internal Guide and gatekeepers assisted greatly in this regard.

3.9 Trustworthiness of the study

In qualitative research, particularly following IPA, the objective is to explore and interpret the lived experiences of participants, aimed at understanding the meaning individuals attach to those experiences. To ensure the authenticity of the findings of a study, certain mechanisms need to be developed to ensure the trustworthiness of a study (Alase, 2017). Trustworthiness relates to the manner in which the researcher presents the data or findings to its audience, readers, and peers in order to enable a meaningful engagement with the phenomena studied. This is achieved by using phrases, quotes and examples from the study to demonstrate how deductions were made and interpretations constructed to contribute to an understanding of the lived experiences of the participants (Finlay, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The focus on trustworthiness and the criteria introduced to achieve it involves credibility, conformability, transferability, and dependability.

Credibility, as explained by Tracy (2010), refers to believable and persuasive findings of a study, achieved by providing rich descriptions of the information collected from the participating FCOs and observation of the participants. It furthermore refers to the “plausibility of the analysis” (Larkin & Thompson, 2012, p. 112) of the findings. This was achieved through personal engagement with the participants during the one-on-one interviews, as well as field notes made of the dynamics and other relevant cues observed during these sessions.

Other techniques applied to ensure that findings were credible include member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), which proves more effective in single case studies. As explained by Larkin and Thompson (2012), in a research design with a larger sample size with multiple participants, as in this study, this often proves unsuitable, since interpretations are amalgamated from various participants’ representations, and not from merely one respondent. Being aware of limited access to the facility and availability of the FCOs, I envisaged that member checking, should it be required, had to be completed with some participants after interviews were completed. As participants were very open during the sessions it allowed me to verify their responses and my understanding thereof. At the end of a session time I allowed time for participants to reflect on their work experiences and what they have shared. This assisted me as a researcher to verify any information that required clarity. Member checking also allows to consult with other role players that did not form part of the study sample but share similar attributes and work experiences as a

form of “credibility checking” (Larkin & Thompson, 2012, p.112). In this regard I had the opportunity to have short, informal discussions with some female DCS employees who were COs, now operating in different units in the centre and not directly involved in the daily supervision of offenders anymore. Their willingness to share some of their work experiences were valuable, since it confirmed the initial themes I have identified. Through the member checking process my research findings, interpretations, and conclusions made, was confirmed as reflective of the phenomena studied and the reality of the FCOs world and experiences. This contributed to evaluate the coherence and credibility of my analysis (Friese, 2018; Larkin & Thompson, 2012).

Triangulation is another technique applied to ensure the credibility of research, by referring to multiple sources, such as literature, other case studies, and research. In this study, I followed a qualitative research method, and adhered to the philosophical tradition of phenomenology, which involves an inductive, interpretive, and descriptive approach (Reiners, 2012). To be true to the principles and nature of this method, I aimed to produce rich data and explore and uncover multiple perspectives of the phenomena I set out to study, and not necessarily to reach consensus between sources or studies or even participants (Wu et al., 2016). The actual data collected, the interviews, audio recordings and transcriptions, as well as field notes and reflective notes are all sources that are acknowledged as sources in validating the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Wu et al., 2016).

Confirmability is established through a process of auditing, whereby I examined the findings and interpretations, as well as the recommendations made through the study. This could be supported by the data collected, and continuous revision by my supervisor and co-supervisor, where internal coherence could be confirmed (Cypress, 2017; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Techniques such as triangulation, as discussed in the previous paragraph, were also applied to assist in this regard.

Transferability involves the meanings that emerge through the study and knowledge generated, that can be transferred to, and be useful in other settings, populations, or circumstances (Tracy, 2010). The participants in this study were selected by purposive sampling with set criteria, so as to ensure a sample representative of the population for this study, which enhances transferability (Cypress, 2017). The aim of this study is to share the FCO’s unique stories to ensure the

prospective audience will be able to relate these to their own experiences (Tracy, 2010). In this regard, the audience can range from peers, fellow researchers, authors, academics, correctional managers, DCS employees, to COs and FCOs globally, ensuring transferability.

Dependability of the study and results, as explained by Lincoln and Guba (1985), can be determined by auditing the appropriateness of the study and the methodology applied. In this regard, the methodology applied for this study was appropriate to achieving the aim of this research, which has been compared to similar research, as well as through peer reviewing and evaluation by my supervisor and co-supervisor. The dependability of this study also relies on how as researcher I addressed personal bias. It was important that I acknowledged any prior perceptions or opinions I might have had of the phenomena, which I studied and bracketed appropriately. The matter of bracketing and how I applied it was referred to earlier in this chapter. By continuously reflecting on the study, from interviews, transcriptions, and data analysis, I constantly focused on the aim and rationale of the research, the participants, and the reality of their world. The stages of reflection as I applied in my study was discussed earlier in this chapter under the section on the interview process and in the concluding chapter of the dissertation. In applying IPA, while exploring the FCOs lived work experiences and how they make sense thereof, I was obliged to come to my own understanding of their reality (Horrigan-Kelly et al., 2016; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

3.10 Conclusion

In this chapter, the rationale for the research methodology, method and research design was discussed and illustrated in terms of how it was applied to the study. I elaborated on choosing the FCO at Kgoši Mampuru as a study sample, the process of acquiring the necessary approvals and participation, the process of data collection by means of interviews, and the efficacy of these methods.

Choosing an interpretive phenomenological framework proved most appropriate to explore the phenomena set out to study. Applying the fundamentals of an IPA in my analysis provided the flexibility to make sense of and come to some understanding of the FCO's lived experiences, the significant meanings they attach thereto, and how this impact on the shaping of their work identity.

The findings and insights reached were furthermore made possible by adhering to the hermeneutic tradition of a dual relationship between myself as researcher and the participating FCOs in their search for meaning in their world, and my own process of making sense thereof by interpreting the stories they shared (Alase, 2017; Smith & Osborn, 2008; Smith et al., 2009).

The process of analysing the transcribed interviews and recordings by re-reading transcripts and re-listening to the recordings contributed to emerging and engaging on so many levels with the data, evaluation of codes, themes and findings and echoed Finlay's (2012, p. 186) description of this as a process of "dwelling with data, [...] and progressively deepening understandings as meanings come to light."

In the following chapter, my findings of the analysis conducted will be extrapolated in the form of themes, superordinate and subordinate themes, supported by direct quotations. Thereafter, a discussion on the findings will be formulated, followed by concluding interpretations.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION ON FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter the findings of the study will be discussed as means to address the objectives and research questions stated for my study. The objectives of my study were to engage with the FCOs to gain an understanding of the work-life of FCOs in a South African correctional centre, to determine why they chose a career in this challenging male-dominated environment. Further to that I aimed to explore what meanings they attach to the experiences of their work life, how their work identity is shaped to match the demands the job requires, and how this enables them to navigate in an environment often faced with adversities and risks.

The primary research question relates to how the FCO's work-life experiences shape her work identity to match the demands of her occupation. The secondary research questions relate to how she sees her role and unique identity in her work environment; and what contributions the FCOs feel they can make in their work environment to capitalise on their unique strengths and attributes as FCO.

4.2 Overview of the research process

Before the findings and discussion thereof is presented, a short overview is provided for context and orientation of some stages in processes followed during my engagement with the FCOs. It will entail some of the steps significant in my study in addressing the objectives and research questions posed in par 4.1 above.

4.2.1 Research participants

The research data for this study was collected by means of face-to-face, semi-structured interviews from 17 FCOs at Kgoši Mampuru II Management Area in Pretoria, with access to both male and female correctional centres. The selection of participants, discussed in detail in chapter 3, were conducted by applying purposive sampling, to ensure adequate diversity of the research population, as well as homogeneity to whom the phenomena studied carried similar meaning (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). A set of inclusion criteria assisted to select suitable participants.

Participants represented the demographics of SA and assisted population. A representation of demographics of participating FCOs are summarised in diagram 3.4.1. The larger sample, coupled with the diversity of this specific research population, assisted me as researcher to explore the diverse work lives of the FCO in a challenging and unconventional environment, that contributed greatly to the richness of data and significance of this study, that will unfold in the explication of the themes and findings later in this chapter.

4.2.2 Interpretive phenomenology

It was important that I remind myself of the paradigms of the phenomena of the lived work experiences of the FCO, I chose to study, as well as the assumptions I had before commencing with this research. As researcher it was necessary to take my ontological stance into account when interpreting the data, as that which constitute what I regard as my reality, in terms of the topic and participants. It required me to reflect on how I initially gained this knowledge or understanding in epistemological terms, along with the extent to which this assisted and added value to identifying themes. In this regard, the application of the interpretive phenomenological approach (IPA) as method of analysis, proved most valuable, since it enabled me to interpret the data by using the stories of participants as the primary source of data, discussed in detail in Chapter 3. With IPA, my role as researcher is acknowledged, by being an active participant, forming a dual relationship with participants during this process. As the FCO share their stories, they make sense of their work-lives and attach meaning and significance to it. As researcher, I am part of this process by interpreting their sensemaking and incorporating it into my reality and understanding of the topics, in particular, FCOs as research population (Alase, 2017; Smith, 2004; Smith et al., 2009). Navigating between the worlds of the FCO in search of what it is that shapes their work-identities, I also found it significant in my own journey of continuous identity formation.

4.2.3 Extrapolation of data

Conducting interviews with 17 participants generated a large data set and transcriptions, resulting in an extensive process of read and rereading, analysis and coding of the information collected. Even though this process was voluminous and time consuming, as researcher I regard this as positive, since it added to the value of this study, in that it brought various dimensions and

depth to my research. It allowed me to explore the work life of the FCO on many levels and gained greater insight into the lives of this unique population. Typically, in following a phenomenological paradigm as researcher I become part of the journey with the participant. This engagement, however, extends to the analysis phase as well where as researcher, I once again immersed myself in the rich data, whereby the FCOs revealed their daily lives to me. During the analysis of the collected data, two overarching topics were identified, namely the corrections environment shaping the work identity of the FCO, and the FCO representing Correctional Services today. By conducting further coding of the data three superordinate themes were identified, where after five subordinate themes also emerged. Table 3.7.1 in the previous chapter illustrates the themes identified that provide a framework for the discussion on the findings to follow later in this chapter.

4.3 The social identity theory underpinning the shaping of the work identity of the FCO

Investigating how the work-life experiences of the FCO constructs her work identity, as primary research question, the social identity theory (SIT) as developed by Tajfel and Turner (1986), proved most applicable in the context of this research study. Upon analysis of the data gathered, my findings uncovered various themes in support of the SIT (Misis et al., 2013). The various factors that contribute to shape the multiple work identities to match the demands of their occupation, as underpinned by this theory, was supported by this study. Additional factors that transpired proved to be of interest, as complimentary to the theory as well as the research conducted.

4.3.1 Micro and macro factors shaping the work identity of the FCO

In identifying and coding the themes, it became apparent that it is not just a single aspect that impacts on identity formation. Nor is there a hierarchy of importance, but a combination of elements that merely reiterated the diversity and unpredictability of the topic, subjects, and environment I chose to study. It is, however, each FCO's representation, heartfelt sharing, and reflections that collectively told a story of their work-life experiences. Their shared stories contributed to a better understanding of the unique characteristics the women in this study possess, the often-surprising factors in work-identity construction, and what is required of the FCO to be highly competent in performing her duties.

Factors shaping the work identity of the FCO were found to be intricate and operate on various levels. Aspects of the SIT that assist individuals to shape in their working identities closely correlate to the concept of the macro and micro levels as factors. Identity formation, although studied in terms of social constructions and social identity, is often explained in terms of abstract levels, viz. micro and macro (Van der Gaag, Albers & Kunnen, 2017). With this study, the focus is not on these levels, but the study incorporates existing knowledge to provide a more operationalised understanding of these factors. Further to this, it was also considered in an attempt that these findings can contribute and be applied to a broader knowledge base and context of work-identity formation.

Macro-level refers to the institution in which the FCO operates, the rules and procedures that regulate their functions, the management of correctional centres, and the social context of the broader community outside their work environment (Brown & Toyoki, 2013). Additional factors that operate on macro-level, as suggested by Pfaff (2013) include government legislation, coupled with the political and economic climate of a country, political climate, economic circumstances that might impact on an increase in the offender population, as well as the role of other parties in crime prevention and management such as the judicial system and police service.

The micro level refers to the smaller, more intricate elements that impact on identity formation, such as the social construction and hierarchy within a correctional centre, organisational culture, and the position the FCO occupies in the organisation. Further aspects relate to the demographics and characteristics of the incarcerated population, the traits and personality of the FCO and her everyday duties and routines. Micro level further refers to the daily FCO-offender and offender-offender interactions, as well as interpersonal relations between COs (Pfaff, 2013; Steiner, 2008; Tracy & Scott, 2006).

In terms of macro and micro levels, it was established in this study that no one level is more prominent in the shaping of work-identity than another. The findings yield that it is indeed a combination of various factors on both levels, that contribute to a sociological understanding of the processes, influences, and elements involved in identity development (Kelle, 2001). The macro and micro-social processes (Kelle, 2001) also find their relevance in the SIT approach applied in

this study. As the study focus on females as COs, gender is relevant as underlying basis of the study, however, the aim is not to compare genders, but to highlight the FCOs' unique attributes. The role of gender is, therefore, placed on both macro and micro level, since, in my view, the broader community plays in on the macro level, in terms of role expectations and traditional roles of women in society. Gender, on the micro-level, I regard as being more within the corrections fraternity and within a correctional facility, coupled with the particular offender population under supervision, as well as types of crime committed.

4.4 Unique attributes of the FCO

The findings of this study further address my secondary research questions, on how FCOs see their role and unique identity in the correctional work environment; and what the FCO can contribute to this work environment, in order to maximise their unique strengths and attributes as FCO. Factors identified that address this question include among others the FCO's ability to manage and navigate her daily work life in an often hostile, negative environment. The FCO display a profound ability to share confined and isolated spaces with colleagues and offenders. Through the relations formed and coherence with other occupants in this new, unconventional, integrated society, the FCO exhibits unique characteristics and perseverance. The superordinate and subordinate themes that emerged to support the contributions and attributes of the FCO, will be discussed in the next section, under paragraph 4.6, reporting on the findings of this study.

4.5 Inter-relational process of identity formation

The significance of the main overarching, superordinate and subordinate themes, and factors identified, is that the contribution it makes towards the shaping of the work-identity of the FCO, is that it is an integrated process dependent on a combination of different factors. During the literature review process, research involved reading as widely as possible, on a national and international level, regarding the corrections environment, the population it houses, policies governing its operations, the roles and responsibilities of the CO in general, the FCO, and identity formation. After establishing a broad understanding of the various aspects of Correctional Services, the sources consulted underpinned the findings of this study. It was, however, necessary to determine which themes proved to be most prominent in addressing the research questions of

my study. After the large set of data was analysed and coded, the overarching topics, superordinate themes and subordinate themes represent a true reflection of the voices of the participants and effectively contribute to an understanding of the principles that shape the work-identity of the FCO. In the representation in Diagram 4.5.1 below, I attempt to demonstrate the interrelatedness and overlapping of the main topics, superordinate, and subthemes in the formation of such an identity:



4.5.1 Overarching topics, superordinate themes and subordinate themes shaping the work-identity of the FCO

4.6 Findings

In order to address the research questions stated in this study, the findings of my research will be presented on the factors that impact and shape the multiple work identities of the FCO. Further to that I aim to describe what meanings they attach to the experiences of their work life, how their work identity is shaped to match the demands the job requires, and how this enables them to navigate in an environment often faced with adversities and risks.

During the analysis of the collected data, two overarching topics were identified, namely the corrections environment shaping the work identity of the FCO, and the FCO representing correctional services today. These main topics will be discussed under three main headings as superordinate themes. Firstly, *Correctional centres as social institutions*, with a subtheme, namely,

My institutionalised self. A second theme *Correctional centres operating as separate communities*, with *The social spaces we share* as sub-theme will be attended to. A third superordinate theme, *Being different becomes her saving grace*, will be discussed, by presenting three sub-themes, under *Emotional labour*, *Vigilance as my armour*, and *My uniform ... the fabric of which I am made*.

These themes will be discussed by means of highlighting significant extracts from the transcripts that represent the voices of the participants. This will be supplemented by reflective notes of, and observations made during my engagement with the FCOs. Although I used an interview schedule, the format of the interviews, participants' responses and participation contributed to data collected not being in the form of question and answer sessions, but more a reflective sharing of their work-life experiences. I therefore prefer to report in a more narrative flow, since this contributes to and represents stories as they truly transpired.

4.6.1 Main topic 1: The corrections environment shaping the work identity of the FCO

Correctional centres operate as isolated institutions, where a large number of individuals live and work together, cut off from the outside (Goffman, 1961). In these facilities, offenders are involuntarily incarcerated, removed from normal society and their regular lives as they have known them. Upon analysis of the participants' representations of the environment they operate in, two superordinate themes were identified. In order to illustrate how the working environment contributes to the shaping of the FCO's work identity, I will elaborate on two significant subthemes, namely, *Correctional centres as social institutions*, and *Correctional centres operating as separate communities*.

4.6.2 Correctional centres as social institutions

“Correctional officers are truly imprisoned: They are not only physically confined, but are locked into movie caricatures, into derogatory prophecies (sometimes self-fulfilling), into outdated supervision patterns, into unfair civil service definitions, into undeserved hostilities and prejudgments of their actions.”

Hans Toch (Lombardo, 1989, ix)

Correctional centres become facilities inhabited by different groups, such as offenders as well

as employees, unknown to each other, placed in a confined space, for extended periods of time, regulated by specific organisational processes, protocol and structures. Although there is a clear divide between CO and offender, they are still required to share the same isolated environment and spend time together during the same hours of a day. As elaborated on earlier in the dissertation within this structured environment, a unique social institution is, however, also established, characterised by shared ordinary living of everyday routines of eating, sleeping, and working. Officer and offender become institutionalised inhabitants, where both parties are perceived by the world as different, and as outsiders (Carrigan, 2015; Goffman, 1961; 2009). However, within this institution, a newly created society, as discussed in chapter 2, paragraph 2.3 of this dissertation, they become insiders.

In exploring the work lives of a CFO, I was fortunate to practically share in some of their daily experiences. This journey brought the realisation that the FCO lives and works in two contradicting realities. My study will not be complete, nor serve justice to my participants, should I not illuminate these significant opposing elements.

4.6.2.1 My Institutionalised Self

Correctional centres are established as institutions for the secure incarceration of a perceived violent population, and to keep the society safe from offenders. As an institution correctional services regulates the confinement of offenders and these restrictions, however, apply just as much to its employees. The environment the FCO operates in forms part of the physical institution. Here FCOs must adhere to strict policies, procedures, and routines with very little freedom of movement within a challenging environment, almost a process of institutionalisation (Lombardo, 2005).

A prominent factor in shaping the work identity of the FCO regards the unconventional environment in which the FCO functions. As the participants recalled some of their first impressions of their new place of work, it echoed some of the sentiments of the SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) as explained in chapter 3, on factors that impact on a person's work identity:

P3: "The first experience coming to this place, [...] is that I have to go inside the door, this huge door, and then the first experience is that I felt being incarcerated myself. [...] not able to come in

with my cell phone, [...] it was scary that what kind of an environment is this, [...] it took me many months and it is still scaring me so much.”

P2: “So you just go up and up and up the steel stairs [...] it was scary because you find them by the corner, some offenders smoking.”

P10: “Working in the prison environment [...] this environment is something that’s completely different. It’s a rare environment you know, to be working in. It’s not your normal, business organisation or what have you. [...] you look at the females here. They’re very stressed, [...] I think being a mother, being a wife, being a working woman takes a toll on them.”

Upon the FCO’s initial entrance to the corrections fraternity officers are confronted with an unsympathetic and harsh environment. As I first-hand experienced, the buildings in which offenders are housed and the FCOs operate in were intimidating. A place that can take its toll on all its occupants, as the participants reflected:

P10: “Some come fresh out of university, they’ve never worked in a prison environment before and coming in here. We had one last year [...] I felt so sorry for her [...] she couldn’t wait to leave. She cried; she cried bitterly. She just wanted to get out of here, out of this environment. She couldn’t handle it. She got sick frequently you know.”

P1: “For me it was scary and I’m a tiny person... So, getting inside and I see all these big guys you know, with huge arms and then they say these ones, they are here for murder, for rape and for all that. I’m like eish, ja, [...] I remember that.”

During a workday, the FCO is confronted with the realities of corrections. Upon engaging with the participants, I first-hand experienced that it is not only the physical isolation that the architecture of the environment represents, but the officer is also physically confined. By navigating what the daily routine of the FCO entail, the statement by Lombardo (2005; 2017), as discussed earlier in the dissertation, was confirmed by the stories shared by participants. The FCOs alluded to how they become institutionalised together with a diverse and problematic population she must supervise. Daily operations pose various risks having physical, mental and psychological effects, as alluded to in chapter 2, and as expressed by the participants:

P14: “It was really, really tough but sometimes I [...] didn’t want to come to work sometimes because you know some were very rude. And if you are scared, they can tell from your face that this one she’s scared of us, ne. So, they would use that to their advantage.”

P1: "All in all, it's a risky environment because you cannot know when, what is going to happen, when, what time, all those things. Because of now, we know these offenders when are sitting in their sections, they are always playing. They are always talking about us members, 'You know, this member is full of shit [...] one day...', so you never know tomorrow when you come in."

P5: "... during night shifts with fewer wardens it becomes risky when the offenders, maybe one offender fake to be sick during the night and then you have to open the cell and then there is a possibility that they can attack you."

P12: "So, it's very hard, yes, because immediately when you see something that can act as a weapon, it comes to your mind that it can. Somebody can come inside and then try to stab you, there can be a robbery and then that robber will grab that knife or that scissor and stab somebody or threaten to stab somebody. That's how it is."

Even though rules and procedures regulate the daily routines of officers' shifts and operations, that creates a sense of 'safety', it remains a highly unpredictable environment. Some participants expressed how the actions by, and reactions of offenders, impact on their emotional state. Statements that support a statement by Hochschild earlier (2012, p. 255) on the "institutional self" regarding the distress experienced by a person operating in such challenging environment, as some described:

P2: "It's mentally and emotionally draining... it's unpredictable. You cannot wake up and think today I am going to do 1, 2, 3."

P1: "When you see that it's six o'clock, when you see that it's six o'clock and you're going home, you're like, 'Oh thank God for another day'."

P10: "One psychologist left because while, during a therapy session, this guy broke the window. He hit it with his fist, and he cracked, and she was pregnant."

The unpredictability of the corrections environment that FCOs operate in, was also experienced during my interaction with the participants. The risk of physical harm is a daily reality and this aspect was evident in the thoughts of the participating FCOs:

P13: "The physical risk, with males there, is that kind of fear that they can dominate you, and should you not agree with whatever that he needs or what he wants, others they get angry and it is where you find that you are really at risk. It's when you really have that fear to say what if he does one two three."

P5: “So you don’t know, you just don’t know what’s going to happen. You just go to work, and you just pray to God that the Almighty will watch you that day and you just work nicely, you go home.”

Another dimension of the FCO’s *institutionalised self*, regards a part of the incarcerated population to which the FCO is exposed, such as those with various ailments, such as mental disabilities. As the participants explained, this places even further demands on them, since they are not necessarily trained in dealing with such individuals:

P3: “When I hear a person shout and screaming in the passage, ‘Pasop die hond! Pasop die hond!’ [beware of the dog! Beware of the dog!] Then it scared the hell out of me.”

P1: “Remember that you are dealing with different kinds of people, [...] some of them they are mentally disturbed.”

P2: “You don’t know who you are dealing with. Some will come and look at you strange and shout ‘I want to pass, open the gate!’. You think, who do you think you are? Or maybe he is mentally disturbed and then you just tell him [...] just read there on the wall, ‘No offenders will be allowed to...’ it’s so draining.”

P15: “Sometimes there is not much you can do. They know they can push you [...] you think maybe when they leave here, maybe he’s going to search you, you just don’t know.”

The above representations by the FCOs, provided some insight impacting on her work identity formation, relating to the *institutionalised self*. This aspect regards the FCO as a confined entity, regulated not only by policies and standards, physical restrictions, but also emotional strain due to their expected roles.

A significant shift was, however, identified during my engagement with the participants on the topic of the institution they operate in. I found that the FCO’s work identity moves beyond the discourse of an imprisoned, emotional and mental state, as implied by Toch (Lombardo, 1989). It was a shift from the constrictions the institution imposed, to an almost accountable, navigated move to *my institutionalised self* (Lombardo, 2005).

Many of the narratives shared by the FCOs entail her experiences of working in both male and female centres. In describing these experiences, they thoughtfully engaged on the differences

between the two centres, its offender population and their preferences between working with male or female offenders. The FCO gave almost clinical descriptions of their choices and the characteristics of the different populations, which posed some interesting views, often opposing of what outsiders might expect:

P7: "Females were suddenly required to work with male offenders [...] where we were used to only work with females [...] You had to make a mind change to adapt. From the start it is much more challenging, since they are big and strong, you can still try to reason with a female offender."

P8: "You get to work with different kinds of people. I've worked at female as well and was called out more for fits and headaches [...] they are much more needy and always want you help immediately [...] so in that way at female it is much more exhausting."

P5: "You get the tomboy type females in here [...] when they get in fights like in a group [...] they can just pull you into a cell [...] if you are not savvy or don't have defense training you have problems."

P1: "I will try to fight back but he's a man, he is going to overpower me. I didn't take any Martial Arts or whatever defense that's why I'm saying this environment is, for me personally, sometimes I think it should be males, only males working here."

P7: "I found working with male youth offenders very difficult [...] they do what they want and don't think, they are very unpredictable."

P6: "I don't want to change my career, but to change the environment. Maybe I can work with males now, or even working at the offices, just a change."

The reflections above represent how the FCO is conscious of the challenges her work environment brings and able to share its adversities in such an open-minded manner, becoming a responsible role player in corrections as an institution. A process of extending her "individualised self" (Hochschild, 2012, p. 255) to *my institutionalised self* as part of her identity formation.

Through the FCO shared narratives they also display roles they are prepared to take on, and the diversity of their work identities. The same environment these women operate in, is often challenged by contradicting and conflicting emotions, that requires a constant adaptation (Wood, 2015) to each situation:

P13: "Women are highly manipulative. They cry easily, so you can be manipulated by them very easily. I think when you work with females you need to be really strong in terms of putting them in line, you have to draw the line."

P16: "You know I'm strong and could put the women in her place... but it was working with the babies that got to me... they didn't have a choice coming here [...] you get to love them [...] that is so unfair and makes me angry."

The institutionalised self is further expressed by the other realities of the FCO's daily work, such as the constant shortages of COs that severely impact on performing their duties efficiently. This aspect, coupled with ineffective communication, administrative frustrations and bureaucracy add to the challenges of their work, as described by some participants:

P2: "...and you find that in a unit, maybe they are housing about 200 and something, one unit on its own, ne? And then we, how many officials do we have?"

P12: "We are always short of staff... especially Central, because there are a lot of men and the policy is clear. It says, when you escort an offender it should be two. Imagine now, we have how many, 36 offenders who should be escorted, where are you going to get those officials?"

P4: "There are so many reports to do, files and info to capture, but technology fails us. And now also, with the assessments, we all must work on one member's computer."

Further to this discussion, it was maybe the following response that portrayed another reality of the newly shaped institutionalised work identity of the FCO, as well as many of females' reality today:

P2: "...and you will just go and work and come back. I'll find a job maybe being a nurse or a teacher or maybe being a housewife or just (you know) schooling the kids, home, like the olden days. But you want the 50/50, thing that's why we find ourselves working in this is a male-dominated environment, you understand?"

Very few people on the outside the correctional services seem to understand the working environment of COs. In my interactions with the participants, I came to understand the reality of the words of Toch (cited in Lombardo, 1989), namely that "correctional officers are truly imprisoned", as the FCOs echoed:

P9: "Police get to work outside in the field, you know that is something different. We sit here confined between walls."

P8: "It is a negative environment because you sit between these walls. I tell the offenders I saw you come in maybe as juvenile, now you are grown up, you did your time and then get to go home. We stay behind. That's the thing [...] we only sleep at home, but here we are also in prison."

Even though the FCOs operate in environment isolated from the outside, they are well aware of the representations made of them, in particular by the media. Upon reflecting on this topic and the distorted images portrayed of COs and DCS, left them visibly disappointed. Expressions that support social theorists' notions, as stated by Mistry (2017) of how the perceptions of others can impact the forming of one's identity:

P8: "There is such a negative perception of Correctional Services from the outside public [...] it is not something you can be proud of [...] you can see people looking at you with a kind of disgrace [...] and you think 'oh well, this is my job I must earn a salary, what else will I do.'"

P16: "Because of all the corruption, we are always portrayed in a negative light by the media, just recently members were arrested again [...] smuggling contraband and that make us all look bad and ashamed to be a Correctional Officer."

Many of the participants commented on their feelings of being judged, but also reiterated that very few outsiders realise the dangers of their position:

P5: "... every day you tell your children when you go to work to say that 'I'll see you in the evening.' To tell you the truth, when you tell your family that you will see them in the evening when you are a correctional officer, that is a lie. You don't know whether you are going to come back or not. That is a fact."

Regarding the often negative, perceptions of the public of corrections and its officers, the FCOs that have been interviewed in this study, portrayed such mature opinions. I got a glimpse of the identity of the FCO as she revealed her optimistic *institutionalised self*, as they all just ask a little acknowledgement and understanding:

P5: "The communities and everybody should not undermine them in any way, because when we check it's a stressful environment, but years are coming in and going out and coming in, and yet we don't even think of changing the jobs, because we are so much used to this job and we wholeheartedly want to do it to a certain extent that we want to perform it to the best of our ability."

Having said and considered all the above, in the face of various risks and adversities that the FCO is often exposed to, she still strives to maintain a professional image, irrespective of her situation and environment, that requires of her to uphold a distinct composure.

4.6.3 Correctional centres operating as separate communities

“Officers are imprisoned by our ignorance of who they are and what they do,
which is the price they pay for working behind walls.”

Hans Toch (Lombardo, 1989, ix)

The corrections environment is a self-sufficient, self-created society (Jacobson, et al., 2017; Lombardo, 1989), shared by a diverse population of offenders and officers living and working, flocked together in a couple of square meters (Sykes, 2007). A society establish categories of individuals with the necessary skills and competencies (Goffman, 1961, 2009), as well as the processes that regulate the functioning of the system and conduct of other members within the community. When individuals enter this community, new roles and responsibilities are assigned to all members, where in a sense, the old self is discarded and a new identity established (Smaldino, 2019). The new responsibilities and norms, as determined by the social structures of this established community, regulate and enable effective patterns of interaction (Little & McGiven, 2014). These roles, as in the correctional environment, represents a dynamic inter-relationship between formal groups, such as the management of the correctional centre, correctional officials, COs, administrators and informal groups, such as the offenders. The operation of the correctional system depends very strongly on the sociological understanding of the nature of the functional and dynamic relations that exist between these groups (Smaldino, 2019).

4.6.3.1 The social spaces we share

In this section, the other side of FCOs' work reality in terms of the institution will be discussed, other than the regulated institution, harsh unforgiving environment the FCO need to operate in. The other side of the officers' work environment represents a space shaped by more informal, communal and socialised structures (Lombardo, 2005), factors that, on a micro-level, as explained earlier in the dissertation, play a prominent role in the shaping of the FCO's work identity. The community or social context in which FCOs operate should be understood to make sense of their diverse work identity. In the previous section, the adverse stern environment that impacts on the FCO and her identity was highlighted. However, it represents a one-sided, almost isolated view of her work life.

The FCO operates in a complex world with various challenges. A world where it is required of her to balance all on different levels, from the physical, emotional, and mental to the psychological, as expressed:

P2: "You know, in our normal context, we thought the prison, or the correctional centre is just a hell, the stories that we see in there or what we watch on the TV, no it scares the hell out of us to say we cannot survive in that kind of an environment. But when I got inside here, it was vice versa."

Correctional centres are structured as a combination of isolated, segregated sections and units to serve various purposes from sleeping courters, bathrooms, laundries, kitchen, medical facilities and courtyards, as well as offices (Sykes, 2007). The occupants, whether officer or offender, share the same building, behind the same high walls with limited access to resources and facilities (Lombardo, 1989). As one participant noted:

P2: "You have to use the very same entrance. There's no other exit."

Successful co-inhabitation in this environment forms an integral part of the daily lives of all role players. The respectful sharing of this living-work space is essential, not only for the functioning of a unique system but often also for survival. As theorised by Tajfel and Turner (1986) in their SIT, for the FCO to co-exist in this setting, she establishes a social work-identity by forming affiliations with different, diverse groups as the participating FCOs also emphasised:

P1: "You just take it as it is. Some will come to you and say, "Hello, madam, how are you?"

P3: "But otherwise with regard to the engagement with the offenders, things you know became more positive than I ever thought."

P12: "I am in very close contact with the offenders every day [...] doing a lot of admin and so on [...] and I have never had confrontation or that they bother me [...] they know I have a job to do and are there for them, but when I say just give me 15 minutes to finish this, they respect it.

Being isolated from the outside world and society does not mean that offenders are totally cut off from family and friends. Nor does it mean that no communication or socialising takes place inside this facility behind high walls. An alternative community is created within these facilities with its own daily routines and interactions. As the FCOs reflected on their daily operations, they emphasised the importance of harmonious relations between officers and offenders. They also

conveyed how they are reminded daily, of the similarities between the incarcerated population and officers:

P4: "You see them with their families until they leave here. You see all their ins and outs. This is how you get to know them... it becomes an important part of your job. I don't mind doing weekend visitation shifts."

P8: "Doing weekend visit duty, you also get to know the families...I've been here 10 years, so I see the lifers' families, you see them getting older and grow up, you see their children from babies to 10 years [...] that is how you get to know the offenders."

P9: "Weekends during family visits they might thank me for something I did or helped them with. I would say it's my job."

P16: "Sometimes they feel like family [...] and experience how they look out for you. When some see you are very busy, they will tell other inmates that are very demanding and say, 'look she's busy, you wait your turn', and I always thank them."

FCOs must manage the familiarity that can develop between officer and offender, and officer and the offenders' families. Since they are daily in close contact, and get to know them so well, as the FCOs explained, some offenders become relaxed and informal, and sometimes forget to comply with set boundaries. This often requires a great deal of constraint from the FCO, and a continuous reminder to act professionally, as conveyed by some participants:

P9: "You become familiar with the visitors [...] But then you get those that are nasty because you cannot do what they want... but its fine you just carry on [...] Sometimes, next time they will apologise."

P5: "I just told myself that I have to draw a line, whether I know this offender, whether I don't know this offender, because you will find out that one offender is your neighbour at home."

During the long hours spent on duty the facility, that forms such a big part of the FCOs' lives, almost become a second home, however, unusual. Friendships develop, within boundaries of course, as participants described:

P7: "And in some way you do make connections with some women, and then she dies in here... it can be hard."

P12: "I like sports so that is some connection I use to get some to open up [...] not to just isolate themselves and give up [...] and ask about their favourite teams."

P14: "Some will tell you about their kids [...] writing exams and you will casually ask about it."

P10 “Offenders study as well [...] and study hard, so it’s important to show your support by just asking about it. That’s enough.”

A notion of *home* is very much shared by some of the offenders, as suggested by Tajfel (1974) by becoming a sort of shelter from the outside, as experienced by the participating FCOs:

P7: “For some, prison becomes their home [...] because if they do get home, they must face the same people that caused them to become who they are, who destroyed their lives and they carry no blame or shame or consequences and the only way to get away from them is to return here.”

P16: “I asked her what is it that make you come back to this place? Why do you prefer to rather be inside here, than try to make a success outside? [...] she looked at me as if to say, ‘what do you care?’ [...] and then she told me her story [...] and I realised there is nothing, nowhere for this woman to go back to?

P8: “Female officers are very observant. Even if you work with hundreds offenders you know who get visits, have families, friends and who not [...] for some you feel sorry.”

In our everyday lives, we need a place where one feel sheltered from the outside world and its challenges. This can be one’s home, church or any other place. While incarcerated, offenders are placed in isolation to safeguard society from them. This space, however, becomes their home and in a sense, they are also sheltered from the outside world for their own protection. During interviews with the FCOs that participated in this study some interestingly conveyed how this unconventional workspace often serves as shelter for them as well:

P12: “I went through a very rough time and the only place I could find peace, can you believe it [...] was in here [...] and it was as if these men felt it and were extra considerate [...] I could see it in their behaviour”

P14: “We are just human [...] with family worries and fights and then need to escape that other environment [...] and funny that sometimes it is here that you feel ‘safer’ [gestures inverted commas]. I know, right? Who will believe that?”

Adding to the challenges the FCO experience, during the interviews many participants also voiced their frustration about the perceived perceptions towards them.

P5: “They don’t believe that females can be able to handle the male-dominated offender environment. They still think they still have got that perception that ‘ah, it’s a female, what can she do?’”

P17: "Some members are still under the impression that we have different lighter duties"

P10: "When it came to lockup, [...] everybody goes into the binneplaas (*translated- courtyard*), I count the offenders, and lock them up."

P11: "If you don't have that strong character [...] you cannot search them, so you have to know how they think [...] show them there is the boundary [...] or they will take advantage [...] you will see you will do things that are not allowed. So, if you're a female, you want to work here, you must have a strong character."

The discussions above portrayed the diverse environment in which FCOs must operate, as some of the aspects that ultimately contribute to shaping their work identity. From the representations, it became clear that the FCO indeed defined her place within this space. Her identity is firmly shaped in a newly established society, dependent on other group members' cooperation and respect. In a society and environment often characterised by threats and risks, she managed to establish boundaries and to balance the different roles and responsibilities expected. It is, however, other aspects of the FCO's career and highly unpredictable spaces that impacts on them shaping their work identity, such as the psychological, emotional aspects to be discussed hereafter.

4.6.4 Main Topic 2: The FCO representing correctional services today

An escalating, diverse offender population pose various challenges to the COs operating in correctional facilities, which demands a total reform of the correctional environment. As discussed earlier one area focussed on to address these demands is the demographics of correctional employees (Husseman & Page, 2011). This focus, shifted towards the recruitment of suitable female employees, and the role of the FCO increasingly grows as an asset in the corrections fraternity. The FCO poses of specific attributes and some of the aspects found during this study to be of significance will be discussed by means of the superordinate theme, *Being different becomes her saving grace*, followed by the subthemes identified, *Emotional labour*, *Vigilance as my armour*, and *My Uniform ... the fabric of which I am made*.

4.6.4.1 Being different becomes her saving grace

A typical working day of the FCO requires her to perform various roles in a high-stress environment often regulated by unpredicted emotional outbursts from the population they supervise. Rapid responses, instant adaptations between her roles from matron to CO, the evaluation of situations, to vigilant transitions, form part of the FCO's everyday make-up. This taps into her psychological, mental, physical, and spiritual well-being, aspects alluded to in previous discussions in the dissertation. Upon analysis of the data collected during this study the FCOs' representations of her responses, actions and attitudes, three units of meaning were identified that illustrate aspects that contribute towards the shaping of her work identity.

The unique attributes identified that the CFO make towards the corrections fraternity will be discussed under the subthemes, *Emotional labour*, *Vigilance as my armour*, and *My Uniform ... the fabric of which I am made*.

“The one area of her occupational life in which she might be "free to act," the area of her own personality, must now also be managed, must become the alert yet obsequious instrument ...”

Mills (2002, p. 184)

4.6.4.1.1 Emotional labour

Typical female attributes such as being nurturing and sensitive to the needs of the vulnerable, over centuries has made women ideal for occupations, for instance, nurses, teachers, flight attendants, matrons, or saleswomen (Hochschild, 2012). One other occupation that gained ground in the past decades for the employment of women is that of females as CO. These jobs, as the quote by Mills above suggests, typically requires one to always be friendly and smile, and never to appear upset or agitated, irrespective of your true feelings. You serve your habitué by being overly compassionate and approachable, no matter what. This concept is referred to by Nylander et al. (2011) as emotional labour, involving the challenge to effectively manage various opposing emotions when expected to act in a specific manner even though one might feel the opposite.

During this study the FCO often revealed her job as an emotional roller coaster ride, where she needs to manage her emotions and remain professional:

P16: "As hard core as it can be, it is also a very emotional environment [...] with many ups and downs, all in one day."

The reality of the environment the FCO functions in is diverse and dynamic all at the same time. Expressions by these officers illustrate how their unique emotional attributes, such as empathy and understanding, are honed in different situations. Particularly during her interactions with offenders, she is reminded more of the similarities than differences:

P7: "You get to know your inmates [...] sometimes you sit down with them and they want to talk [...] having a typical mother-daughter talk. And the things you hear make your hair rise. A young girl, nowhere to go, only a grandfather, who then decides he will treat her as his wife."

P15: "Sometimes you look at a woman and think this could be my daughter, stuck in a trap... abused and then just snapped."

Further events, as voiced by some participants highlight the reality of the extent of the type of emotional labour exerted by the FCO, that support the statements on this aspect by Nylander et al. (2011) and how these emotions can affect them on a personal level:

P2: "When I started in the centre, I was very emotional because when I see the offenders ... they were the same age as my first born."

P1: "Officers facilitate for example Life Skills, yes, and [...] then the offender will start to explain how [...] what happened, their mother maybe got divorced [...] then he started the crime at a very early age, all those things. Then I get emotional [...] just to think of my own son."

In the unpredictable corrections environment, the FCO must act and react on cue often within seconds, from compassionate to indifferent, sad or shocked to vigilant. These rapid transitions as also described by Crewe (2011) are similarly expressed by the participants, working in this harsh emotional environment:

P2: "The offender will tell me their story, how did he kill this child or how did he kill the wife or the girlfriend, I started to be emotional. But you can't show it and just walk away and then I start crying."

P11: "You just heard a 70[-year-old] man raped a two-year child. You won't cope with those things."

One aspect that further illuminated the emotional reality of the FCO's environment, voiced by almost all participants, is the fear to see or hear about a death that took place in their workplace, in whichever way, and some experiences thereof was still vivid:

P10: "In the first five years, an offender committed suicide [...] We found him the next morning hanging on the side of the wall."

P9: "I've unlocked cells just to find there is an inmate hanging, they hung themselves. Others they overdose [...]"

P10: "We heard that there was a hostage situation here [...] so, officials at Atteridgeville had to now lock up the prison and get here to come and assist and that's when we found out that the Head of Prison was shot dead."

Through the narratives shared by the participants it became evident that managing the different emotions within the diverse roles she must perform is challenging. Participants explained the importance to set clear boundaries, but also create a conducive environment for co-operation. Their representations support the suggestion by Crewe (2011) of the impact of role conflict and emotional labour. The FCOs in this study displayed some unique characteristics she possesses to balance emotions of empathy and understanding, and remain professional:

P5: "I just told myself that I have to draw a line [...] he will try to manipulate you, "please tell my mum I've got flu" and then immediately when you take that small message, tomorrow he will say, "my mother is going to give you ten Rands, please."

P3: "I will never take chances, my job is too important."

Further to the previous expressions, as researcher I deduced how the FCO manage and competently apply the necessary skills to balance their emotions in various situations. An aspect I found significant in contributing to the shaping of her work identity, and supports the notion stated by Ness and Elsworth (2009) on a person's ability to adapt to different circumstances. This was reflected by all the participating FCOs who portrayed real character in their ability to navigate between their varying roles:

P11: "You cannot be caught and relax [...] remember they have the mind that 'we are going home'.

So that's the challenge again because some of them, they become aggressive if they see you don't fall for stories [...] 'No, I must go home. I don't belong here' [...] that it's a challenge for us women."

P13: "When you work with females you need to be really strong in terms of [...] you have to draw the line [...] it's easy for them to skip to your side and you find yourself to be like a friend, and when you start now to be like a friend, then things might start going wrong."

Describing the work environment of the FCO, most participants echoed the following remark that, "This place is emotionally and mentally draining and physically on its own" (P2). This remark urged me to explore how the FCOs cope with this emotional strain. Although Misis et al. (2013) postulated that FCOs may experience less stress, due to their less confrontational relations with offenders, than their male peers, I found that they might experience stress in a different form. From the participants' remarks, I observed more of a real concern, and unhappiness in their feedback, as they conveyed that not enough is done to assist them and relieve them from the emotional trauma they experience:

P1: "There is no debriefing anything [...] I am working with you know a lot of emotional stories but [...] there is no debriefing."

P14: "No debriefing nothing [...] you sit with these feelings, stress and it affects you."

P12: "Some of us who are years in service learned how to cope [...] but there are young ones here ... we see them struggle and there doesn't have to be blood to be traumatised [...] every day things happen [...] they need to be debriefed or something"

P6: "...the problem is we don't speak [...] if you are working in the same environment for a long time, you end up adapting [...] you think it's normal [...] but I think that maybe it will catch up with me later."

P11: "Most of the females they do sports. There is some walk that they do. If I didn't exercise [...] I wouldn't cope."

(P9): "...these things [...] affect you because you take it back home."

It is by the above representations that the reality sets in of the strain the FCO works under, and the emotional labour she needs to exert to fulfil her duties, but more so the ability she demonstrates to navigate between her different roles. This reflected on these females' strong resilient character and how this greatly affects and shape another part of their work and the impact on their identities,

as summarised by a participant's (P10) story: "Working in various places or contexts of the prison environment [...] made me more brave, made me assertive, made me stronger [...] I developed a core that's so tough that it's unbreakable."

4.6.4.1.2 Vigilance as my armour

"In the normal course of her work, because her personality becomes the instrument of an alien purpose, the salesgirl becomes self-alienated ..."

Mills (2002, p. 184).

During my interactions with the participants, various aspects of their work challenges were highlighted. Throughout my discussion in this dissertation, the work environment of the FCO was highlighted from various perspectives. In the previous section, the emotional labour to which the FCO is exposed to were explored, and the question was raised as to how they deal with it. What mechanisms do they apply to cope in such a hostile environment? Their life stories involving the constant need for adaptation proved to be an essential aspect of shaping their identities.

Daily operations are characterised by stressful, often traumatic situations that place a great deal of emotional strain on an officer. It is a continuous state of being on alert as the FCO are exposed to various forms of violence (Denhof, Spinaris & Morton, 2014) as a participant reiterated:

P9: "The trauma you experience in here is bad... you hear about rape [...] murder [...] violence [...] and you have to be strong."

The FCO is confronted with situations that very few other occupations are exposed to and deal with a diverse, challenging population. It involves a great deal of knowledge of people, and skill, beyond just locking-up and supervising offenders. This, coupled with self-knowledge, FCOs noted:

P5 : "So, they are so manipulative [...] I've learnt that I cannot trust them. Yes, I just look at them because you can't say anything, you just have to listen to whatever they are saying and then read their minds and then that's it."

P5: "So, I said no [...] I am not going to take them in my head and then start to think about whatever."

Another important aspect is to be aware of the triggers that shape behaviour (Oyserman et al., 2012), that of ourselves and those around us and with whom we work. This knowledge and insight, as expressed by the FCOs, is often not acknowledged. Dealing with the reality of their work, a necessary tool that they must apply is by becoming vigilant:

P5: "You must be familiar with the firearm that they gave you at the prison [...] , because those guys [...] the offenders, they know the firearm in and out. Sometimes when you [...] fiddle with the firearm, the offender that you are escorting will tell you 'ma'am, no, don't do it like this, do it like that and keep it like this'."

Many representations made by FCOs that participated in this study, were of the changes they detected in their personality and attitude, that inevitably transpired due to their daily operations and close interactions with the incarcerated population. Their reflections support the views by Crawley (2013) as earlier discussed, that refers to the social costs of correctional work, as reiterated by the FCOs:

P10: "When I came in, I was shy, introverted [...] today, I'm a completely different person [...] Prison has changed me. It shaped me into the woman I've become today."

P1: "You know you just don't trust anybody because if me, when I started here, I was not so scared of anything, but now [...] I've learnt about the bad in here."

Being vigilant does not only apply to the male offenders the FCOs supervise, but as I have first-hand experienced, it also applies when close contact with female offenders, where the threat is just as real:

P15: "You see what they do [...] all want to report stuff [...] they know there are boundaries, stand in line [and] wait [...] but they will push and push. The females like to see how far they can get you [...] they have this hierarchy here as well."

P16: "... and you know your customers [...] those inmates that will always look for trouble [...] look I can show you the women [...] and I know how they will behave."

P17: "...but I have learnt to be on the lookout [...] never get caught off-guard [...] we had some incidents, because you relax."

Various encounters with adversity in a highly strenuous environment, as voiced by participants, resulted in them adapting their identities, masking their real selves and keeping up appearances. Officers consciously develop a resilience that helps them cope with the daily challenges (Everly et al., 2008) as voiced by participants:

P2: "You get hard and develop a thick skin [...] I walk alone even in the cells [...] I am not afraid. I've been here for a long time, hey [...] but I stay diligent [...] my safety first."

P9: "Your head has to be very strong."

P10: "I'm still soft on the inside, but I think on the outside, I put on this very strong exterior because then even the offenders know."

P16: "You will never show how you feel [...] being afraid or that their threats affect you."

As reported by Lewis et al. (2013), exposure to traumatic stress such as in the case of the FCO often results in vicarious trauma that severely affects individuals, making them hyper-vigilant and cynical or suspicious, as reflected by this study:

P11: "I'm so much more vigilant [...] working with offenders, you must be [...] if you are not, believe me, you are in trouble."

P12: "...even in the street when I walk, if I saw someone who is not right, I can see that this one is planning something."

P5: "And I can't tolerate a place where I can see a scissor or a knife... even in the supermarket [...] there was a scissor on the table and I said [to the sales lady], please put the scissors away, remove that thing first [...] it's very hard, you are like that always [...] when you see something that can act as a weapon, it come to your mind that it can."

P8 "As in here we have a bagless society [...] everything I want to take with me must fit in my pockets [...] I'm like that on the outside as well, I wear trousers with pockets and no handbag."

The significance of these newly shaped identities lies in the fact that this state of hyper-vigilance and acute sensory awareness is not limited to their workplace (Liebling & Maruna, 2011), but extends outside the high incarcerated walls. Daily interaction with offenders and knowing what humans are capable of, influences the FCOs' lives on so many levels:

P2: "My kids [...] playing outside [...] then the nanny is like "No, they are okay, just let them play." Coming in from here [...] the way you are so vigilant, ne. When I go home, every second I just want to see them right here."

P1: "I lock the grills while I'm inside the house. I lock the gate ... cleaning the house the grills are locked. When you go out you [...] safety comes first. Even your kids, make sure that when you are alone you lock the grill [...] you become so, so vigilant."

P8: "My kids go nowhere [...] no sleep overs, or just to visit if I don't know the parents or their friends [...] no way [...] they suffer I know [...] and that's because of my job, but it is who I am now."

Being vigilant comes automatic, it has become part of them, of their newly constructed identity. As Oyserman et al. (2012) suggested, this serves as survival mechanisms, and an essential part of this process is to be aware of your environment and your true self. Many participants elaborated this aspect as to how their work identity transpires into their everyday lives:

P5: "At home we will lock the door and then you will go to the bathroom and then you come back you test the door again because we are used to testing. Because here you lock the first door, then you lock the second door and then the other person comes and test that the first person has done it correctly."

P8: "You will always check the windows, check the doors and you have this tough love at home on your kids, even your partner [...] because you don't know how to differentiate between being at work and switching off and being in a home setting."

It is, however, often their close family that must carry the burden of this hyper-vigilance, which the FCO is very aware of:

P14: "...when I am so overprotective and on-guard and suspicious about everything and everyone [...] they will say you are not at work now please!"

P5: "...and yes, it is sometimes what we fight about [...] they say I don't trust them [...] I know it's not fair, but it's so part of me."

P8: "Oh and when we drive or go out it is worse [...] phones down nothing with you or to display [...] I'm constantly looking around and have this way of walking and looking [...] I think people know not to try anything."

Interestingly, many participants attribute this resilience to the training they received when they entered the service. Even after years of service, it is remarkable how many of them still rely on what they were taught. My engagements with the FCOs lead me to the opinion that it is a

combination of their unique attributes of aptitude, personality, diligence, and resilience that makes a good FCO:

P10: "Look, I went for training. We were treated like prisoners [...] you will eat the food they eat. You sleep at a certain time. They lock you in [...] you clean, you scrub the floors. You run from A to B. You sit when they tell you to sit."

P5: "The training that the department gave to me and the training that I got from the previous work experience [...] prepared me [...] that I understood fully the behavioural pattern of the offender [...] so immediately [...] when I came face to face with them, it's then that I saw those things that they were telling us, it's real."

What is expected from the FCO, in terms of a stern, vigilant and disciplined demeanour, is precisely that which changes them. In shaping a work identity to cope and competently perform her different roles, has now become a way of living for them, such that they almost become "self-alienated" (Mills, 2002, p. 184). As summarised by one participant, "...you know, this kind of a job, it really moulds you. It shapes you into something different, but strong [...] unique."

4.6.4.1.3 My Uniform... the fabric of which I am made

"The need to shape minds and bodies finds in uniforms a valuable aid [...] It is an instrument in a process designed to shape the physique and the bearing of [an] individual, whose autonomy conditions his docility and whose obedience transforms individual strength into collective power."

Roche, 1996 (cited in Craik, 2003, p. 130)

In the security and uniformed fraternity, of which correctional services form part, the wearing of a uniform is an essential part of their package in expressing their work identity. A uniform conveys non-verbal messages of authority and silently the consequences of non-compliance (Kaiser, et al., 1991).

In this study, the role and impact of the uniform is expressed through various representations. One might think that when choosing a career in correctional services, it is only when entering the workplace that you are confronted with the prescribed dress code and its symbolism. Participants reflected on some of their memories:

P3: "I was attracted by the uniform more than anything from early."

P4: "...coming from a family being in uniform, so since young I was used to it and always thought it might be an option for me."

P7: "I grew up in this environment [...] my father, in-laws [...] even my mother [...] coming from a very small town with no females in the service then, and she had to stand in as part-time matron [...] so it was kind of part of me."

Wearing their uniform, the participants echoed what some literature suggests, namely the role it played in shaping their identity. Participants reflected on how their uniform represented discipline and stature (Craik, 2003), an attribute that they embraced from early in their careers:

P10: "I wear my uniform with pride because for me, it's made me the person I am today."

P16: "You know my husband was in uniform at corrections [...] his dedication and pride impressed me [...] he always said how members feel [...] that the uniform made them form a group [...] then I joined and until today, so many years later I feel proud."

These discussions touched on aspects regarding the role of their uniform in shaping a collective identity, and it was portrayed to be the case. The FCOs form affiliations with their peers, and support the notion explained by the SIT of Tajfel and Turner (1986), that social identity is formed by acquiring multiple selves and identities shaped by these associations within one's working environment. It became evident that they are very aware of themselves as female officers, part of a larger group of employees within the DCS:

P7: "It actually make us feel part of an organisation [...] a feeling that we belong and have the same goals"

P11 "...you can say the female members operate as a force in uniform [...] not to say we don't feel part of the male officers, but we have to stand together."

The FCOs' reflections on their uniform supported the suggestion by Bunyawanich et al. (2018) that wearing a uniform enhances group uniformity and group membership, and some exclusivity:

P16 "This brown and green uniform is different from the Police [...] it makes us different [...] we take over from them and deal with offenders for years afterwards [...] we are our own group [...] close members."

P14: "...ja, they like to say look out for that member or watch out the uniform is coming [...] that doesn't bother us [...] we don't take it negative [...] we are The Uniform you know."

Valuable insight was gained from some contradictory experiences shared by the FCOs regarding their uniform. These views involve both public opinion and the role the media that plays a role in shaping their work identity:

P4: "Sometimes on the outside, people attack you because of the uniform [...] they target us [...] there were incidents I can tell you about."

P8: "Because of the corruption inside [...] we are never portrayed in a good light by the media [...] you feel ashamed wearing this uniform [...] I always get rid of my uniform first before I go anywhere [...] I have seen how the outside look at us as if we are a disgrace."

P12 : "I know there are negative perceptions out there [...] we hear and read what they say [...] the media [...] people [...] but I still wear my uniform with pride."

P5: "Even though there are many scandals about this uniform [...] there are still good things that this uniform is still doing."

These narratives shared by participants, highlight the reality of the challenges the FCO experiences to balance and manage different perceptions of her and her job. It is the multiple messages and meanings that their uniform represents and the unfair attachments by the public towards it, that can impact on her. Officers also feel exposed on the outside, open to any interpretation of her as person and her career, unfortunately often negative (Craik, 2003; Hertz, 2015).

However, some stories by participants, highlighted another interesting interplay between the wearer and the public, as explained by Hertz (2015), and the expectations and respect the FCO's uniform carries:

P5: "I am so proud of this uniform, I love it and at least the little respect that we still had from the public with regards to this uniform, wow it's amazing."

P5: "[...] when you encounter one of the parents [...] in the street and then he or she gives you a handshake that you changed my son's life, and by that time you must put it in your mind that you don't even know this son."

P5: "Some people put their faith upon the people in this uniform [...] they get to know us [...]

members get to know the families [...] there is a good thing, that this uniform is still offering towards the community.”

FCOs' work and responsibilities often extend beyond their immediate workspace, which contributes to shaping their work identities, from strict, neutral safe keeper, to approachable public servant and community member on the outside, representing the DCS, to family member.

Upon further exploration of the meaning attached to the wearing of their uniform, some unexpected aspects were voiced. Choosing a career in corrections, as discussed in earlier sections, is often a conscious decision, due to past positive experiences, the discipline fraternity, the status the uniform portrays, or becoming a member of a like-minded group. For some FCOs, they chose a career in corrections as rank bearing officer, for the status it would bring, which also plays a role in the shaping of her work and social identities (Hargreaves, 1961; Hertz, 2015). It is, however, the impact of the changes in the rank structures and demilitarisation of the DCS that had a significant impact on the COs. That which was once their work identity, suddenly changed and had a demoralising impact on officers, as remembered by participants:

P8: “...we had ranks, we were disciplined, in other words, we had like totems [...] we strictly wore uniforms and did parades in 94... it was demilitarised in 96 [...] suddenly you had no rank [...] nothing [...] we got new names like KW1 [...] after ten, eight years they brought the ranks back, but from 1998 to 2008 I couldn't progress [...] so this was just clothes.”

P9: “ Then around 1994 they took the ranks away [...] many officers were very demoralised [...] they didn't have a problem with the demilitarisation, but to take your status away [...] to degrade you.”

P7: “ ...my rank meant something to me [...] I worked hard for it, then they stripped us from it [...] we were nothing [...] we could have put on civvies.”

P15: “ That time being almost demoted [...] even the inmates made fun of us [...] ‘you are nothing now, see what you can do now’ [...] most of us were stuck [...] I think some still did not recover.”

Due to events, as mentioned above, of almost degrading officers' status, one would expect a negativity and demotivation of the officers. This, however, did not affect the FCOs to such an extent that they did not still recognise the positive properties of their uniform, and how it formed

an indelible part of their working identities. In this volatile environment, where the FCOs in our discussions often revealed to me how exposed they felt, but could not display any sign of vulnerability, it was fascinating to learn from them how their uniform assisted in keeping up stern appearances:

P9: "My uniform is like a shield that says I'm untouchable, I won't, just for no reason, be hurt here inside."

P14: "It is how you wear it [...] proud, show you are strong [...] this is my protection, my shield almost [...] puts a boundary between you and the inmates."

P5: "You know sometimes outside I miss it because it protects you. It is so part of me..."

P9: "...I feel scared, anxious [...] inside between 2000 plus offenders that some committed gruesome murders it protects me. But outside without my uniform I get scared I feel so vulnerable [...] unprotected."

These findings support a global trend, as Hertz (2015) explained, wearing a uniform promoted feeling protection and safety, and a served as defense mechanism for officers, especially FCOs.

The uniform is, however, also the one aspect they need to remove once they are on the outside, or at home, to drop their appearance and guard, to change their frame of mind. The FCOs mentioned that they find it difficult not to take some of their work home, such as being vigilant and the accompanying emotional strain, it is the uniform as a shield that shapes one part of their work identity:

P5: "Even with all the pride I wear my uniform I need to take it off immediately when at home [...] you need to transform [...] and it is not always easy."

P12: "You act differently when in uniform [...] your talk, walk everything [...] even when in the street or mall [...] when at home it is the first thing I do to take it off [...] it forms a boundary between you and your people, just like when at work [...] it is true."

P9: "...and then tomorrow morning I put on my uniform again and it changes me, I even start talking differently."

To transform into mother, wife, partner, sister, daughter, friend, they need to remove their uniform:

P9: "When I get home, I ask for just 15 minutes to be alone in my room, to take off my uniform

[...] so that I can just get back to be mother and wife. While I'm still in the work mode I treat them as if I'm still at work."

P15: "Sometimes we say we have double lives and to balance that is difficult, also for our family."

During their reflections, apart from the pride, protection and some status their uniform provides, the FCOs mentioned how being a uniformed officer, the strict rules one has to abide by, and what it represents, affects their sense of femininity, so much so that when outside they still dress down, avoiding any attention to be drawn on them:

P9: "We are advised to rather wear trousers [...] button up, cover up [...] no cleavage allowed to show."

P8: "Outside I also don't wear make-up or jewellery [...] very toned down [...] it has become part of me [...] I can't do the girly thing."

P7: "But I see the young ones [...] they don't get it [...] dressing up, make up and so on [...] they will learn here you don't try to attract attention [...] this is what a uniform means in this place ... you must become a different person [...] otherwise get another job where you can dress up."

P5: "Yes I find myself that I tend to dress very boring, practical clothes, pale colours ... not to draw any attention [...] I prefer to blend in."

P14: "Some Corrections centres [...] I read, in Britain I think [...] advice FCOs to wear double sets over each other [...] to look bigger or unattractive [...] I don't know [...] it must be very uncomfortable."

Being prepared to lose a part of one's identity as women, as the participating FCOs reflected on, being proud of their appearance, to dress neatly and clothes with a proper fit is not always made easy for them. This might be one area where their challenges could receive more consideration. Some FCOs reported having only one or two sets of uniform for ten years, with material old and faded, uniforms too small and no prospects of any new uniforms issued:

P6: "We've been battling for five years plus now and they expect us to come to work wearing uniform. Where do we get uniform? Because you can't go to the shop and buy uniform!"

P13: "Look at the material it fades and scuffs it looks so old... And this is for winter too, you just wear a jersey or jacket over."

P14: "It is not fair [...] as a woman you want to look neat and decent this is already not nice material [...] it is hard, brown, boring but we don't mind [...] we just ask for more sets!"

P17: "See how tight my trousers are [...] can I help it [...] one gains weight and now look like this [...] feel ashamed, it is not right [...] but they just say 'No'."

P16: "We try to make a plan between us with sizes and so on, but it doesn't really work."

From the discussions in this section, some points of the role and attributes the FCO possess were already highlighted. These include aspects such as her ability to manage an often hostile, negative environment and sharing these spaces with colleagues and offenders. An isolated place surrounded by high, grey walls become home for many occupants and in some sense, a new, strangely integrated community is formed, where co-existence is essential. Factors that further address the secondary research question on the FCO's contributions, relates to her being naturally inclined to be nurturing and sensitive, as noted by Hochschild (2012). She tends to be a homemaker, which reflects in the approach towards her. Some participants echoed this notion in their concern and compassion towards some offenders and the circumstances that put them here:

P7: "For some prison becomes their home [...] because if they do get home, they must face the same people that caused them to become who they are... and the only way to get away from them is to return here."

P11: "Sometimes the offender, they feel free to talk about their female dilemmas and stuff [...] So, I think there I'm really adding value."

P16: "You see who get visitors and who never [...] sometimes they even discuss their outside lives [...] some have nowhere to go [...] big men saying [...] 'this is the only home I know' [...] that's how they feel, and we must know that."

P17: "I often ask why do you come back to this place? [...] but I know after years this is the only place, they feel at home [...] almost safe [...] and that is what we try to help with"

These representations also highlight the FCO's effective communication skills, portrayed as non-confronting, and having a natural calming effect. These skills are also reflective of the claims by Nink (2008) that FCOs increasingly become a sought-after source for employment in among other correctional services. The mentioned attributes are further highlighted by the officers, that showed offenders' considerable respect towards them:

P1: "You know these guys, they disrespect males [...] but when they bring in a female, they get humble."

P2: "Ah, men, they want to show off especially with the male Officers [...] they want to show their aggression and challenge them [...] but when us females are there, they quickly stop [...] talk softer and when you talk, they listen [...] we have a different approach."

P11: "...you know some offenders, when they become so much aggressive, if a female started to talk, they listen and say 'Ah, oh no fine Chief, I hear you'. But if it's a male, he wants to show them I'm strong enough."

P14: "So with females they just calm down a little bit and listen [...] 'Okay, no it's fine, I hear you. No, I'm sorry'. They even apologise sometimes. Ja, so another good thing for females to be employed."

In sharing stories of her lived work experiences the FCO exhibit unique traits in her approach in working with, and an understanding of the incarcerated population. She displays the ability to move beyond the fear this challenging environment poses and demonstrates power in her communication style and how she applies it towards the offenders. These characteristics support research findings by Lambert, Paoline, Hogan and Baker (2007) on the role and invaluable attributes the FCO make towards the corrections fraternity, as echoed by the participants:

P3: What I've seen in them is that I never heard anyone screaming at me personally [...] yes they scream and fight [...] so you must understand them [...] and that make me still feel safe around this place."

P7: "Never forget you compassion [...] all of us go through difficult times [...] you are not here to punish the offender further [...] you are here to help him become a better person."

P9: "Women contribute so much [...] we can handle trauma, and we have a special way to cope [...] you know our intuition."

P12: "...in-between our duties we make time [...] every small minute they can talk and know you listen [...] even if it's a noisy place [...] we have a way to communicate [...] like in school many children want attention. That is where the female members are good."

P13: "...the offenders, they will tell you [...] especially those who were incarcerated long ago [...] that after the female officials were employed, everything changed."

In terms of their role in the rehabilitation of offenders, the findings supported the argument forwarded by Nylander et al. (2011) that FCOs tend to be positively orientated towards rehabilitation and more interactional inclined:

P2: "I believe I've made a contribution, especially showing them unconditional acceptance."

P5: "We are able to talk, to listen to understand their feelings [...] they will say 'I did not know the mother's love' [...] 'there was nobody who can listen to me' [...] least now we try to listen."

P14: "Yes we want to make a difference even if it's just one ..." You know you see them or their family outside [...] yes and I had them coming say thank you."

P3 "I think females also have a tone to them [...] they open up easily towards us."

P7: "There must be a social worker or someone that follow up or monitor them when they leave here... we always wonder about some [...] are they coping [...] it is sad when you see some return [...] very sad. That's how it is, we are like that."

During discussions on this topic, it became evident how many FCOs are single parents, divorced, sole breadwinners, still taking care of extended families, and it became clear how important their careers are for them, as some voiced their aspirations:

P2: "Us females are always busy to improve ourselves and our lives [...] not like with some male members [...] to them it's just a job. We must make a success [...] we want a career [...] we are bread winners and will make no mistakes."

P10: "You will hear different stories from different women in Correctional Services because each one has a different role to play. Like I said, education plays a key role, because when you're educated you have knowledge and knowledge is power, and we bring that into the working environment."

P16: "Our experience here helps a lot, and that's why we study further [...] not maybe to leave, but to be able to contribute in other areas in Corrections."

The multiple roles represented above is also reflective of women in society. An important aspect echoed by almost all participants, that equips them to provide in these different roles is their efforts at self-development. Most have acquired some level of tertiary education and/or a keen interest in human and social sciences, with a high level of knowledge and skills. Some had obtained degrees and national diplomas, others are busy pursuing their studies, and some are planning to start their studies. Aspect of the FCO becoming a highly skilled and educated commodity agrees with the statements made earlier by Nink (2008). Participants also reported on how many officials came through the ranks of officer, studied and are qualified in various occupations in corrections today:

P12: "Maybe they see us only as 'wardens' [mimics inverted commas] but we are the first line who work with inmates [...] we might not be that high qualified [...] but it is here that a lot of problems are sorted out."

P7: "I am very much interested in community involvement [...] they are not involved enough with the offenders. Maybe I will pursue studies in community or social work."

P15: "We follow different paths [...] I am studying to better myself and to be able to become an Official in Corrections [...] and to put back what I've learned as officer."

The findings discussed above brought me closer to an understanding of the work life of the FCO, and what factors play a role in forming her work identity. I also gained insight into the meanings she attaches to her lived work experiences and highlighted how she is required to play various diverse roles and how she often has to mask her emotions and keep up a strong exterior. The above representations reflect the array of attributes the FCO possess, such as her rehabilitative nature, discipline, resilience and vigilance, attitude towards self-development, and her ability to navigate between diverse roles in a highly complex environment. These attributes coupled with their positive attitude and determination forms an indispensable part of the South African Corrections fraternity. As emphasised by Nink (2008), FCOs are increasingly becoming a source of educated, talented, and an accomplished workforce, as well as managers in corrections globally.

4.7 Discussion of findings

Through this study and in reviewing various sources, I found that research, literature, the media, even TV shows and movies with the corrections fraternity as topic mostly focus on the offender, their lives, and turmoil during incarceration. This notion as Nylander et al. (2011) states, unfortunately often portrays the CO as stern, unemotional, and autocratic, as the brown brick and mortar buildings in which they work. The COs shortcomings are rather reported on, and very limited discussions on the officer-offender interactional relationship, aspect also highlighted by the FCOs in this study, that support findings from studies by Crawley (2013) and Liebling (2000) as previously discussed in the dissertation.

In determining the various meaning units of the analysed data, I discovered that all units are interrelated and therefore the subsequent themes identified, and discussion thereon should be

regarded and viewed in its entirety and not as different, unrelated or isolated parts. I realised that in order to form a better understanding of the lived work experiences of the FCOs, a holistic view was needed in order to address the research questions posed for this study. With the primary research question, I aimed to explore how the FCO's work-life experiences shape her work identity to match the demands of her occupation. The secondary research questions relate to how the FCO see her role and unique identity in her work environment; and what contributions FCOs feel they can make in their work environment to capitalise on their unique strengths and attributes as FCO.

Apart from the detailed findings already presented in the previous section, I wish to highlight some significant factors that contribute in the shaping of the work identity of the FCO, as it transpired during my journey with the participating FCOs. This will be presented by using the three subordinate themes, namely *Correctional centres as social institutions*, *Correctional centres operating as separate communities*, and *Being different becomes her saving grace*, as basis of the discussion.

4.7.1 The FCO shaping her work-life identity: An inter-relational journey

During the data analysis process and identifying of themes, through the FCO shared narratives I determined that it is not just a single, but various factors that impact in constructing her work identity. There is also not a set hierarchy of importance, or a step by step process, but consists of a combination of factors. Identity formation is an interrelated process that takes place on a macro and micro-level, where macro-level refers to the institutional factors that regulate the functioning of the FCO, such as policies and procedures. It also encompasses the social context of a broader community outside her work environment (Brown & Toyoki, 2013). The micro-level relates to the more complex elements, such as the social constructs and organisational culture, as well as how the FCO positions herself within corrections, her daily routines, and interactions with colleagues and offenders (Pfaff, 2013; Steiner, 2008; Tracy & Scott, 2006).

From my engagement with the different facets of the FCO's work life, I could explore aspects that construct the FCO's identity, such as her abilities, psychological make-up, interests, sense of belonging and affiliations that support the processes in individuals' personal and social

identification as earlier referred to and defined by Ashforth and Mael (1989). This process was also a means of discovering the other multiple identities that she needs to apply according to the situation during her daily operations. This array of factors is presented by discussing the different, significant, interrelated aspects shaping the FCO work identity through her life and career.

- ***Multiple work identities***

The findings of this study, as discussed in the previous section of this chapter, highlight FCOs as multifaceted and layered, where multiple factors shape their work identities. Factors that impact on these constructions include the correctional environment she is part of, the isolated corrections environment she operates in, the different group memberships she is part of in these spaces, the dynamic interplay between these relationships, and the FCO being an entity herself.

Aspects I found to be of significance firstly relate to the context of the DCS environment the FCO forms part of and different groups she affiliates with, such as DCS employees, COs, colleagues, and fellow FCOs, all who strive to uphold the corrections mandate. Within these affiliations, she develops different sets of work identities that regulate her daily conduct. She, however, also forms other affiliations with another group in this organisation, namely the offenders. Firstly, she shares her identity with the offender population as part of a marginalised section of society, which supports the statement by Chipango (2016) and Hochschild (2012), whereby women, children, the elderly, differently abled and the incarcerated are similarly regarded. Correctional services regulate the confinement of offenders, and the regulations and restrictions, however, in many instances apply to its employees as well. As a member of this unlikely group, the FCO also shares the same impersonal, incarcerated spaces with offenders. It is within this partnership, that might seem most unconventional, that the symbolism lies. As from the participants' representations, the FCOs themselves in a sense take on a similar identity as a confined and isolated entity, as the offenders they supervise. As a DCS employee, she shares this as another identity with the population she secures and serves every day, whether male or female offenders. It is this "multiplicity" of shared spaces (Lombardo, 2005, p. 38) and multiple shared identities that positioned my research and some findings in an interesting context.

- ***Shared communities, shared identities***

By engaging with the FCO I determined that she shares a unique and complex environment with the offender, where they, as an unlikely in-group, isolated from the outside, establishes a kind of separate community. From the FCOs' shared stories it revealed the important role the environment in which she operates plays in forming her identity, as also asserted by Hatch and Schultz (1997; 2000) and Little and McGiven (2014). Correctional centres are established as institutions for the secure incarceration of a perceived violent population, and to keep the society safe from offenders. As a member of this unlikely group, the FCOs work-life plays out in the same regulated, grey spaces, behind high walls and steel locked gates, often faced with the same risks and dangers as the incarcerated population she supervises. The FCOs' work-life, as for the offenders, are regulated by rules, codes of conduct, and time schedules and in a sense both parties are institutionalised. It is within this framework that another aspect of her identity is formed referred to as an institutionalised identity, which I thematised in an earlier discussion as *my institutionalised self*. This finding supports the suggestions by Hochschild (2012) of identity shaping embedded within an organisational setting that impacts on the operations, emotions, actions and reactions of its role players.

It is within this separate community setting, that I found a significant reciprocal relationship between the offender and the FCO. On the one hand, the respect she demonstrates towards the offender is mutual. Another dynamic in this relationship as voiced by the participants, is the almost unwritten rule that, since the FCO as mother figure cares for the offender, they will take care of her. These expressions of her work identity formation are relevant to what Tajfel and Turner (1986) described in their SIT, as a process of inter-relations whereby the FCO defines herself relative to others. The FCOs' stories support what these authors suggest how their sense of themselves has meaning in the different affiliations they form, their standing within these different groups, and their relation to that. In this study, the FCO were found to form part of various inter-relational groups, from FCO in the correctional environment of DCS, as colleague, as FCO within the incarcerated environment, or as FCO part of the same isolated setting as that of the incarcerated population. As voiced by the FCOs in this study, for the outside world, they become outsiders, a sentiment that supports the notion also expressed by Carrigan (2015) and Goffman (1961; 2009),

and within this institution as revealed during my co-journeying with them, as part of a new society as it were, they become insiders.

These findings reiterated the impact these different dynamic relationships have on shaping her work identity. This, however, also brings another dimension to the multiple work identities as discussed earlier, seen in relation as law enforcer towards the offender, as rehabilitator towards those to be rehabilitated, or as female to male. In my journey with the FCO in her workplace, I observed how highly competent and professionally these officers navigate within a shared space, between these different memberships and multiple identities.

- *Social work identity*

It is in the social working space the FCO daily shares with the incarcerated population that another side of her identity is detected. Participants expressed the sentiment that to ensure effective functioning, and in the interaction with the incarcerated population, she has to position herself as part of this society. In constructing her work identity, this echoes how she shapes her social identity as part of a shared space, as posited by Ashforth and Mael (1989) and Smaldino (2019) earlier. Positioning herself in this community requires the FCO to balance being a member of two separate communities in one space. One as member of the corrections fraternity, and another as a member of a shared social officer-offender community, an unpredictable space where lives are at risk, irrespective of the group they affiliate with.

As part of this shared space, the FCO describes how she spends most hours of the day, sharing the lives of the population she serves, their dreams, hopes, fears, and even get to know their families and friends. She becomes a member of a larger family where she provides support within boundaries. However, as life happens to her as well, sometimes she escapes from her own hardships and finds comfort, and a “kinship” is formed, even in this unlikely social space (Lombardo, 2005, p. 37). She finds meaning in her work and in the gratitude of offenders and their families.

Within the diverse social context, the FCO operates in, coupled with the corrections population she supervises, the expressions shared by the FCOs, revealed the challenges they are faced with

and tasked to maintain order within a specific social structure. These aspects require of the FCO to employ different strategies or presentations of her identity and self, but also her multiple identities to perform her duties explanations that support discussions by Flannery (2011) as elaborated on in a previous section of this dissertation.

- ***Interrelated self-identity***

The interrelated aspects of the FCO, her work life and identity as illustrated in diagram 4.5.1 earlier, is confirmed by the interactions with them and expression made by her during this study. In terms of shaping her identity, I alluded to the interrelatedness of these processes, and contexts within which it takes place. One other process also involved refers to self-categorisation, that is dependent on the social context in which the FCO works, that allows some flexibility. This approach acknowledges the different interactional group processes involved in the daily work lives of the FCO. Within an organisational setting, the FCO also has a group identity she embraced as part of her work identity (Cornelissen et al., 2007).

Evident from this study is how the FCOs share similar values, ambitions, and beliefs, and forms some sense of collective work identity which supports the processes explored by Harrison (2018) as well as He and Brown (2013) in identity formation, discussed earlier. The SIT extends this process further by focusing on the self and individual differences by introducing the concept of possible social identities or possible selves that which further suggests the interplay and interrelatedness between the multiple identities.

This process serves as an interpretive framework for the individual, and gives insight into past behaviour, as well as current behaviour. Given the demanding environment in which the FCO operates, along with the unpredictable population she serves, this is a continuous process. It requires the cognitive inputs of knowing what is required and the motivation to apply that and continue. The FCO's work requires navigation between different personas, and a constant cycle of change, adaption, alteration, and acceptance. In forming these possible selves provide meaning and context for the FCO's current work situation. As asserted by Harrison (2018) earlier this serve as link between her past, present and future work context, as supported by the shared narratives of the participants' career, in that it forms part of her continual development and growth and

consequent identity formation. These representations provide a significant discourse as it reveals the hopes, goals, and aspirations, as well as the reality of the FCO's everyday fears or threats. This corroborate aspects of the framework that Dumont and Waldzus (2015), and Markus and Nurius (1986) referred to in a previous section, in that it provides additional meaning, as well as context for the FCO's current behaviour, actions and reactions as she almost embrace the continuous process of creating a new self.

- *A gendered identity*

Conducting studies on a specific part of society such as COs and as in this case, female officers, one might expect the focus to be on gender as female versus male or a study on equality within the workplace. Although, in this study, comparisons or references are made of male COs, it is to provide context and does not form the focus of this study. By interacting with the FCOs and her shared narratives, gender per se did not play a role in her frame of reference. This aspect is significant since the FCO regards herself as an independent entity and is not confined to a definition of male or FCO to determine her identity. In an earlier discussion, the question was posed, as to whose definition of male and female, or male CO and FCO, do we ascribe? In this regard, I agree with the claim by Cornell (1998) that the value of the attributes by FCOs is by not using gender comparisons, or as discovered in this study by typical gendered definitions.

Gender differences are a given, whether biologically, historically, and socially, or whether in equal opportunities or treatment. The significance of the findings is, however, that various factors identified, impact the shaping of the FCO's work identity. Since this is not a comparative study, I cannot argue that such factors only apply to FCOs. It is acknowledged that the COs share the same work environment and interact with the same colleagues, and apart from female offenders, they mostly engage with the same offender population. The environment also poses similar risks and dangers. However, the FCO, sometimes portrayed as being more vulnerable concerning the supervision of male offenders, is an aspect alluded to by Smith and Loomis (2013) in an earlier discussion on the different perceptions held towards FCOs.

One of the topics discussed with the participating FCOs was on vulnerability, and they emphasised it as a reality of their challenging work environment. This aspect, however, does not overshadow the other unique contributing factors that shape her work identity. Her resilience and

vigilance counter any other stereotypical traits. It is in how she acknowledges her otherness, and do not make excuses for being different. She embraces her nurturing and sometimes more empathetic approach towards the offender population, of which her honest reflections in the previous section is evident. All participants indicated the positive effect of a calm, non-confrontational approach during incidents of conflict or aggression with or between offenders. Typical female characteristics alluded to in reports by Nink (2008), as highlighted earlier. The participants displayed the ability to focus on the different roles they have to fulfil. The FCOs expressed the importance of her career, what she regards as essential, and how she can make a difference in her work as CO, FCO, colleague, fellow female officer, and supervisor.

From the representations by the FCOs in this study, I have to differ from the statement by Lorber (1997) earlier in the document, who argued that the women's practice of *doing gender* might be a factor that contributes to the challenges they experience to prove themselves and to be treated as equals. Findings from this study revealed that the FCOs endeavours is not to use gender as a disadvantage or excuse, or that it defines their discourse as female or as CO, but rather to apply it as unique advantage, contributing to her career as officer in the corrections fraternity. Their stories revealed how they succeed as competent FCOs, and their value is displayed in their established work-life identity.

4.7.2 Unique attributes of the FCO

Through the literature review, some perceptions I formed were that the FCO operates as a silent force, working behind the scenes, on the outskirts, and seldom being acknowledged. In this study the participants supported this notion, not in the sense of submission or despair, or by comparison with her male peers, but by embracing her otherness and continuous endeavours of being the best they can be.

- *Consciously adapting and asserting the self*

During this study, I could determine how the FCO's working environment comprises different, diverse functions to be performed by various role players to meet a challenging, highly unpredictable environment as mandated by the DCS (2016). Representations made by the FCO

include an array of diverse stories of her work life that portray her navigation in a challenging environment having to adapt and alter her actions and fluctuate between her different roles. These shared stories display how embedded she is in this process, a notion also described by Harrison (2018) whereby she acquires a deeper understanding of how her work experiences and the meanings she attaches to it shape her identity.

In the FCOs' endeavours to uphold the mandate of DCS, she finds herself in often contradictory roles, expecting of her to be rehabilitator, with an almost counselling focus on the one hand, to being the stern, vigilant security enforcer, maintaining limited and constrained contact with offenders. It is against this backdrop that the FCO and her role as part of these scenarios are significant.

The FCO's daily operations, coupled with the harsh environment to which the FCO is exposed, her identity is shaped as stern, in keeping with the space in which she works, and the offenders with whom she deals. Participants expressed how these traits are often perceived by the outside world and offenders, as autocratic and unsympathetic. From the participants' stories, I deduced that these factors shape her on both a conscious and unconscious level. Consciously, the FCO adapts her personality to the environment in which she works, and the duties expected of her. Given the challenging offender population she operates in, she reiterates the importance of upholding her 'no-nonsense' attitude and assertiveness. In a highly unpredictable environment, not knowing what to expect from one moment to another, the FCO can never let her guard down.

From the FCO's stories of their work-life journeys, the construction of her identity formation becomes evident. As conceptualised by Markus and Nurius (1986), this formation operates on a cognitive-motivational level, an aspect found to be supported by the various representations made by the FCOs. In sharing their work-life experiences, the participants engaged in many stories of how her character, views, and attitude changed over time during her career and how it is continuously changing, in forming multiple selves, and shaping her work identity. The FCOs expressed various incidents displaying a character of resilience and the ability to adapt to different situations. Her daily operations require her to balance between her roles as a vigilant law enforcer and assertive supervisor to caring FCO, which supports similar findings reported by Lindegaard

and Gear (2014) discussed earlier on the role expectations and role conflict of officers. The participants' reflections further represent the reality of the South African context, in that COs are often required to choose an alternative role, one with the least adverse effects.

Sharing in the reflections of the FCO's career, a mature and conscious engagement of her work-life journey was displayed, taking ownership of the processes that shape her work identity. These actions by the participants support what Cornelissen et al. (2007) explain in that the FCO engage in more than just thinking about it or just on a cognitive level. The participants shared representations evident from a conscious emotional, motivational, as well as cognitive journey with many roles as female, functioning as CO within the correctional environment in daily contact with offenders.

- ***A matter of masked emotions***

The FCO's navigation between different roles and expectations, as discussed above, does, however, pose many challenges and impacts on the emotional, psychological, and physical well-being of the FCO. Participants articulated that these effects remain, irrespective of their experience, age, or the incarcerated population they serve, since it is always expected of them to be the autocrat, matron, strict officer, as well as therapist and protector, all at once. In a male-dominated environment, the typical female attributes of empathetic carer and nurturer are what is required, and what defines her value. Participants expressed, however, that they cannot openly display or succumb to those female traits. As confusing this might sound, it is what is expected of the FCO. Whether she observes violence, experience insults, or first-hand see death, she needs to keep her composure. It is the emotional labour the FCO is exposed to daily. For survival and coping, she needs to form another identity of embracing her female attributes in adding value to their occupation, but not by being feminine, nor trying to be masculine. From the participants' narratives it is not necessarily the contradicting roles they have to perform that leads to the most strain. As soon as the FCO enters the corrections fraternity, she realises what is expected of her, and early in her career, consciously make the decision to stay or leave, accept, or change.

It is, however, the emotional labour, where psychological and physical demands, expected of the FCO from hour-to-hour, that unconsciously impact on her. Leaving the high walls behind,

when alone at home, this often has the tendency to linger with her. At work, the FCO succeeds in keeping up appearances wearing a mask of the resilient FCO, that can shield herself against everything and everyone. From the participants' stories, it became evident that it is on the outside that the challenge is often higher, having to switch between officer, mother, wife, partner, daughter, and sister. The FCOs' stories reflect on the difficulty of many aspects of their work-life that they cannot escape when not on shift.

One prominent characteristic, as discussed in the previous section, essential for her survival, and efficient functioning is her duty to remain vigilant in all situations, which follows the FCO off duty as well. This vigilance also protects her outside work, often impacting on her normal functioning, and often more to the detriment of her family. In this regard, the participants report that they remain suspicious and observant of situations, as well as people and objects, pre-empting any eventualities. Children, friends, and partners are all exposed to this resilience that often evolves into over-protection, but as the FCOs expressed this as a crucial part of her work-life that she cannot escape from, and further shapes her character.

As some participants echoed, it becomes a way of life, where knowing what goes on in the world, dealing with the incarcerated population teaches them this. This diligence makes switching to a more relaxed life difficult. The representations shared by the FCOs resonate with the models described by Hatch and Schultz (1997; 2000) in that identity is shaped within the organisational setting in which they operate, the groups they belong to, and affiliate with, and thereby express and project their organisational self. This process is also referred to by Brown and Toyoki (2013) as identity work that involves how individuals shape, maintain, and evaluate their life stories and identity. From the FCOs' presentations, I deducted how she is continuously required to integrate, construct, and reconstruct her identity, to be able to manage and make sense of her life within as well as outside work.

- ***Symbolism, meaning and function of the FCO's uniform***

An interesting finding was the different roles the FCOs' uniform plays. It functions as a symbol that shapes her identity and unconsciously ties her persona inside the corrections environment with her outside persona, as thematised ... *the fabric of which I am made*. The FCOs expressed how

her uniform contributes to a sense of belonging within the fraternity and a shared sense of identity among members or fellow officers. In terms of identity formation, this also contributes to the internal legitimacy of an organisation, sentiments that support the notion expressed by Little and McGiven (2014).

A significant finding on the FCO's uniform and insignia that previously formed part of her attire regards the impact the removal thereof had on many officers. They felt stripped from their status and without it felt even more exposed, demotivated, and degraded. Their uniform seemed incomplete and senseless without the necessary indicative insignia. It represented some status, however small, in its totality it shaped her identity, self-worth and discourse as FCO. As most participants revealed earlier, it was the uniform and what it resembles that attracted them to a career in the uniformed fraternity such as corrections. For many it portrayed an image of protection and instilling trust, especially in the communities they lived. This downgrade, as experienced by the FCOs caused uncertainty of where they fit in, impacting on the social processes within corrections, between members of DCS, as well as the offender population. Further to that it disturbed the collective acceptance that the status and responsibility of their uniform requires and provides. Representations that challenge, but maybe also highlight the suggestions by Brown and Toyoki (2013) and Suchman (1995) as made earlier, on the role of collective identity and cohesion, in many organisational settings provided by uniform, ranks, and insignia, and the consequent shaping of her work identity.

Maybe more significant than ranks and insignia is the concerning stories shared by the FCOs of inadequate uniforms. Some have only one proper, wearable set, others have sets as old as 10 years, dated and fading material, and ill-fitting attire. These officers work in an environment not known for its aesthetics, and clean immaculate, sparkling spaces. It is a harsh environment, sharing the same rough and hardened interior as offenders, that daily takes its toll on their uniform. This added to their feelings of disregard and negative imaging. It portrayed much of the character of the FCO by her expressions, what others on the outside might regard as dull, brown, unflattering, unimpressive attire, they prefer to wear it as long as the material is new, they have more sets and better fitting clothes to accommodate all body types. As some shared, they had babies in the past

10 years, some of their bodies have changed, and yet it is still expected of them to squeeze into those outfits.

The importance of her uniform, particularly as part of her external image, as extension of her identity, is, however, not the case for all FCOs, since some prefer not to be seen in public with their uniform. They feel exposed, some feel ashamed, and prefer to take it off as soon as possible to enable a quick transition from an officer to an ordinary citizen or family member. Even though FCOs may share the same duties and settings, as presented by Ashforth & Mael, 1989, as discussed in a previous section, how their identity shapes how they attach meaning to all aspects of their work-life is unique. These representations confirm that, in some sense, they define themselves in the process of constructing their identity. An aspect also suggested earlier by Smaldino (2019) on the process where individuals accept only parts of the organisational symbols, characteristics, or social codes.

Apart from the different expressions shared by the FCOs above, most reiterated that while working with offenders, this unflattering brown attire becomes a shield against her femininity. Her uniform becomes an essential tool of power and protection. Officers are often impersonally called by, or named 'the uniform,' and where some may find it insulting, most participants in this study reported that they regard it as a sign of respect. This proverbial armour is worn proudly on the outside as well. Their uniform carries a dual significance as it becomes an extension of her identity and upholding a specific image of respect, status, but most of all trust.

4.8 Conclusion

The FCO's identity is framed and shaped by her individual lived work experiences and the mature and knowledgeable manner she regards her different roles in the corrections fraternity. It is in the multiple roles and shaped work identities, as elaborated on in previous discussions, that her unique contribution lies, and where she finds and attaches meaning to her work-life. Evident of the above, representative of the voices of the participating FCOs is echoed in, "*You will hear different stories from different women in correctional services because each one has a different role to play*" [P10].

This study, among other, revealed how the FCO understands the traits she shares with her working environment, as well as the offender population she supervises. She acknowledges outsiders' views of the FCO, encompassing of her psychological, intellectual, and emotional capacities. She is often described as stern and cold, confined, marginalised, and institutionalised, aspects also reported on in research by Lombardo (1989). Through their reflections on these views, the participating FCOs display exceptional self-knowledge in how they successfully position themselves as proudly female, competent CO, serving colleague. Attributes that support findings by Oyserman et al. (2012) as predictors of an individual being conscious of how to manage and direct her behaviour, attitude, and emotions. Further to this is the ownership the FCO takes of the different roles she performs. Journeying with the FCO, she displayed a unique ability to challenge the stereotyping FCOs face, and move beyond the discourse that restricts her, towards a person that makes a difference.

In my discussion on the findings, I highlight different aspects of the FCO's daily operations. Through their representations, I address the primary research question concerning how the work-life experiences of the FCO shape her work identity, as well as the secondary research question relating to the contributions the FCO feel she can make in her work environment. Through their shared narratives it became apparent that their work-life experiences further extend to their lives outside of work, as it became evident that the boundaries often unconsciously get blurred. Different identities evolve with the diverse role expectations of the FCO that require considerable effort to balance all at once. Often, it seems that the shaping of the FCO's work identity causes it to become holistically embedded in their lives.

Resulting from the findings of this study and ensuing discussions support the factors influencing and impacting the construction of the FCO's identity in the workplace, as suggested by the SIT by Tajfel and Turner (1986). These aspects were further elaborated on in relation to concepts of macro- and micro-levels according to which identity formation operates (Brown & Toyoki, 2013). The findings also illuminate her unique contribution and the meaning she attaches to her work-life experiences. Relevant factors highlighting the findings were reported on by a discussion of the main themes identified, such as the *Correctional centres as social institutions*;

Correctional centres operating as separate communities; and how Being different becomes her saving grace. Subthemes identified were discussed under, *The social spaces we share* and *My institutionalised self*. Further factors shaping the multiple identities of the FCO include the attributes of the FCO and subthemes, such as *Emotional Labour, Vigilance and Resilience*, and *My Uniform ... the fabric of which I am made*.

In the following concluding chapter, a summary of the significant findings will be presented, further to that aspects for future studies, recommendations, challenges and limitations of the study will be discussed. This will be followed by my reflections on this study, where after the dissertation will be concluded by highlighting some notes of significance to give voice to the FCO as participants in my study.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In this study, I engaged with 17 FCOs from DCS stationed at the Kgoši Mampuru II Management Area in Pretoria, South Africa. The objectives of my study were to determine why these FCOs chose a career in the correctional services, known to be a male-dominated environment, supervising a problematic offender population, in the face of daily adversities and risk. Further, I set to explore what meanings the FCO attaches to the lived experiences of her work-life. These objectives were addressed by means of a primary question relating to how FCO's work-life experiences shape her work identity to match the demands of her occupation. The secondary questions regarding how the FCO sees her role, contributions, and unique identity in her work environment.

Following an interpretive phenomenological analysis methodology, informed by the Social Identity Theory (SIT), the findings of this study presented three main themes that address the research questions. The first theme, the *Correctional centres as social institutions*, secondly *Correctional centres operating as separate communities*, and the third theme *Being different, becomes her saving grace*. Subthemes identified to further assist in answering the research questions, respectively, under the first and second main themes are, *The social spaces we share* and *My institutionalised self*. Significant factors shaping the multiple identities of the FCO also include the unique attributes of the FCO, highlighted under subthemes, such as *Emotional Labour, Vigilance and Resilience*, and *My Uniform ... the fabric of which I am made*. It is important to note that all the themes are interrelated, and the essence of all factors combined, contribute to answering the primary research question.

From the findings of this study, it was determined that it is multiple, multifaceted, and layered identities that construct the work identity of the FCO. As posited by Brown & Toyoki (2013), this formation takes place on a macro and micro-level, where macro-level refers to the institutional factors that regulate the functioning of the FCO, such as policies and procedures. On a micro-level, this formation relates to the more complex elements, such as the social constructs and culture of the organisation, as well as how the FCO positions herself within her work environment, her daily

routines, and interactions with colleagues and offenders (Pfaff, 2013; Steiner, 2008; Tracy & Scott, 2006). These multiple identities, as discussed in the previous chapter, that impact on the construction of the FCO's work identity include the *shared identity* as part of a newly created community they share, not only with colleagues but most of all with the incarcerated population. A community where both FCO and offender are part of an institution that regulates their conduct, time, and mobility. It is within this framework that another aspect of her identity is formed, referred to as an *institutionalised identity*. In this shared space, the FCO forms part of a social officer-offender society and form a *social identity*. This constructed identity enables her to navigate between the daily lives of the offender, their fears, dreams, and hardship, where her role extends from supervisor to member of a larger family.

These findings allude to another concept regarding the interrelatedness of the processes of work identity formation. A process where this formation is dependent on the different work, group, and social contexts it takes place, resulting in an *interrelated identity*. This is an approach that acknowledges the different interactional group processes involved in the daily work lives of the FCO. In a study on a specific part of society, such as women as CO, one cannot omit to address gender and how it is presented in the construction of the FCO's work identity. Gender indeed forms a more substantial part of the FCO's identity, as some features were highlighted in earlier discussions, however, this was not the focus of the study, nor was it a comparative study between genders. The participants reflected that they acknowledge the characteristics of their gender, being part of a marginalised group, and the often stereotyping of women, and more so of women working in the correctional fraternity. My findings, however, revealed how the FCO's endeavours are not to use gender as a disadvantage or excuse, neither does it define her discourse as female or as CO, but that they instead embrace being different. From their shared lived experiences, the FCO expressed how they apply their *gendered identity* and otherness as a unique advantage, contributing to her career as an officer in the corrections fraternity. Thereby she establishes her work identity as competent CO, who adds value to correctional services.

An important aspect from this study yield that the shaping of the FCO's work identity is not a set hierarchy of importance, or where one level is more prominent, nor is it a step by step process.

It, however, consists of a combination of interrelated factors that contribute to a sociological understanding of the processes, influences, and elements involved in constructing the FCO's work identity, a notion also expressed by Kelle (2001).

5.2 Recommendations and Challenges

Some challenges the FCO face include the reality of the environment and the mandate they are expected to adhere. The space participants were interviewed in, could not be the exact same for all. Understandably, not all participants were able to leave their posts for an hour without another CO relieving her. Staff shortages had to be envisaged and managed within access and the timeframe allowed, being mindful of stringent security measures, rules, and procedures that had to be maintained. Arrangements were made to interview them at their posts, where one had to deal with continuous noise and interruptions. As a researcher, this stretched my abilities, but allowed me to adapt to and facilitate changing situations. The gatekeepers, together with all participants, are commended on their professional conduct and assistance during this process. The FCOs participated enthusiastically, which contributed immensely to my skills and to grow as a researcher. The challenging environment and different situations they experience gave tremendous insight into the reality of the FCO's daily lives and operations. I believe, being part of this journey enriched this research and its findings. It is understood that correctional services are governed by strict protocol and ethics in terms of access and research. However, research in the form of ethnographic studies, physically sharing in the daily shift of the FCO will be most significant.

The matter of staff shortages was highlighted throughout the study. This, however, does not only impact on the safety of officers but also on that of the offenders. It further affects the rehabilitation of offenders. As one of the COs' roles, to facilitate various rehabilitation interventions, this poses serious challenges given the supervise of offenders and ensuring everyone's safety.

In terms of sample size, 17 participants for a phenomenological study was larger than usually recommended, due to the nature and intensity of such research method as well as the amount of data collected. Even though the data collected were voluminous, and added to the time to transcribe, read and reread, analyse, and code the information collected, I am grateful for the

opportunity that it was indeed possible. It brought new dimensions and depth to my research. It required one to think on your feet and adapt where necessary that contributed to my growth as a researcher. I believe a smaller sample would not have done justice to this unique population and my questions on how the FCO shapes her working identity or the contributions she adds to the corrections fraternity. It echoed that the FCO share characteristics, ambitions, and beliefs, but also highlighted their differences, that contributes to their value for correctional services.

This study was conducted in one facility, Kgoši Mampuru, in both the male and female centres. My findings did not demonstrate significant disparities in the characteristics and identity shaping of the FCO, between working with female or male offenders, apart from their approach to, and with whom they prefer working. Future studies could be conducted focusing on both the male and female offender population to compare the FCOs' functioning and explore similarities or differences in constructing work identities. It is also recommended that studies be extended to other correctional centres in SA, to compare the findings and determine whether a particular correctional centre shapes the challenges, traits, and factors contributing to the identity shaping of the FCO.

Since the focus of this study was on the FCO, it excluded the male CO in the sample. Although reference is made to the male CO and one had to tap into research on mainly the FCO's male counterparts, it would be interesting to determine whether similar factors apply in constructing the work identity of the male CO. It would furthermore be significant to find which characteristics the male CO possess of, and how this differ from the FCO. Comparative studies could be useful to establish the coping strategies the male CO apply and whether they share in the meanings attached to their work-lives. The value would lie therein to highlight each group's attributes and provide greater acknowledgement for the imperative role of particularly the FCO.

A further contribution I hope to make with this study is to facilitate change where attributes by all role players complement each other, thereby taking the corrections fraternity forward into an era of combined effort in contributing to a positive image of correctional services. This could, in turn, lead to among other the efficient management of the offender population, and a more proactive approach towards rehabilitation, by increased engagement with outside role players.

Attempting to facilitate such endeavours, I wish to provide some recommendations on aspects I found to be significant in my study, most of which have already been elaborated on in previous chapters of this dissertation.

As a first step by particularly highlighting the FCO's valuable role and attributes through reporting the findings of this study to DCS. Ideally, this should be escalated beyond correctional services. It is further important to create awareness to a broader public audience, corporate organisations, and the media, of the reality of the highly unpredictable environment, and diverse roles all COs must perform. Further to that, contributions the FCO add to the corrections fraternity that extends to the outside community as well, should be shared. The recommendations I wish to make entail the following:

5.2.1 Realising the reality of the CO's work environment

Correctional centres are unconventional workplaces. Apart from its harsh, unforgiving architecture, COs are confined behind fences and locks for most hours of the day, similar to the incarcerated population.

The public, and often DCS as well, hold some perceptions of the risks and dangers to which the COs are exposed. These adversities, however, impact on various levels of the COs work-life. It is more than the physical dangers they fear. From the FCOs' reflections, it became apparent that their confined working environment, coupled with a highly problematic incarcerated population they deal with daily, has a more significant psychological impact on them. The FCOs experience immense strain and trauma from the emotional labour they must exert daily. They, however, always mask these feelings from management, colleagues and offenders, by remaining calm, composed, and in control. She is expected to be the stern, resilient officer to empathetic carer for offenders, all emotions, and roles that can fluctuate within a minute. Their vigilant, tough exterior becomes an inseparable part of her identity, extending to her life outside her workplace.

- **Recommendations relating to the above include:**
 - Interventions should be introduced to relieve the FCO, indeed all COs, from the consistent

adverse environment and events they are exposed to that cause trauma and impact on their physical and psychological well-being. Due to the unconventional work environment and the population they serve, debriefing, and sessions on managing trauma-related facets of their work must be arranged and allowed on a more frequent basis, and not only after some event occurred. To merely go home after a stressful or traumatic day does not assist. Since the internal psychology and social services are not to the avail of employees, apart from employee assistance programmes, it is recommended to make use of service providers outside the employ of the specific centre to facilitate such interventions. These services can include other government services available, universities can be engaged for a possible agreement to avail their social and psychological services, as well as voluntary organisations, can be utilised.

- A further recommendation is to capacitate the officers to work with an unpredictable offender population, particularly those with mental disabilities, psychological disorders, and other negative psychological dispositions. The reality is not all offenders who are predisposed to such challenges are appropriately housed, which adds to the potential risk faced by officers. The psychological effect of incarceration is an aspect to be addressed, as well. It is not only those known to be mentally or psychologically challenged, but any person can, at some stage, experience severe adverse effects of incarceration (National Research Council, 2014), and officers must be prepared accordingly. The view is held that a pro-active approach will empower COs with the necessary knowledge and ability to perform their duties with confidence, thereby eliminating unnecessary fear of the unknown.

5.2.2 Acknowledging the unique attributes of the FCO

From this study it was significant how almost all participants view their career in corrections as more than a job. Which initially might not have started off as such, developed in a passion to serve, to gain knowledge of the population they supervise. From the statistics represented in the diagram in chapter 3, of the sample in this study 53% have obtained a tertiary qualification, 12% are still busy studying, and 17% are embarking on furthering their studies. The field of studies relate to among other social and human sciences and all expressed they wish to better equip themselves for their career in corrections, to progress to a higher ranking as officer, and some to the correctional official dispensation.

As an organisation DCS should embrace the pool of skilled and educated calibre of FCOs in their employ. In this regard the FCOs who participated in this study voiced the need for DCS to realise their commitment towards DCS and their wish to build a career in correctional services. They request an acknowledgment of the contributions they attribute towards the fraternity, the diverse roles they diligently perform, and their ability to remain resilient and vigilant in a challenging environment.

- **Recommendations I wish to present with regards to the above would be to:**

- Encourage FCOs by facilitating more training interventions such as workshops in human resources, interpersonal relations, practical communication skills focusing on officer-offender relations, conflict management, with the focus on matters between colleagues and managers, and stress management relating to their direct and indirect work environment.
- Refresher training on topics like their initial officer's course offered. Most FCOs mentioned the benefits of the initial officers' orientation course, how they still tap into what they have learned, but that revision on various aspects covered will be beneficial. Topics of importance include reading or analysing offender behaviour, essential criminology, sociology, and psychology, self-defence, and conflict resolution.
- Support towards their development regards tertiary studies as well.
- A significant finding was the positive attitude the FCOs have towards the rehabilitation of offenders. This, irrespective of the daily challenges they experience with the population they supervise. It is suggested that their views and opinions on matters of rehabilitation be considered. Since they are in daily contact with offenders, their practical experience could contribute to the rehabilitation programmes. This will benefit not only offenders but also DCS and the larger society.
- One aspect that the FCOs emphasised, as a matter of concern, was their uniform. Participants revealed the importance their uniform resembles towards their image, the status and pride it reflects, and the protection it offers inside and outside the correctional facility. Shortage of adequate uniforms, inappropriate sizes, and worn-out material of very old sets portray FCOs as unkempt, uncomfortable and neglected. Some views were expressed that apart from losing their ranks and insignia, inadequate uniforms are just as demoralising. This might be resolved

by obtaining a report and inputs from all FCOs regarding the issues of their uniforms to determine their concerns and needs.

- Other views articulated by the FCOs was that they often feel as invisible as the offenders. It is the opinion that the FCO should be assured that her contributions are valuable, to regard her as an asset to the DCS. Her loyalty should be acknowledged, as expressed by some participants, unlike some offenders who will leave eventually, they are there to stay because she chose to, and build a career, not because she has nowhere else or better to go. Some perceptions often presented of COs by the media, public, and even offenders.
- It is believed that the above could be achieved by making effort to acknowledge the professionalism the FCOs portray through their shared narratives during this study. To commend the positive impact the FCO has on corrections, her attributes, and the diverse roles she performs. This would be possible by allowing them to provide inputs on issues of concern, supporting her endeavours, inputs, and development, by allowing her to be more than a ‘warden’ or ‘guard’. To make it clear to offenders, who often undermine her status and value, due to her not being rightfully acknowledged, that she is not a mere turn-key, but regard her as a competent, qualified change agent.

Some ways to achieve this would be by creating greater awareness of her contributions, through improved networking between DCS and researchers, academic institutions, students, members of society, and other relevant organisations. Thereby illustrating the interrelated disciplines and approaches, that can only be achieved through shared knowledge, understanding and co-operation.

5.3 Reflection and Conclusion

During this study, together with the literature research required for this dissertation, various perceptions were formed of the FCO. As mentioned in the previous chapter, FCOs often operate on the outskirts, almost quiet and invisible workforce. She has, however, established herself as an indispensable asset to corrections. Although from representations by some participants, they feel their attributes are not often acknowledged, they are not left despondent. In my journey with the FCOs, they carried themselves as determined women, that embraced their characteristics not as indifferent or stereotypical, but rather uniquely different. With this study, I gained insight into

the FCO's world that comprises multiple realities. Her ability to construct and reconstruct her work-life and the strategies she applies to meet the demands of her job was explored. Insight was also gained towards the valuable contributions they can make to enhance their diverse roles as FCO.

From the personal recollections shared by the participants, it was clear that many of their characteristics developed over time. My interactions with the FCOs determined them having a keen interest in the social and human sciences. Furthermore, many were exposed to the correctional fraternity from a young age, either by family members, friends, or partners. Many started afraid and unsure but soon realised that they had to decide to harden up and stay, or instead leave. During conversations with FCOs that have fewer years' service, it was interesting that their careers started very similar, and they already shared the sentiments articulated by the older FCOs. I realised that this maturity forms part of their traits and identity that must have been part of their inherent make-up. It is, however, when placed in this job and environment that it is harnessed and developed. It is indeed, as some echoed, that this is not a job for everyone, in some instances, corrections chose them, in some instances they chose to be here and stay here, and this is where they are shaped and grow.

It might also bring us a bit closer to an answer to the question posed by Liebling, Price, and Shefer (2011) in Chapter 1 of this dissertation, namely, "What makes a good officer?" During this study I realised that it indeed takes a unique calibre person. Further to that, the role of the FCO fraternity is paramount. As the findings of this study emphasise, it adds value to DCS in many areas. Through my journey with the FCO and from their shared work-life experiences, I echo the sentiments by (Liebling, Price & Shefer, 2011, p. 1) that "It must be a pretty hard balance, because I mean you've got to try and develop your interpersonal relationships with others so that you can control an environment without resorting to violence every minute of the day".

Exploring the diverse work environment that the FCO operates in, displays the various aspects that ultimately contribute to shaping her work identity. It became evident that the FCO manages to position herself within a complex group. From the representations made by participants, the

FCOs illustrated that they indeed defined their place within this space. Her identity is firmly shaped in a newly established society, dependent on other group members' cooperation and respect (Smaldino, 2019). In a society and environment often characterised by threats and risks, they manage to establish boundaries and to balance the different roles and responsibilities expected of them.

Concerning one of the FCO's primary responsibilities, the work-life stories shared by them is reflective of a positive towards rehabilitation, and a firm belief that most people have some good in them. These FCOs revealed an exceptional capacity in understanding that the offenders' lives stretch beyond their cells, and they are more than their crimes. Of value was the unexpected discovery of factors that were found to play a significant role in shaping the work identity of the FCO. Aspects found to play a significant role is among other the correctional environment, and before journeying with them, I did not realise the restrictions they are bound to, on their freedom and time. This aspect draws on a dynamic relationship I found in this shared space. One of a newly created community where members, from worlds apart, become part of a most unlikely group. Where communication, socialisation, and sharing in life's turmoil and heartache becomes a new reality. It is almost as if partnerships are formed to cope every day. However, although they are part of this society, it was striking how competent the FCO sets boundaries, with a no-nonsense attitude.

From their narratives, some presented earlier, the FCO displays maturity in her approach towards her work and the offenders. She is clear-headed and knowledgeable about the population she supervises. Most participants also obtained qualifications in various human sciences fields, which adds much to the calibre of the officers that DCS employs. These are attributes, very few outsiders are aware of, which emphasises some misconceptions of COs and correctional services held by the public. The participants revealed that they are aware of the negative publicity the corrections fraternity and its officers receive and voiced their embarrassment, but also disappointment in the unfair stereotyped representations and perceptions. Some examples in this regard were highlighted earlier.

Further unanticipated findings, found to be significant, are the characteristics of the FCO to be

mostly under emphasised or acknowledged, even during my literature searches. This study revealed an amendable ability the FCO possess to navigate between her diverse roles. In a working day, she continuously adapts from strict officer and autocrat to almost mother figure and protector. All this while supervising a most challenging population who, within seconds, can change from an understanding, co-operative person, to an aggressive and dangerous offender. In this regard, the FCOs shared incidents that always require of her to be on high alert. She displays resilience and vigilance that one would associate with members of typically the armed or uniformed forces such as the military, police, and security. The difference is that she is in constant contact with the offenders, sharing the same space. The stories shared by the FCOs revealed many events where her acute observational skills of the smallest detail, actions, objects, behaviour, or body language of an offender held her out of harm's way. However, more so, participants reflected how they remain responsible for the safety of offenders, therefore their diligence in this regard. Even though the FCOs acknowledge their vulnerability, all voiced that this does not compromise their ability to perform optimally and that a CO's work ultimately relies on teamwork.

This resilience alludes to other important facets relating to the adversity she is exposed to daily and the emotional labour it requires of her. In performing her duties, she has to mask herself and her emotions. She acts out a role in keeping with the confident law enforcer, undisturbed by the risks that surround her. It was only after sharing the work-life experiences of the participants that I realised the strain this requires from her daily. Furthermore, it brought another dimension regarding the impact of her work, that it extends beyond the work environment. It impacts on her life outside, in public, and with her family as well, where she never lets her guard down. She remains vigilant, suspicious, and protective, even when stripped of any insignia or uniform.

Evident from the FCOs' reflections, through the course of her career, it reveals a woman consciously on a journey of self-discovery and continuous transformation. They alter how they perceive themselves, explore the meanings they attach to her experiences, and come to crucial self-knowledge, in that way establishing her work identity, aspects also alluded to by Harrison (2018) earlier in the discussions.

The voices of the FCOs resonate with the foundation of the SIT in terms of identity formation,

in that it is a social, holistic, and continuous process whereby individuals are actively embedded in all their lived experiences, as theorised by Daher, et al. (2017) in an earlier section. Her identity is shaped by day-to-day experiences and the meanings that she attaches to it. The FCO's identity as reconstructed by her stories and reality, is intertwined with her environment and situational context, as well as social and professional interactions. The group affiliations she forms, as well as the values, beliefs and ambitions she shares prove just as important. Regardless of how unconventional the relationships might seem to an outsider, this carries significance in the FCO making sense of her world. In an environment where the FCO and offender are often perceived as similar, they evidently form an almost symbolic alliance, where both become insiders of this shared space. The latter contributed to a better understanding of the role of the FCO and the factors that construct her work identity, thereby building on existing knowledge in a broader context, but particularly in a local and national context.

In a highly unpredictable environment, the FCO must be rehabilitator and often counsellor, but must still portray an image of stern law enforcer, upholding tough security measures, a no-nonsense attitude, and is often portrayed as being apathetic towards offenders. By keeping up appearances and with no sign of wavering she successfully navigates her different roles in this harsh and unforgiving environment, which is what illuminates her unique role and contributions to the corrections fraternity.

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APPENDIX A

Ref. No: PERC-17032



Ethical Clearance for M/D students: Research on human participants

The Ethics Committee of the Department of Psychology at Unisa has evaluated this research proposal for a Higher Degree in Psychology in light of appropriate ethical requirements, with special reference to the requirements of the Code of Conduct for Psychologists of the HPCSA and the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics.

Student Name: Tanya Pieterse

Student no.: 7832141

Supervisor: Prof. Eduard Fourie

Affiliation: Department of Psychology, Unisa

Co-Supervisor: Ms. Bianca Parry

Affiliation: Department of Psychology, Unisa

Title of project:

Keeping Up Appearances: Female Correctional Officers Shaping their Work Identity in a South African Correctional Centre

The application was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Department of Psychology on the understanding that –

- Any and all formal procedures that need to be followed to gain access to the participants and to obtain information for the purposes of research, as required by Department of Correctional Services, must be adhered to, and that the relevant authorities will be informed of the scope of the research.
- All ethical conditions related to voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality of the information and the right to withdraw from the research must be explained to participants in a way that will be clearly understood and a signed letter of informed consent will be obtained from each of the participants in the study;
- No official records will not be consulted or used for research purposes without explicit consent by the participants involved.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Prof P Kruger".

Date: 4 October 2017

Prof P Kruger

[For the Ethics Committee]
[Department of Psychology, Unisa]

The proposed research may now commence with the proviso that:

- 1) *The researcher/s will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.*
- 2) *Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study, as well as changes in the methodology, should be communicated in writing to the Psychology Department Ethics Review Committee.*
- 3) *An amended application should be submitted if there are substantial changes from the existing proposal, especially if those changes affect any of the study-related risks for the research participants.*
- 4) *The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study.*

Please note that research where participants are drawn from Unisa staff, students or data bases requires permission from the Senate Research and Innovation Committee (SENRIC) before the research commences.



correctional services

**Department:
Correctional Services
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

Private Bag X136, PRETORIA, 0001 Poyntons Building, C/O WF Nkomo and Sophie De Bruyn Street, PRETORIA
Tel (012) 307 2770, Fax 086 539 2893

**Ms T Pieterse
132 Venter Street
Capital Park
Pretoria
0084**

Dear Ms T Pieterse

**RE: APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE DEPARTMENT OF
CORRECTIONAL SERVICES ON: "KEEPING UP APPEARANCES: FEMALE
CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS SHAPING THEIR WORK IDENTITY IN A SOUTH
AFRICAN CORRECTIONAL CENTRE"**

It is with pleasure to inform you that your request to conduct research in the Department of Correctional Services on the above topic has been approved. Your attention is drawn to the following:

- The relevant Regional and Area Commissioners where the research will be conducted will be informed of your proposed research project.
- Your internal guide will be **Ms Z Radebe: Principal Psychologist, Kgoši Mampuru II Management Area.**
- You are requested to contact her at telephone number (012) 334 3457 before the commencement of your research.
- It is your responsibility to make arrangements for your interviewing times.
- Your identity document and this approval letter should be in your possession when visiting.
- You are required to use the terminology used in the White Paper on Corrections in South Africa (February 2005) e.g. "Offenders" not "Prisoners" and "Correctional Centres" not "Prisons".
- You are not allowed to use photographic or video equipment during your visits, however the audio recorder is allowed.
- You are required to submit your final report to the Department for approval by the Commissioner of Correctional Services before publication (including presentation at workshops, conferences, seminars, etc) of the report.
- Should you have any enquiries regarding this process, please contact the Directorate Research for assistance at telephone number (012) 307 2770 / (012) 305 8554.

Thank you for your application and interest to conduct research in the Department of Correctional Services.

Yours faithfully

**ND SIHLEZANA
DC: POLICY COORDINATION & RESEARCH
DATE: 14/03/2018**



Consent Form for Participation in a Research Study

Keeping up Appearances: Female Correctional Officers shaping their Work Identity in a South African Correctional Centre

Description of the research and your participation

You are invited to participate in a research study by me, Tanya Pieterse, currently a student conducting the study to fulfil the requirements of the Masters Degree in Psychology (with specialisation in Research Consultation) at the University of South Africa (Unisa).

The aim of the research study is to explore the work life experiences of female Correctional Officers and how this shape her work identity to match the challenging demands of their profession. The research study will focus on female Correctional Officers, currently employed, with three to five years experiences in a South African correctional centre, who have been involved in the direct supervision of offenders, and who would preferably be able to communicate in English. Should language pose a problem provision will be made for an interpreter.

Participation will be facilitated by **Ms. Z. Radebe, Principal Psychologist**, who will assist the researcher in the logistics of the process.

Your participation will involve an interview of a duration of approximately an hour to be conducted at a convenient time and venue at your work centre. The interview will be an informal session, discussing your work experiences as a female Correctional Officer. Questions that will be discussed include, why you chose this profession, how do you see your role in corrections, what characteristics do you possess that enable you to perform your duties effectively, how do you shape and develop your work identity to meet the demands of your job, what challenges do you face daily, and what contributions do you feel you can make to better your work experience and environment.

Participation in this study is voluntary and your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the Department of Correctional Services. The information gathered from these interviews will only be used for the research study. If you decide to participate in the study you will be provided with an information sheet to keep, and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

There are no known serious risks associated with this research. During the interview, should you at any stage feel not to discuss any specific matter, you are free not to. By sharing some of your work life stories you might find yourself becoming emotional, and should this happen and you wish to acquire counselling or psychological support, you will be provided with details in this regard. Alternatively, support and counselling services are available at the Unisa Psychotherapy Clinic. To secure an appointment you may contact the clinic at 012 429 893, or you may sms your details to 079 724 3591.

Although there may not be immediate or direct benefits resulting from your participation in this research, the knowledge and insight gained from sharing your work experiences, will be of great value to add to the broader knowledge and understanding of the work life of female Correctional Officers. Your participation will provide you the opportunity to tell your stories of your real work life experiences, challenges and ideals with the hope of making your voice heard.

Your identity will not be revealed in any publications resulting from the study and you will be given a pseudonym (false name) of your choice. The interviews will be audio recorded, transcribed and analysed. The recorded interviews and the transcripts will be kept in safe keeping for a period of 5 years. Only those involved in the study will have access to the transcripts and will have to sign a confidentiality agreement. The transcriptions will be included in the appendix of the final work with any identifying remarks and names changed.

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Committee of the College of Human Sciences, Unisa. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish. Feedback regarding the study's outcomes will be made available in the form of a report to all those interested.

Contact information

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please feel free to contact me on 0827771089 or on my email address at tanyapiet247@gmail.com.

Should you have concerns regarding the research or how it has been conducted, you may contact my Research Supervisors, Professor Eduard Fourie at fourime@unisa.ac.za and Bianca Parry at biancarochelleparry@gmail.com.

I want to thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Kind regards

Tanya Pieterse



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Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150
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APPENDIX D

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person conducting the study who requested my consent to participate in this research has, informed me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had it explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings.

I agree to the recording of the Interviews.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname _____ (Please print)

Participant Signature _____ Date _____

Researcher's Name & Surname _____ (Please print)

Researcher's signature _____ Date _____

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Biographical information

1.1 General Information regarding:

Age, marital status, family composition, any children, education level, qualification, language, place of birth, ethnicity.

2. Work experience:

2.1 Prior to corrections and current:

- Corrections experience, period, centres (male or female centres), town and province.
- What did your duties entail?

2.2 Career as Correctional Officer (CO):

- When and why she decided on a career as CO.
- What does your duties entail?
- First impressions as CO.
- Training as CO.
- How do you experience your work environment?
- Challenges experienced in your work life.

2.3 Professional relationships with:

- Colleagues, male and female COs.
- Offenders, male and female.

2.4 Experience as female CO:

- Describe a typical day-in-the-life of a CO.
- What do you enjoy most about your work?
- How do you see your role as CO?
- What is your experience being a female CO. How were you received as female CO? If any negative experiences, how did you deal with it?
- How would you describe or characterise your identity (*will explain*) in this particular challenging environment?
- How do your abilities, competencies and attributes differ from your male peers?
- How do you think and/or feel you are perceived by your male colleagues and male offenders?
- What emotional adversities and life risks do you experience in your work?

2.5 Contributions:

- What contributions can the female CO make to the rehabilitation of offenders?
- How do you think, can you change the negative perceptions towards female COs?
- What contribution can this study make to a better understanding of the female COs work life, to give more prominence to their work, and enhance their role as female in this environment?