



# **Comparative study into the under-representation of women in the police**

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***This report was completed for 2010-2011 Fulbright Police Research Fellowship  
awarded by the US-UK Fulbright Commission***



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## 1. Summary

The inclusion of women as police officers was a predicament from the start, the further question of promotion and latterly the under representation of women within the police rank structure is a relatively new concern but its existence is no doubt evident. In England the Sex Discrimination Act was introduced in 1975 yet gender disparity still exists. This may be apparent at entry level, within specialist roles, or in relation to the virtual absence of women among senior ranks within the Police service.

The concept of a glass ceiling for women is a vast area of research in both business, and within uniform services and will be further explored in relation to problems encountered by women. This will position the notion of the glass ceiling within current thinking and developments proposing the concept that the glass ceiling has now morphed into a Labyrinth.

The engendered environment of power/control discourse is challenged by the presence of women. This is overlaid with the consideration that, during the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the rules and procedures applied in relation to the inclusion and recruitment of women was formed by the male leadership in power - the reluctance to afford women complete equality was assured in this period of development of society, of business and industrialisation.

Quantitative data will be presented with the addition of qualitative data from the perspective of serving women officers in Sussex police and Los Angeles Police Department. This data illustrates developments in equality for women both within the promotional structure and in affording opportunities for specialisation.

## 2. Introduction

### 2.1 Created Barriers - Historical perspective

The Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), U.S.A. were the first police force to have sworn female officers – the first being Alice Stebbins-Wells who held badge number 1 in 1910. But, this did not bring with it any parity to the male officers' role, and was essentially the same function as that being performed by the unsworn women being included in England's police service.

In England the Police service in its initial form, as Metropolitan peace keepers, reached the point where women were deemed an essential inclusion in 1913 in reaction to 'White Slave Traffic'. Margaret Damer Dawson, in 1914, was to be the founder and organiser integral to the establishment of the women's police service. This was responding to 'the traffic of young girls sold for the private delectation of rich and dissolute men' with the use of the already established 1885 Criminal Law Amendment Act, which 'included strong measures to suppress this type of procuration for prostitution'. But responsibilities went further to include dealing with women and children issues. The necessity of policewomen was that they could be most effectively used in the following way:

- 1) On the streets: to prevent solicitation of respectable women on the streets. They would not hesitate to approach a policewoman if annoyed.
- 2) In certain places of amusement, especially in parks and open places.
- 3) In police stations and courts.<sup>ii</sup>

The enlistment of men as soldiers for the First World War had depleted the number of men available to operate as police officers, so women were filling this void as in almost all areas of employment.<sup>iii</sup> The situation caused 'the consequent need to draw upon the reserve of female labour'<sup>iv</sup>. This can be overlaid with the event of first wave feminism which had emerged from enlightenment thinking.

Developing this furthermore, the role was extended into what amounted to security patrols in munitions factories, and in the vicinity of military camps.<sup>v</sup>

The inclusion of women in the police was on the basis of their gender difference, as stated by Jackson<sup>vi</sup> 'women possessed specific qualities and skills that made them experts with children'. This was based on the gender construct of women as maternal.

The same concept of women's inclusion based on difference is explored in detail from reports at the time trying to provide justification for women in policing and the benefits to the community. The Home Office had minuted in a report in 1913 that 'these women who are mostly of the suffragette type would say they were prepared to discharge any police duties whether they are fitted to do so or not'. This produced the understanding that 'the appointment of female constables at the beginning of the war was seen very much as a temporary volunteer matter, not to be put on a permanent basis' <sup>vii</sup>.

Following this, in 1914 the Criminal Law Amendment Committee in London put forward a resolution 'urging the appointment of women police constables with powers equal to those of men constables....'. This was with the assertion of the chairman that 'men were not always competent for the multifarious duties placed on police constables. With women police there would be less of red tape, a little less brute force and a little more humanity.....' <sup>viii</sup>.

When positioning this at the turn of the twentieth century, it can be understood as Jackson <sup>ix</sup> discusses that 'while policing may be seen as an appropriate line of work for a son, there were mixed feelings where daughters were concerned', this was further engendered in the domestic arena by Jackson with an excerpt from an interview with a serving police woman 'mother was delighted and supported me all the way; father was very worried and concerned...'. At that time it was still considered that the woman's realm was the domestic sphere and her involvement in decision making and politics was a relatively new concept.

The past lack of acceptance from the father may stem from the notion that patriarchal control was being expressed in a verbal form albeit the rules in existence actually permitted a woman to commence in the role, only should her father agree. The need for her father agreeing to embark on a job as a woman police officer was imperative as the woman was generally still living within her family. As soon as a woman married she would no longer consider remaining in the role of woman police officer, therefore freeing her to fulfil her wifely duties and become a house maker.

Times were changing and a report on Police in the Manchester Guardian in 1916 with the headline 'New Force for New Needs' discussed that

'women were used not because of a shortage of men, but because  
some police work could only be done properly by women.

Attention was drawn to the changing social life of the nation; women  
were taking their places in public, commercial and industrial life' <sup>x</sup>

A further example of resistance against the inclusion of women as police officers can be found in 1922, when a review was conducted on national expenditure and women police numbers were cut from 112 to 24 in the Metropolitan Police. The Home Secretary at the time held the view 'their work... was not police work, no matter how noble'. <sup>xi</sup> This demonstrates how the segregated nature of women's policing, based on difference, may have hindered the recognition for the need of women officers to be involved in all aspects of policing, having narrowed down the effectiveness of the women's role to dealing with women and children issues.

In 1930 the Home Secretary standardised pay for police women and specified women police officers main duties as

'patrolling, duties in connection with women and children found  
missing, ill, destitute or homeless, or in immoral surroundings,  
taking statements from women and children and dealing with  
female prisoners' <sup>xii</sup>

The duties laid out would not change until the commencement of the Sex Discrimination Act in 1975.

The Second World War followed only twenty years after the end of the First World War (which was still in the living memory of many women who had previously taken on voluntary roles), again calling for the need of British women to step into the breach and fulfil useful tasks outside the sphere of the family unit. This created an increase in women police officers from 282 in 1940, to 418 in 1945. <sup>xiii</sup> There were also the 3000 unattested Women's Auxiliary Police carrying out driving roles, clerical duties and canteen work.

The work of the auxiliary was expanded to include keeping order. Latterly a further 342 women would be attested to perform all law-enforcement duties<sup>xiv</sup>. This could be seen as a turning point for appreciating the significance and impact of women's police work for society.

Jackson<sup>xv</sup> asserts however, that

‘during both the First and Second World War, women’s increased involvement in the policing of the home population was positioned in terms of women’s war work: undertaken for the duration only and in relation to a feminine duty to serve the nation’.

Worldwide events had little impact on the utility of women in the police in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, be that in the United States, or England – women’s participation or, in some instances, paid employment as an officer was still not readily accepted by the male dominated government.<sup>xvi</sup>

Jackson<sup>xvii</sup> conversely positions women’s entry into policing during this period of time as an ‘accelerator of social change’, that women’s inclusion was not through consultation but out of necessity which concurs closely with evidence presented by Carrier above.

## **2.2 Gender difference**

Gendered binary thinking was explored by Schulz.<sup>xviii</sup> She states ‘not only does the work world segregate jobs by sex, but parents, schools, guidance counsellors, and the media send messages about what is an appropriate dream for members of each sex’. A summary of this perception was proposed by Simone de Beauvoir<sup>xix</sup> when she states that ‘one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman’. This reinforces the concept that as children we are trained into our gender, from birth, through schooling, and in our homes by adults - resulting in the person that we inevitably become.

Furthermore, the role of women in the police was challenged as a ‘feminist argument about the legal rights of women and children..... soon blurred with protective arguments about moral propriety and traditionalist viewpoints, which demarcated the sphere of social/welfare work as feminine’.<sup>xx</sup>

Feminist thinking supports this notion asserting that 'gender is so fundamental to hierarchical structure that alteration of the gender order tends to threaten the hierarchy itself'.<sup>xxi</sup> This threat to the hierarchy is apparent and significant when considering the promotion of women into positions of rank (and power) within the Police. If women are promoted to decision making positions, as managers of men, and equals to men the male dominated hierarchy may be diluted.

The view relating to women in the home is referred to by Clement and Myles<sup>xxii</sup> where they suggest the reality that 'the subordination of women in the household was reproduced in the relations of power in the capitalist firm..... it also incorporated social forms derived from the patriarchal household'.

Furthermore it was identified that women had the burden of the 'double day'<sup>xxiii</sup> relating to the fact that the patriarchal organisation of the household meant that women were also unpaid domestic labour in their own homes; over and above taking a position in working society. The notion of patriarchy was still quite apparent but can be seen to have altered somewhat since. It has been suggested by Clements & Myles<sup>xxiv</sup> that

'this traditional patriarchal society no longer exists, if only because the particularistic distinction between the public and the private sphere has been eroded, first by employment trends and the..... nation-state's welfare interventions in the private household/family'.

This can be seen to observe Engels and Marx notions around women's participation in the workplace and that it would free them from their private sphere of 'domestic slavery'.<sup>xxv</sup> However Clements and Myles expand on this which then contests the Marx and Engel's theory around the labour power of women. The freedom of women through their labour power, suggested by Marx and Engel's, is seen to be a repeatedly debatable matter. It is furthermore disputed by Rowbotham<sup>xxvi</sup> as she proposes that 'the labour of the worker and his wife is appropriated, the one directly, the other indirectly, by capital whilst only that portion of their labour is paid (via the man)...' This does not afford any form of freedom to the woman in relation to work she carries out in the private sphere. In fact the proposition that any work completed in the household as having any value, whatsoever, is denied by Rowbotham.<sup>xxvii</sup>

Clements & Myles declare the modern form of control as neo-patriarchy in that patriarchy as a form of control has not vanished, just that its visibility is diminished in its method of application. This was looked at under the term 'gendered institution' further adding that 'gender is present in the processes that create differential outcomes for men and women'.

This will be explored below, viewing qualitative data gained from serving officers. The concept of 'gendered institution' is present in policing and will be explored against the challenges that the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 placed on policing to operate what Jones proposes are informal practices as a means to circumnavigate around the formal.

Clement & Myles<sup>xxviii</sup> further state 'women's subordination in the labour market – the public sphere – is an effect of their subordination within the household'. Examination of this aspect is shown to relate the problems encountered by women in employment, in the Police and within their homes.

Societal expectations were also viewed in that men have 'careers'. This was further explored by Jackson<sup>xxix</sup> during interviews of women who had served as police officers from 1940s and 1960s 'women who were interviewed found it difficult to answer the question as to whether they had seen their work as a job, a career or a profession' this was overlaid with the issue of marriage and having children. The concept of policing being seen as a career or a job for women was also reviewed by Jones<sup>xxx</sup> where during an interview a male officer stated

'I don't think the majority of policewomen have decided to make this a career. It is a job, maybe for ten years, maybe for fifteen years, maybe for five years. But to them it is a job, whereas to a man it's a career. As I say I'm totally committed to the job until I'm 55'.

Representation of women in terms of reporting and TV dramatisations presented negative connotations of women in careers and of women police. For example a 1956 issue of a women's magazine called Life was focussed on the 'new' American woman, the typical 'career woman – that fatal error that feminism propagated' with a story of a woman

'so masculinized by her career that her castrated, impotent, passive husband is indifferent to her sexually. He refuses to



take responsibility and drowns his destroyed masculinity

in alcoholism' <sup>xxx</sup>

This kind of media portrayal did not assist in attracting women into careers or in gaining support from their families in pursuing a career. Friedan <sup>xxxii</sup> continues asserting that, in America, 'career woman has become a dirty word'.

Women in the police in Britain had increased by 1971 to 3884 officers (nationally) which was 3.9% of the total national police strength. <sup>xxxiii</sup> This was still on the basis of differing conditions, pay and restrictions on shifts, still remaining the case even though the Equal Pay Act had been established in 1970.

There is the narrow view that is reflective of the ideology that women will chose marriage and children over having a career. What is a career in policing terms will be explored in more detail, but the concept of a woman having a career was not a new phenomenon in 1975. Betty Friedan <sup>xxxiv</sup> discussed the concept of career in 1963 affirming that 'career meant more than a job. It seemed to mean doing something, being somebody yourself, not just existing in and through others'.

Loftus <sup>xxxv</sup> discusses the idea based upon difference that women 'stand out' which gives a sense of vulnerability. This was presented by Holdaway <sup>xxxvi</sup> in that

'minority ethnic, female, and lesbian and gay officers stand forth  
as visible emblems of the new diversity paradigm and, for the most  
part, continue to be repositioned as 'outsiders' within'.

This suggests that the very differences which originally made women necessary within the policing community are the same differences which may affect their acceptance. Jackson <sup>xxxvii</sup> discusses how 'women's involvement in the police service was won on the grounds of gender difference rather than equal rights' to perform specific social roles.

Bringing research into the current day Blok & Brown <sup>xxxviii</sup> examined the masculine domain of policing, viewing the gendered role, but they also look at the public view as well as the Police perspective. They found that the public prefer a male officer for physically demanding incidents and women officers for sexual or domestic issues. Blok & Brown identified that the police officers surveyed acknowledged few gender differences being

presented other than women officers sought advice more and followed procedures rather than being spontaneous.

Jones<sup>xxxix</sup> puts forward the suggestion that ‘...the organisation of police work, the disturbance to family life caused by shift work and irregular hours is a relevant factor’ although Jones furthermore adds and explores further, in that other professions such as nursing do not suffer from the same wastage of females to the same extent as the police service.

An alternative comparison to this, again from the field of psychiatry, was presented by Dutta et al<sup>xl</sup> in reviewing the under-representation of women from senior positions within medicine, declaring that ‘various reasons have been put forward, for example the lack of high-ranking female role models or mentors and a reduced rate of career progression for women’. This observation is on par with findings offered when reviewing the success of women within the police service.

Policing, and indeed most employment has been historically engendered, this notion has become destabilised in terms of industrialisation and changing market demands for staff, which when explored in relation to the impact on policing provides the starting point for the inclusion of women in the police not as equals, not with equal powers (to men) but with their own specified unit or, as put by Jackson<sup>xli</sup> their ‘special sphere of usefulness’ based on gender difference.

A further aspect which falls outside of my proposal but I feel does directly link can be seen in research conducted into women in the police in 1996 by Price<sup>xlii</sup> in New York. It was found that gender had an impact on women in the policing environment, but interestingly Black women felt their ethnicity was more a factor for discrimination over their gender (consider in New York 30 per cent of female officers were Black). The same can be said of the double bind aspect of being a lesbian in the workplace which is an area of research currently being undertaken by Stonewall but not available at this time.

Once women had proven themselves as capable, the issue that then raised its head was the inequality in pay, promotion and contract conditions.

Above is a brief example of events in the UK with areas where the US events can be seen to relatively match. The requirement of men to participate in wars in the 20<sup>th</sup> century was instrumental in the initial inclusion of women in the police service (both UK and US).

Without this requirement it may have been a longer period of time before women were deemed necessary and considered able to perform the role of police officer. Women proved they were capable and therefore won ground in establishing their worth to the police service and communities. The theories that have been explored are in order to elicit an understanding of the dissonance that was present at the time, and that persist to this day albeit on a subliminal level.

### **2.3 Problems encountered by women in their employment in the Police comparing the U.S.A. and Britain**

The Civil Rights Act 1964 was passed by US congress providing that discrimination was forbidden on the basis of sex and race, for hiring, firing and promotion.<sup>xliii</sup>

In the UK, the Equal Pay Act 1970 was passed, followed by the Sex Discrimination Act 1975. The Sex Discrimination Act forbade discriminatory practices based upon gender and furthermore held that there would be no discriminatory treatment on the basis of marital status. However, the marital status and associated prospect of impending motherhood certainly impacted on women's inclusion in the workplace, including within the police service.

Martin <sup>xliiv</sup> identified that women '...as police officers are in positions of both power and control, not roles which are readily accorded to women in society in general'. This sums up many aspects surrounding women's acceptance as equals in the police, be that the opportunity for recruitment and progression, or simply in terms of the conflict between women's perceived maternal nature and the appalling reality that she may face violent situations which had been historically the domain of men.

Policing can be seen to have made advances since the inception of women's departments, with acceptance from both within the ranks and in terms of governmental approval. The same cannot be said for the US military. In 1973, (after the establishment of the Civil Rights Act 1964) the inclusion of women in the military had not even emerged to any level which could be seen as inclusive. Head of the US space council stated

'we've never sent any woman into space because we haven't had good reason to. We fully envision, however, that in the near future, we will fly women into space and use them the same

way we use them on earth – and for the same purpose’

Added to this was the statement from John Glenn (astronaut and later US senator) ‘men go off and fly the planes and fight the wars and women stay at home’.<sup>xlv</sup>

Further exclusion was evident when considering the backward reasoning given by NASA who believed that ‘all astronauts should come from the ranks of the military jet test pilots’ however during the period women were not allowed to fly planes in the military, clearly creating a complete prohibition on women’s participation.

The above example can be used to contrast women’s representation in policing within senior ranks and specialist departments whereby institutional discrimination was manifest, that specific set requirements were mandatory and yet at the same time precluded women’s participation. Some departments are virtually devoid of women, and in general women are under-represented throughout policing, especially at entry level in Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD, U.S.A.). LAPD have created a system in an attempt to overcome the shortfall in female recruits and recruits from minority groups with their Candidates Assistance Program (CAP). CAP provides for potential recruits to attend the police academy one evening a week (and receive payment) in order to train and practice in areas of new recruit training to assist them in achieving success, both as a candidate and a future police officer.

Jones<sup>xlvi</sup> proposes that

‘...the police service is a male-dominated organisation  
(both numerically and culturally), but it bears the responsibility  
that social order, embodied in the Rule of Law, is maintained.  
The symbolic imagery associated with this order-maintaining  
function, and in the law-enforcement role, reflects and  
reinforces the belief in the ‘natural order’, in which men are strong  
and women are weak and need protecting’.

This suggestion is evident when reviewing all aspects within the police, from the point in time when John Peel developed the police into the basis which is still perceived as its

current function today. Women's departments were seen as essential, albeit they were not on equal terms to the male roles. This provided for the consequence that the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and the Equal Pay Act 1970 were seen to be troublesome.

Jones<sup>xlvii</sup> highlights that gender can affect a women's desire to enter into a police career. Jones differentiates between the U.S.A. as law enforcement and Britain's police as peace keepers stressing that 'there are some compelling similarities in the policing sub-cultures of the two countries, there are some cultural differences deriving from the unarmed...' This unarmed nature, Jones explores further, adds to the predisposition of the male officer to view women officers in need of protection and, therefore, their responsibility. This protectiveness over women in past terms was clearly evident in this research reviewing the integration period of 1975 from separated spheres of work to that of combined units.

To be in the situation of being suitable for promotion within the police has the prerequisite that firstly women are recruited, and secondly that they are afforded the same opportunities as male officers to enable them to obtain a skill profile suitable for promotion and the role of management.

Research presented by Jones stresses consistently the divergent nature that exists within the police. This was presented in terms of police policies (–the formal way), and police practices (–the informal way). The informal way dominates in as much as it is how things get done in reality. This is viewed from one point, such as advertising for police recruits to encourage applications in England with the by-line for this (in 1982) being 'Does the man make the job? Or does the job make the man' situated beneath a picture of a male both in uniform, and in civilian clothing. Jones exploration at this early phase identifies how even subtle messages such as this are inadvertently saying to women that they are not welcome, that they don't fit in.

Jones research describes the application and interview stages, this was highlighted with statistics to support the fact that women were looked over for employment, presenting interview comments from recruitment officers who based their opinion on whether she was involved in sports or was married as a basis to shortlist a female candidate. The informal practices are blatantly illegal, and were so in 1975 but persisted at the local level. A further discussion point was on the informal practice of keeping women officers down to less than 10 per cent of the total officer numbers, this was acknowledged as desirable by recruitment

officers interviewed within her research but the practice was denied due to it being unlawful.<sup>xlviii</sup>

Along with this are the statistics of female officers employed from 1975 to 1982, during this period the 10 per cent mark is only exceeded once, in 1982 by West Midlands Police.<sup>xlix</sup> Did this occur by chance or were there illegal informal practices sustaining the below 10 per cent figure?

After recruitment of police officers in England and Wales they were required to attend a twenty week residential course at the Police Training Centre (PTC), this requirement alone weeded out women who were mothers, and many women who were already married from considering policing as a career.

The women who could join were invariably in their early twenties and single, this provided for the fulfilment of the prophecy that they would marry, have children and leave the police, treating it as a job not a career – a sentiment expressed to Jones frequently during her research.

Attendance at residential training was a requirement in England which continued until 2007 when a Home Office review deemed the training obsolete and not fit for purpose. At the closure of PTC's each individual police service (43 in England and Wales) created and designed their own Student Officer Course – this could provide for some Counties to censor success of women further from the view that discriminatory practices were previously more evident at the local level rather than as set within national regulations and directives.

The treatment of women officers when recruited also provided for prejudice behaviour at the local level based on their gender. A point stressed to Jones<sup>l</sup> by a male police inspector in relation to selecting individuals for specific duties was that

‘you would stop when you came to a WPC (women police constable) name, you would stop when you came to the name of somebody who is perhaps a probationer or a PC that you consider not to be too good at his job’.

This is an appalling view evidencing that women were not used to their full abilities or even considered to have any, perhaps seen as a liability rather than an equal, or an asset within a department.

#### **2.4 Masculine Domain and Patriarchy**

The idea that women could perform the same roles as men within the police was disputed widely at the point of amalgamation. Jones<sup>ii</sup> states that

‘the notion that women are able to perform the same duties as men challenges these basic concepts and threatens to undermine the masculine identity and social importance of this apparently masculine controlling role’.

This presents a stance that was pertinent in 1975 which was the working opinion of serving officers. Jones<sup>iii</sup> continues, further proposing that

‘the actual composition of police work may well give credence to the argument that the fears stem as much from a threat to male self-identity as from genuine concern for the welfare of female officers’.

This seeming concern for the welfare of female officers was far reaching not just verbalised as apprehension but manifest in practise.

Jones research identified that women (traditionalists) who were employed prior to the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 perceived that ‘senior supervisors did not want to expose women to the seedy side of life...’.

However the newer women (modernist) employed after 1975 viewed that ‘in most instances the barriers to women’s entry were seen to be based on men’s reluctance to allow women into their domain’ and therefore this would have further ramifications in them being deemed fit for selection for other roles and for their promotion prospects if their experiences were not such to make them suitably qualified. This is of major relevance when at the time the supervisors making the decisions were male.

A further fact which warrants discussion is that (in 1975) ‘...just under 12 per cent of all male sergeants and inspectors favoured a fully integrated role for policewomen’.<sup>liii</sup> This obviously provides that 88 per cent of male sergeants and inspectors were not in favour of the women’s police departments being amalgamated within the existing departments staffed by male officers – these will be the supervisors of the women when they do arrive, meaning that they may be treated unfairly due to discriminatory practices employed by their first and second line supervisor at a local level. Jones details this further<sup>liv</sup> stating that ‘59 per cent of the male sergeants and 65 per cent of the male inspectors felt that police women should be given different duties’ providing further assertion of the protective male in addition to the male who is suffering an environmental identity crisis. This was not an expression without foundation, Jones adds that this was evidenced by the fact that

‘a higher proportion of women of all ranks felt that supervisors did in fact employ women differently. In fact, 70 per cent of male inspectors said that supervisors do employ women on different duties’.

These practices were by the front-line supervision and were apparent in terms of deploying women to carry out duties such as routine station administration, pairing-up of women officers with a male colleague and for use in dealing with women victims and children.

This factor created unseen barriers to a woman’s progress, furthermore creating envy and resentment from male officers who on occasions did wish to be on administrative duties or working within juvenile units on a Monday to Friday rota.

Jones<sup>lv</sup> states that ‘it is apparent that integration has not resulted in a greater number of promotions for female officers (despite their greater representation in the total workforce)’.

Naturally, the starting point of 1975 in Britain for women’s equal standing in the police produced an insufficient amount of suitably qualified women to enter into the promotion procedure, but as discussed by Jones<sup>lvi</sup> the change of role for policewomen at this time was contentious and resulted in swathes of resignations from women who did not wish to be engaged in the full remit of policing duties, and conversely from men who did not agree with the united structure.



Clement & Myles<sup>lvii</sup> suggest

‘women are absent from positions of power and privilege in the workplace not merely as a result of market forces and the pursuit of profit but because of men’s resistance. Like the Pope, men in the corporation and the union hall cling to the St. Paul’s teaching that women should not exercise authority over men’

This is an archaic view, however, it still continues but in less obvious and transparent ways, relating back to the ‘gendered institutional processes’ proposal of Clements & Myles.

A similar précis providing the account that the masculine domain itself is to blame for women’s under-representation was offered by Young<sup>lviii</sup> stating that

‘women are structurally excluded from policing... but gender is not unproblematically part of the structure... the problem can be best summarised as the gendered claim to sole ownership of the rights of social control’.

Clements and Myles<sup>lix</sup> relate the public into the private suggesting that

‘the residues of traditional patriarchy are also evident in domestic practices that privilege men’s participation in public life over that of their female partners.... when women, but not men, turn down opportunities for employment or career advancement because of family responsibilities’.

Developing this Heidi Hartmann states that

‘control over women’s labour power is the lever that allows men to benefit from women’s provision of personal and household

services, including relief from child rearing and many unpleasant tasks.... patriarchy's material base is men's control of women's labour'<sup>lx</sup>

This observation is continued by Clements & Myles<sup>lxi</sup> where they declare that 'restructuring the domestic sphere is a contested terrain for patriarchal powers. At stake is not only the empowerment of women but a challenge to the privileges that have empowered men'.

Jones<sup>lxii</sup> succinctly puts it 'she is more likely to be a homemaker first and police officer second' although the research conducted by Jones asserts that 'there may be important factors other than marriage and child-bearing which influence female resignations'.

The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 brought about changes that saw women's integration into all fields of policing (in theory), one point raised by Jones<sup>lxiii</sup> around this prospect was that

'the practical implications of integration...the difficulties inherent in combining child-rearing with working the same shift patterns as male officers, have been such as to adversely affect women's ability to pursue a career in the police service'.

Since the inception of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 women's positions and success within leading companies and organisations has altered very little in both private and public sectors. This is especially evident in finance and law. A current focus of the UK government looks at the fact that a fifth of the FTSE top 100 companies have no women on their board, an article in The Guardian<sup>lxiv</sup> identifies that the government wants the UK's largest public companies to ensure 25 per cent of their directors are female by 2015. This kind of target is all well and good and could provide vast opportunities that may otherwise not have come to fruition, however, the question of whether women wish to aspire to these senior positions needs to be considered, and explored in relation to research and obtained qualitative data from women employed within business.

When considering data for representation from 1975 to 2010 it is evident that within the senior ranks of policing (positions of power and decision making) women remain virtually absent.

## **2.5 Glass Ceiling or Labyrinth**

The concept that there are no visible limits to women achieving success and they may climb the career ladder without being restricted or hindered on their path is a point of contention. The glass ceiling purports that the limitations on women's progress are invisible and whilst it is true, a few women will achieve some success there is often a point in many sectors where she may progress no more – that her head has struck the glass ceiling restricting her further advancement.

The glass ceiling is explored by Kellerman and Rhode<sup>lxv</sup> to a point where it is being referred to as the 'glass cliff' relating to the precarious position of leadership where a woman's failure is monitored far closer than a man's to the degree of 'forgetting' successes which had been achieved and focusing on the prioritising of career over family casting a negative image on her abilities as a mother which are seen to be sacrificed to follow a career – an experience which men do not need to endure.

In many roles which have been, and still are, largely male dominated it has been supposed that women's lack of participation is due to 'choice'. This view was considered by Redfern and Aune<sup>lxvi</sup> where they state it is down to the perceived inability to 'reach the top'. This is summed up in that 'they face obstacles in reaching the top, for which gender is the only explanation... women are still treated as if they are out of place when working in jobs that have historically been done mostly by men'.

In real terms this often is noticeable with women performing at lower levels and at middle management levels on equal terms to men, but the hindrance that actually occurs is varied and has been explored in many academic texts and research. It is often perceived as lack of recognition of her ability from the (predominantly) male board or panel who conduct the process for selection to the executive or chief levels.

Selection methods are based frequently on methods that have existed for a considerable period and were originally generated by men who had in mind exactly what characteristics they wished to observe in their senior level workers, this fits with what was earlier referred to as 'gendered institutional processes'.<sup>lxvii</sup>

Carli & Eagly<sup>lxviii</sup> when discussing the success of women leaders assert 'women who advance must work harder and negotiate a more challenging path to leadership than men do'.

This could be seen as corresponding with Carli & Eaglys' 'Labyrinth' idea which is explored as a new concept, accepting that success is possible but the route is more varied and not as clear for women also recognising that there is more than one possible route.

The glass ceiling experience of Alison Halford, who was, in 1983, the first woman assistant chief constable (ACC) in England and Wales, can be deemed as pertinent as much today when she stated that

‘There came a point – and unbeknown to me I had now reached it – where only the men really belonged and women had better know their place in the scheme of things. So far up the greasy pole and no further... I had to prove and justify myself at every turn in a way not expected of my male colleagues’<sup>lxix</sup>

Alison's thirty year career in policing began with success, which soon dwindled when she achieved the position of ACC in Merseyside. Working with male peers and a hostile Chief Constable who made it abundantly clear to her that she did not fit in, this culminated in refusal to support Alison's progress. In the end Alison achieved a successful employment tribunal case against Merseyside Police for Sex Discrimination.

Kellerman & Rhode<sup>lxx</sup> present the impression of 'precarious pedestals' in relation to women who have achieved success being at an elevated level, those that are in a visible position who may have individuals just waiting for their downfall, even on occasions with allegations that women's success is due purely to gender – not on merit, presenting that

‘There is a subversive culture, a feeling: people generally don't feel part of.... On the face of it, it may appear like, and say the right things, and tick the boxes, and use photographs. Now it happens on a more informal basis (female inspector)’<sup>lxxi</sup>

It was later in Alison Halfords' career that she felt this about her position of ACC in Merseyside.

A further noteworthy case is the sex discrimination law suit against LAPD which began in 1973 on behalf of LAPD officer Fanchon Blake. Fanchon at this time, had twenty years experience but had been forbidden from taking the lieutenants exam by the chief of police - it was not an option for women whatsoever<sup>lxxii</sup>. This case was finally resolved in 1980 providing success to Fanchon and many other women officers who had suffered discrimination. Also, it served as a wake-up call for Los Angeles city, paying \$2 million dollars 'for recruiting and training programs aimed at women....' Further to this, the continuing disparity in officer gender in LAPD was examined by Mills<sup>lxxiii</sup> in an article in the Los Angeles Times she identified that 'the 20 per cent female goal should be reached in six to eight years'. In 2010 this figure had still not been achieved, female officers currently stand at 18 per cent.

## **2.6 Engendering of roles**

When consideration is given to the engendering of roles there can be potentially damaging results as discussed by Kellerman & Rhode<sup>lxxiv</sup> when discussing that

'by characterizing and stereotyping leadership traits as gendered,  
we ultimately exclude, misrepresent, mold, and polarize the  
sexes, and leadership in general'

Can it be surprising that stereotyping is used when the fact is policing was historically a male domain? And furthermore, women's inclusion in the field of policing was built inherently on the basis that men and women are different with differing aptitudes. Women had been ascribed the role of supervisor, but this would only be over other women within women's departments – never as supervisors to men. This was anticipated to change with the establishment of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 in the U.K. and The Civil Rights Act 1964 in the U.S.A.

The approach of gender separation was identified as negative by Kellerman and Rhode<sup>lxxv</sup> in that

‘a rigid adherence to gender demarcation can be inaccurate and counterproductive, helping women advance into leadership positions in one instance (in stereotypically feminine tasks, for example), but hurting them in others (stereotypically masculine tasks)’

Martin<sup>lxxvi</sup> refers to stereotyping of personalities in relation to assessment and congruence to expectation, asserting that ‘if women are criticized for aggressiveness but men are praised for assertiveness, perhaps the trainers should be examining their interpretation of stereotypical personality traits’.

In England and Wales the criteria examined for recruitment and progression of officers no longer relates to dealing with violence and hostility, being more focused on communication and public service.<sup>lxxvii</sup>

Heilman<sup>lxxviii</sup> points out specific traits ‘characterizing men as “aggressive, forceful, independent, and decisive” and women as “kind, helpful, sympathetic, and concerned about others” polarizes masculinity and femininity’ which is where perhaps women’s perceived natural traits do not offer the same level of leadership that perceived traits of men would in any organisational setting.

Martin<sup>lxxix</sup> provided an account from a senior male officer from Sussex on the question of why women were not participating in the promotion system

‘The whole set-up of the service is geared towards male dominance. The whole promotion system is time related, and the key period for promotion from PC to sergeant takes about four to five years. It’s about that time when our girls start to think about having a family... ...if we can’t get sufficient

numbers of females into positions of authority we haven't got  
a hope in hell of changing this perspective of male dominance'.

A male officer making the observation that visible representation is crucial for equality within all ranks within the police service validly identifying an area which is currently being reviewed.

Women's lack of presence within senior positions does not have only one cause. Jones<sup>lxxx</sup> asks the polarised questions of whether 'women officers are consistently less able or ambitious? Can their lack of progress through the ranks be attributed to a system in which their opportunities are restricted either deliberately or unknowingly?' Jones ultimately concludes that both hold answers to why women are not achieving promotions to match their increased numbers at recruitment.

### **3. Promotion process**

#### **3.1 Britain**

In Britain it is necessary to gain the permission and support of your supervisor to even take a promotion exam. The supervisor will make a judgement on whether, in their own opinion, the individual performs effectively and is ready to sit an exam for the next rank.

If this permission is granted and the candidate passes the extensive question paper, which is normally studied for over a six month period in one's own private time. Then there are further stages to overcome, such as panel interviews - for which, in high ranking promotions these being, almost exclusively, made up of males, as well as role play scenarios and work based assessments the criteria for all based on management in policing, and being pre-determined and, in theory, not open to debate. The sought after traits have been naturally devised to ensure that successful candidates are able to perform the role of manager successfully instructing, making decisions and giving orders to staff working with them in a team.

#### **3.2 LAPD**

In the LAPD (U.S.A.) the rank structure has incremental levels built in affording Police officers level 1, 2 and 3 allowing for gradual development before taking on supervisory roles. Later promotions in LAPD, however, are not so impartial, almost taking on a more

informal approach whereby success is more likely to be forthcoming with the help, support and say so of a 'sponsor' (usually a chief officer, commonly male). This 'sponsor' when approached will verify the suitability of the subordinate to attain the next rank. Without a 'sponsor' notifying on aptness an individual will be looked over and is unlikely to achieve their next rank.

### **3.3 Bias or impartial**

Both systems during different stages present the opportunity for bias to creep in, allowing managers the chance to exclude whomever they consider not fit due to motivations of their own creation.

The idea that having only men on an interview panel may impede the progress of a woman is clear when considering the following statement from Chief Alicia Powers, Hercules, California, Police Department, she states that 'I don't think I would have gotten the offer if a woman hadn't been the decision maker...' <sup>lxxxix</sup>

### **3.4 Role models**

Considering that the virtual absence of 'like' role models, in the sense that one often looks for a role model who in some way offers a vision of success whilst possessing similar characteristics or traits as one self, be that gender, sexual orientation, ethnic or cultural heritage. The availability of 'like' role models is great encouragement in instilling an attitude of self-confidence and belief. The idea was expressed by Martin <sup>lxxxii</sup> in relation to a particular unit which suggested the reason for their high proportion of women officers was 'the successful role models which particular women in the unit portrayed'. This is not suggesting that a male will not also be perceived as a role model, but the virtual absence of women from senior ranks within the police provides a message to a woman that she is not the same and may raise questions on whether she belongs. This is evident in a quote from a female police inspector about the gendered nature of her rank 'It's the little things. You go to a meeting, and you are the only female in the room. Or I get e-mails saying 'Dear Gentlemen'. You still hear people talking about officers being 'he'. <sup>lxxxiii</sup>



Martin<sup>lxxxiv</sup> presented respondent comments which support that women's virtual absence in senior ranks may be an issue, such as a female stating that

'it would be nice to have women in positions of power throughout the force. That would show WPC's coming in what's possible. We don't have any senior female officers on this division, I wish we did. Not many women take the exam, I don't know why'.

A quote from Chief Mary Ann Viverette from Gaithersburg, Maryland Police Department provides a positive sentiment gained by Schulz<sup>lxxxv</sup> that 'It's hard for anyone – woman or man – to become chief. I hope my presence will encourage more women to aim for the top...'

A quote received from a Sussex female officer supported the above discussion, stating that

'It seems like there aren't many women in rank. I think it's a vicious circle because there are so few, fewer women want to apply'

(Respondent 7/30/10 6:37PM)

Networking opportunities within the police are more often in social settings, maybe at senior level events where the chance to stay after and network over drinks is presented. This networking, which on the surface is seen as informal, is often used as a chance to make an impression amongst peers or more senior level management. The likelihood of any officer who has family commitments being able to participate in activities after hours is very restricted, this in general terms will relate to women and their mothering role.

Schulz<sup>lxxxvi</sup> 1998 survey of International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP, US) believed that 'it wasn't difficult for women to win promotions.... the biggest problem involving the promotion of women was that there were no women to promote'. This particular quote by Schulz albeit 13 years old is conceivably still reflective of the situation in the U.S.A. For example, LAPD has 18 per cent of their sworn officers that are female (2010), however, when viewing this suggestion against England and Wales figures it seems not to be the

case – Sussex Police has 30.23 per cent female, this being maximum at 33.86 per cent at constable level, dropping to 21 per cent for sergeant and further dropping to 18 per cent for Inspector rank (07/2010).

#### **4. Part-time working**

When beginning to view the idea of part-time working it is imperative to consider that in LAPD there is no availability for part-time working, it does not exist.

One LAPD officer response explored the concept further, stating that

‘I have always been interested in workshare program. LAPD loses a lot of women that want to raise their children for first 5 years and are left with no options.

I think we could keep a lot more women with this option’

(Respondent 12/8/10 7:04PM)

#### **4.1 Separation between home and work**

‘Women (and men) with exhausting sole home responsibilities have little opportunity to study and, as such, are not as likely to pursue promotion as those less encumbered’

(Respondent 7/21/10 2:47PM)

Rowbotham<sup>lxxxvii</sup> proclaims that ‘separation between home and work, together with the responsibility of women for housework and child care, serves to perpetuate inequality’. This can be more evidently seen when considering the fact, for example, that in Sussex Police 89.82 per cent of part-time workers are women (2010), almost without exception taking this part-time working status primarily to accommodate their role as mother.

‘Part-time work can..... hinder a woman’s career, since managerial positions call for all her time, while the part-timer is also excluded from further training

and other important activities that would help her

to mount the career ladder'<sup>lxxxviii</sup>

This is evident from one Sussex officers response, that

'Child caring responsibilities are in direct conflict in my experience with ability

to take on flexible roles and long hours/on call of more senior roles'

(Respondent 7/23/10 12:20AM)

This conflict was further provided as clashing with participation in promotion by a Sussex officer, stating that

'I get the impression that if you want promotion then you have to put the job first

and with a child on the way and going to need to work part time hours

I do not feel this is realistic'

(Respondent 7/22/10 3:33PM)

If a woman chooses to have children she is not taken seriously in terms of her career, she is not expected to wish to progress through the ranks, she is almost expected to choose to return on a part-time basis in order to accommodate her new role as mother – can the same be said for the father? Recent changes have, rightly so, enabled men to opt for 6 months paternity rights. But in reality how frequently is this taken up?

Enabling men to take up part-time working and paternity leave provides an opportunity for real change to be achieved. This kind of opportunity was suggested by Clements & Miles<sup>lxxxix</sup> to present an issue, in that

'restructuring the domestic sphere is a contested terrain

for patriarchal powers. At stake is not only the

empowerment of women but a challenge to the privileges

that have empowered men'.

Schulz<sup>xc</sup> provided a quote from an interview with a senior police officer which may be representative of a more frequently occurring situation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century that ‘her husband was not in policing and that he was not only willing – but able – to move to accommodate her career’. This was explored by Schulz additionally adding that ‘the impact of children on a woman’s career has intensified at a time when women seem to be avoiding hitting the glass ceiling by opting out of power positions, further detailing how ‘magazines and newspapers have focused on numerous professional women who have left careers to become full-time mothers or to work part-time from home – further asserting that ‘no one knows what the effects of these decisions will be for these women or for others who might follow them’. Indeed, this could be taken an element further asking what effects these decisions will have for women who may not chose to pursue a career for lack of female role models and lack of confidence in their own ability.

A pragmatic view was explained by a Sussex officer, that

‘Having made the choice to have a family they are my first priority. I physically cannot devote the same time to my career, hence part time, that I used to. There are those in the service who cannot appreciate this. I have chosen not to look to promotion as the pressures, time and change of roles would have an adverse effect on my family life. My husband is also a police officer and works full shifts. In giving flexibility I have ended up with a situation where we rarely spend time all together. As I see it, it remains a fact that women tend to be the major caregivers in a family and therefore many are never going to be looking to devote extra time to their career whilst nurturing young children’

(Respondent 7/21/10 11:55AM)

#### **4.2 Contentment in role**

This can be summed up by an LAPD officer, stressing

‘love what I currently do’

(Respondent 12/8/10 6:59PM)

This opinion was commonly expressed, furthermore by an LAPD officer stating

‘No need for additional stress, stress upon my family life: I live within my means:

I have no need for rank or increased pay’

(Respondent 12/8/10 7:27PM)

This concept was explored by Schulz<sup>xci</sup> in that ‘it is easy to have interesting assignments that cool the ardour for promotion or to get sidetracked onto glass walls as often as hitting glass ceilings’. This sidetrack appears to be frequently mentioned by police women who are happy in their current position and do not wish to progress upwards.

One LAPD officer expresses

‘(my) current assignment is very challenging, exciting and I get

exposure to a variety of assignments’

(Respondent 12/8/10 6:59PM)

Martin<sup>xcii</sup> provides a concurring respondent answer in relation to promotion ‘Not many women take the exams, but I don’t know why. Most of them seem to like the job that they’re doing’.

A Sussex officer response agrees with this sentiment

‘The biggest prohibitive factor for myself, is the fact that I would have to move

from a job that I really enjoy, and that suits my family life in order to go

for promotion, which there is no guarantee that I would get.

money is not everyone’s driver’

(Respondent 7/21/10 10:18AM)

Jones<sup>xciii</sup> explores differing career paths for women police officers suggesting that she may pursue one of three paths 'individual development within an existing role; movement between roles; and upward progression to positions of greater responsibility and power'.

To consider that a 'career' or 'success' need to be measured by promotion and power is narrow, Jones examination opens up the thinking around women's positions in the police, in that expertise in a specialised field do equate to success in terms of organisational efficiency.

A Sussex respondent concedes this factor, saying

'I don't think it is that well known that you can progress your career whether that be going up the ranks and/or changing departments and units. I think it is a positive thing especially for those forced to work part time due to having children'

(Respondent 7/25/10 5:34PM)

A further affirmation from a Sussex officer suggests that

'Any product resulting from this survey will need to bear in mind that some women like me simply do not want promotion or firearms etc..'

(Respondent 7/23/10 1:55PM)

#### **4.3 Dominant culture interrupted**

Loftus<sup>xciv</sup> discussed the idea of the dominant culture interrupted stating

'the widely articulated resentment, articulated by the prevailing white, heterosexual, male composition towards the increasing recognition of minority groups indicates that the challenges to the 'old' police culture remain partial. The narratives of

resentment and discontent represent, I contend, an aggrieved attempt hitherto hegemonic culture to retain its privileged position; they operate to preserve an increasingly endangered culture by subordinating the spaces of representation for emerging identities'

The dilution of the hegemonic white male culture would often be quoted as the reason a person does not achieve promotion, be that an Asian male or a woman, the visibility of difference is a challenge to the established regime.

This is often stated in a way to seem protectionist such as by Jones<sup>xcv</sup> saying 'underlying this protective attitude was the belief that police work is somehow unfeminine.... The duties of a police constable is contrary to all that is finest and best in women' which on the surface seems gallant but, alternatively can be interpreted as subconscious patriarchal control.

The discussion on patriarchal control and gendered institutional processes has been explored in order to allude to a rationale of why disparity still exists when any discriminatory practice has been unlawful for thirty six years. Reviewing the situation in the US and England and Wales provides a view that this issue is not isolated in the one – both countries have historically been under male administration and therefore women's inclusion was not considered. Women's presence in positions of power could be foreseen as creating disharmony to the hegemonic control, therefore resistance from the established male rule is guaranteed.

## **5. The issue of equality**

### **5.1 New training system**

At the demise of probationer training at Police Training Centres (PTC) in 2008, Sussex Police embarked on a partnership approach to educate new recruit police officers. This partnership was with the University of Brighton and provided an academic course for new police recruits, now calling them student officers. This partnership approach was revolutionary in that it differed from the arrangement being adopted by many other English and Welsh forces.

Sussex student officers would attend their most local University Campus, these being Bognor, Eastbourne and Falmer sites, therefore reducing the need for long distance travel

as was previously necessary when attending and residing at Ashford PTC in Kent. Also this course would be on a five block basis, consisting of 4 weeks attendance daily at University, followed by a practical performance element for each block at the Policing division to which the officer would be allocated. This pragmatic approach was praised by the Home Office for its integration of academic with practical performance providing police officers that are more able to serve the local communities. The daily nature of the student officer course naturally differed vastly from that which it replaced, providing the opportunity for candidates who may not have previously seen attendance for 15 weeks residential training as an option.

At a local level, in Sussex Police, one can on initial sight have an optimistic outlook which can be attributed to the daily attendance requirement of the student officer course. To consider that recruitment in 2010 provided 37 per cent of recruits which were female. The fluctuation per cohort meant that on occasions the individual class make up could consist of more women than men, a huge shift from previous figures.

Consideration on the success of the above discussion in terms of a process to increase women's participation in a policing career will need be delayed for future deliberation for the following reasons; the partnership approach was discontinued (November 2010) after funding/budgetary constraints sought more economical methods of training student officers, this being likely to be held in uniform on police premises which may not be so close to home and once again may restrict women's participation and, furthermore, the aforementioned cuts have also meant a complete halt to any recruitment at this point in time.

## **5.2 Departmental and promotional under-representation**

During 2009 a women's staff network called Evolve was established within Sussex Police, this group has been central in reviewing and consultation of issues which primarily, but not exclusively, affect women. They have supported workshops being held for supervisors to educate them on the policies of part-time working, on maternity and women's health issues. There have also been workshops held for staff members and male supporters relating to part-time working, confidence and leadership, and recently Evolve have been involved in the setting up of profiled mentors, and also are involved in setting up study groups for promotional exams.



Within Sussex Police there are specialist areas which remain virtually devoid of women. Examples of this are firearms and traffic, to name a few. During 2009 and 2010 several departments, with the support of Evolve, held open days to allow women to visit and discuss departmental specifics, or to try shooting a gun for instance. These had varying success; indeed any interest from under-represented groups would afford an improvement. However, this approach can not truly be seen to have had a substantial result. This leads to the consideration that women are just not interested in the perceived masculine roles, or is it that they feel they don't fit?

Martins<sup>x cvi</sup> study identified that it was considered the 'physical requirements for work such as PSU (police support unit/riot team) or firearms meant that there were limitations on the capabilities of some women, as there were in the same jobs for some men'.

Promotion within Sussex Police is not a manifestly biased process. It is a relatively transparent process, open to anyone who wishes to participate and achieves their supervisors support for their suitability. When considering the above presented figures, can the previous 3 years of partnership with the University be seen to have provided a huge increase in women wishing to undertake the sergeants' exam? - an option for any officer after their two years of success as a student officer. The straight forward answer to this is no.

An LAPD officer response in relation to promotion suggests the opinion that

'not worth the trouble. Don't want to go back to shift work'

(Respondent 12/10/10 10:56PM)

### **5.3 Promotion findings**

In a key findings report entitled Sussex Police Promotions 2008<sup>x cvii</sup> it was identified that the total candidate numbers for the June sergeants procedure was 109 of this only 18 per cent were female, interestingly only three candidates were not supported by their first line supervisor – two of these were women. The October procedure showed a marked difference in that 38 per cent of candidates were female. One factor that is significant is that women achieved a success rate of 70 per cent, which outperformed the male success rate of 61.8 per cent (this was reflected similarly in the 2007 report with over 80 per cent of women being successful compared to less than 70 per cent of males).

The next level of promotion is from sergeant to inspector, of the total candidates 14.75 per cent were women, with a success rate of 77.78 per cent (compared to the male success rate of 61.54 per cent). This would seem to support the notion that women try harder in order to ensure success, be that in studying for an exam or in performance in general.

Qualitative data provide by a Sussex female officer provides a couple of issues which have been specified previously

‘I personally feel that women can be promoted in the Police and I personally have never experienced any sexism. I do sometimes feel though, that as a woman, I have to prove myself and work harder than my male colleagues to be accepted.

This was very true when I first joined, 15 years ago, I felt that I had to prove that I wasn’t scared in confrontation incidents, so I always put myself forward, even if I was petrified! I sometimes feel that, (it may just be my perception)

female colleagues of rank can be more harshly judged than males’

(Respondent 8/4/10 11:14AM)

#### **5.4 Part-time affect**

Out of the total of 933 female officers in Sussex Police 203 are part-time workers this represents 89.8 per cent of the total number of part-time workers, therefore substantiating the fact that any matter relating to part-time working, in the main, is a women’s issue.

An internal career progression survey was completed in 2008 for female officers only – when asking part-time workers (question 8) their reason for working part-time 96 per cent of respondents stated that this was due to ‘Childcare responsibilities’.

Identifying that childcare is the main reason necessitating the part-time working status links with the suggestion of Clements & Myles<sup>xcviii</sup> around the requirement to restructure the domestic sphere in order to alleviate this issue.

This is interesting when identifying that LAPD does not operate any part-time working for officers – perhaps this is the reason their base level of women officers remains at less than 20 per cent of their officer total, with their target set at 28 per cent remaining unachieved. Indeed, this is not so surprising when considering that the UK document Women in Police<sup>xciix</sup> suggested that ‘implementing flexible working will happen only if managers at all levels in force are open to new ways of working and officers and staff know that alternative options are open to them’.

Part-time working was an aspect specifically considered of great consequence in increasing women’s representation within the police in a survey by Martin.<sup>c</sup>

The provision of part-time working can not be said to be without its own difficulties, these issues may not be for the person undertaking this working arrangement. The complications are more evident in the workplace, an example demonstrating this was gained from a women officer in Sussex (respondent 7/26/10,7:35)

‘As a supervisor managing part-time staff is problematic... full-time staff can be disadvantaged by always having to work unsociable hours that part-time staff can refuse to do’

And from a Sussex part-time workers’ view, that

‘you feel like a second class citizen. Many managers see no place for part-time working in the police and returning from maternity was an uphill battle’

(Respondent 7/27/10,8:13)

These expressed sentiments seem recurrent. Would these reactions suggest that part-time working is not in fact assisting with inclusion but exacerbating exclusion?

## **6. Comparative findings**

Within Sussex Police my devised questionnaire was electronically distributed to all female police officers.

LAPD refused to disseminate to all female officers due to political issues around renegotiation of the policing contract with Los Angeles City (conducted every seven years)

and concerns that my findings may stir up ill-feeling. Therefore, completion of LAPD female officer responses was on a personal approach and word of mouth basis, still eliciting a substantial response to enable a basic level of comparison, although it is appreciated this may not be an entirely random sample.

The following data is that which was gained from completed and submitted questionnaires.

Not all gained data has been provided, areas of disparity and analogous responses have been presented in order to present points of debate.

### **6.1 OFFICER AGE**

40.1% of LAPD respondents are 34-41 years of age, with 34.4% being 42+

32.9% of Sussex respondents are 26-33 years of age, and 32.9% are 34-41

This data provides for the assertion that Sussex Police female officers are within the younger age range which could prove an issue in the future if a percentage of these should/will have children, they may leave the force or request part-time working which is not an entitlement but on a departmental/divisional basis.

The following observation was provided by a Sussex officer

'I feel that being late twenties and married has affected my ability to specialise, as I believe those departments are assuming I would want to have children soon and therefore not get value for money from me (maternity / career break / part time), as they would a male of the same age. This has not been said directly, but I got this understanding whilst attending a recent interview'

(Respondent 7/21/10 4:36PM)

These figures identify that LAPD respondents were in the higher age brackets.

### **6.2 SERVICE**

38.9% of LAPD respondents have 13-19 years service

35.1% of Sussex respondents have 6-12 years service

This is in parity with the age of officers in 6.1, highlighting that LAPD respondents have longer service than the female officers of Sussex.

### **6.3 Ethnicity**

38.9% of LAPD respondents were Hispanic or Latino, with 26.1% being White

97.9% of Sussex respondents were White, with .7% preferring not to say

A result of this nature is only to be expected when considering the geographical location of Los Angeles in Southern California.

### **6.4 Sexual Orientation**

58% of LAPD respondents were heterosexual, with 35.7% being Gay/Lesbian

84.7% of Sussex respondents were heterosexual, with 9.5% being Gay/Lesbian

### **6.5 Caring Responsibilities**

63% of LAPD respondents have children or caring responsibilities

45.8% of Sussex respondents have children or caring responsibilities

More LAPD female officers have children/caring responsibilities without the option to work part-time.

A Sussex officer declares that

‘I worry that if I stop work to have a family, I might miss out on opportunities at work,  
or have to come back part time and lose the respect of my male colleagues –  
which in turn makes any promotion prospect slim’

(Respondent 7/26/10 8:47AM)

### **6.6 Specialist Departments**

29% of LAPD respondents work in detective role (which includes juvenile work)

22.3% of Sussex respondents work in CID

My own knowledge on this result is that LAPD detective role is, on the whole, on a condensed working schedule of Monday to Thursday on ten hour days, with rare on call responsibility (62% of LAPD respondents worked this particular arrangement). The benefit of a condensed shift pattern could also be viewed with the fact that more LAPD respondents had children/caring responsibilities than Sussex respondents (with the availability of part-time working status).

### **6.7 Consider a future in specialist department**

82.2% of LAPD respondents would consider a move into a specialist role

64% of Sussex respondents would consider a move into a specialist role

The larger number of LAPD respondents who would consider a move into a specialist department is not surprising in that the rank of Detective is a pre-requisite for some roles, resulting in specialising and promotion being linked. This can more clearly be seen below in 6.8.

A Sussex female officer asserts that

‘It could have possible ramifications on my family life by taking on  
more responsibilities at work’

(Respondent 7/27/10 9:50PM)

A further Sussex response highlights a personal view that

‘(I’m) sometimes made to feel less useful because I’m part time. I haven’t applied  
for specialist posts as I feel I would not be considered against a full time applicant’

(Respondent 7/22/10 9:37AM)

### **6.8 Reasons for joining a particular department**

39.4% of LAPD respondents were ‘due to interest in area of work’, with 38.7% stating ‘career progression’ as the reason

53.3% of Sussex respondents were 'due to interest in area of work', with 23.1% 'not interested in joining another department'

### **6.9 Not interested in joining another department**

37.5% of LAPD respondents stated that 'doesn't suit career plan', with 18.8% stating 'the effect on family/work/life balance'

36.1% of Sussex respondents provided that 'the effect on family/work/life balance, with 28.6% stating 'no interest in other type of work'

Both groups of female officers had high responses relating to effect on family/work/life balance being an issue for not being interested in joining another department. This result emphasizes a key factor for consideration by departments that are under-represented by female officers.

### **6.10 Success in applying for specialist role**

LAPD respondents expressed 'lack of experience' as the key factor for not achieving a specialist role

4.9% of Sussex respondents stated 'lack of experience' with 4.9% also providing that 'part-time working status' was the main factor

Within Sussex this response was not surprising and the reasoning that 'Part-time working status' as a factor causing lack of success can be seen in one Sussex officer quote that

'As a supervisor managing part-time staff is problematic. Training events  
sometimes extend beyond agreed working hours'

(Respondent 7/26/10 12:35AM)

### **6.11 Considering promotion**

81.6% of LAPD respondents were considering applying for promotion

37.7% of Sussex respondents were considering applying for promotion

The greater number of LAPD respondents considering promotion may again be linked to departmental specialisation as above 6.7 and 6.8.

One Sussex female officer provided the following statement, that

‘Promotion is based on opportunity and the culture of the Force.

Certain areas within Forces are still predominately male and will remain so as long as they are managed both at the top and in the middle by a majority of men. There is definitely a glass ceiling in certain Forces and this is due to the strong hold and control of promotion boards by males. Over the past 5 years excellent women have gone to other Forces and achieved their ambitions there which is great for them but leaves their home Force stagnant. I had rapid promotion under a chief constable but once he left the promotion and honest support from the next 4 Chiefs have been extremely poor and this is the case with many of my colleagues’

(Respondent 7/28/10 2:44PM)

### **6.12 Time frame for promotion**

73.9% of LAPD respondents are considering promotion in ‘0-4 years’

56.6% of Sussex respondents would consider promotion in ‘0-4 years’

### **6.13 Rank aspiration**

28.7% of LAPD respondents aspire to achieve ‘Police officer III/Lead Detective Role’, with 27.9% aspiring to reach ‘Lieutenant’ rank

34.9% of Sussex respondents aspire to achieve ‘Inspector’, with 22.6% wishing to ‘remain as Constable’

These results offer some similarity; however, the LAPD rank structure provides the opportunity to gain incremental promotion into Police Officer level II or III which provides a pay increase and different responsibilities and recognition as a senior officer.



#### **6.14 Part-time working in LAPD**

Working part-time is not an option within LAPD, when asking hypothetically if it was an option would it be taken 29.2% answered 'YES' with 56.5% answering 'NO'

The high proportion of negative response here may be attributable to the availability within the Juvenile/Detective unit of working Monday to Thursday on a ten hour condensed week.

#### **6.15 Working part-time would/does restrict one taking on the duties of a more senior rank**

54.2% of LAPD respondents 'AGREE', with 27.7% answering 'STRONGLY AGREE'

35.3% of Sussex respondents 'AGREE', with 26% answering 'STRONGLY AGREE'

Even though LAPD does not offer part-time working the respondents answered in similarly high percentages as Sussex respondents.

The following view was expressed by a Sussex officer,

'(I) feel being firstly a woman and then part time has a huge detrimental effect  
on promotion and prospects within the Police service'

(Respondent 7/23/10 6:20AM)

#### **6.16 Working part-time restricts career opportunities**

54.8% of LAPD respondents 'AGREE', with 28.4% answering 'STRONGLY AGREE'

39.2% of Sussex respondents 'AGREE', with 28.6% answering 'STRONGLY AGREE'

As in 6.15 the LAPD results are reflective of the Sussex Police respondents even without the opportunity of part-time working.

This raises the question of whether this is merely a perceived restriction from negative coverage portrayed by different media sources or whether it is based within reality and from personal experiences?

The demands of differing career opportunities was viewed by one Sussex officer that

'Certain roles require different commitments - some are not suited to women who  
have caring duties due to work times and the balance this has on the home life'

(Respondent 7/22/10 3:54PM)

## **7. Conclusion**

Brown, Hegarty and O'Neill<sup>ci</sup> were quoted in a Women in Police assessment paper proposing that 'research suggests that 35 per cent representation is where a critical mass occurs and women experience the least discrimination and greatest acceptance by male officers in the workplace'. Sussex Police currently has its level of female officers over the 30 per cent mark, with recruitment exceeding this (when in process).

A declaration from the Office of National Statistics stated that 'the glass ceiling supposedly holding women back is cracking up'.<sup>cii</sup> This claim has some basis, but still the areas identified in which women are reaching proportions around 35 per cent in management are conventional female roles such as in the National Health Service (NHS) and in education.

A Sussex respondent comment is in line with this suggestion, stating

'We are under-represented across the board in all aspects, but refreshingly we

seem to be having a positive increase in female recruits coming to the job.

Hopefully this will mean an increase in the number that push for promotion

or try for different specialist departments'

(Respondent 7/21/10 4:00PM)

The Economist<sup>ciii</sup> asserts that 'motherhood, not sexism, is the issue'. This is a U.S. publication but the facets presented can be overlaid with the experience of the UK working woman, in that when she has children her career prospects will become limited.

Progress and data when presented on paper provide a positive outlook, and indeed make evident the great strides of progress since 1975, however, inequality still continues within the police rank structure.

Police officers are recruited from the communities in which we live and should be representative of our communities. Findings of Blok & Brown<sup>civ</sup> suggest that the public perception of police may have as much to do with engendering the policing role stating that public preferences for officer gender for specific job types 'tend to follow gender stereotypes and lag beyond the reality of policing in practice'.

Comparing U.S. and English Police systems has enabled an overview that LAPD offers an example of incremental levels within their promotion structure. These increments could provide a stimulus for women to enter into further promotion if this structure was implemented in England and Wales. LAPD's opportunity for condensed working hours also has provided for what appears to be longevity in service of its female officers.

Conversely, LAPD could gain by recruiting more women and retaining female officers after maternity if the option of part-time working was available.

Any proposal would not be without issues though, as was presented by a Sussex respondent

'I think women are promoted fairly and if they are capable of carrying out the role they have applied for. There are of course less women in the Police force than men, hence less in higher ranking positions. I'm sure the fact that many women choose to have children can affect their promotion prospects, if someone has made it clear they plan to have a family whilst going through the promotion process then rightly or wrongly those promoting them may think twice about promoting that person.

It is a very old fashioned view but one that is still floating around'

(Respondent 7/26/10 2:04PM)

Women's role in the police service today is embedded; there are no areas of absolute segregation. Notwithstanding the fact, that, there remains departmental under-representation and only few women in the senior ranks of policing within Sussex and across England and Wales.

The components, discussed above, such as patriarchal control, motherhood and opportunities for progression being identified as not only upward but also sideways have been reviewed in this paper to broaden the analysis of promotion and specialising as a gender issue.

The explanation for inequality can only be cursorily explored as the components that can be taken into account on a woman's career are too vast and wide to elicit a single factor.

A succinct quote from a Sussex officer (Respondent 7/21/10 1:29PM) simply sums it up, citing that 'It's all too complicated!!'

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