

ANTICIPATING THE FUTURE: THE EARLY EXPERIENCES AND CAREER EXPECTATIONS OF WOMEN POLICE RECRUITS IN POST-FITZGERALD QUEENSLAND

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INTRODUCTION

Police Reform and the Recruitment of Women in the 1990s

In 1987 the Queensland government established the Commission of Inquiry into Possible Illegal Activities and Associated Police Misconduct. This action followed a period of mounting public concern over, and intense media coverage of, allegations of corruption in the state's police force (Dickie, 1989). The final report of the Inquiry, known popularly as the Fitzgerald Inquiry (Fitzgerald, 1989), made recommendations for reforms which addressed many aspects of police recruitment, training, management and operations. All political parties in the state had committed themselves to implementing the recommendations of the Inquiry and, when the final report was tabled in Parliament, moves to reform key areas of policing got quickly underway.

Among those areas which received early attention were police recruitment, preservice training and education. The Commission of Inquiry had devoted considerable time to investigating police culture. It found that the occupational culture which had developed in Queensland was characterised by an inward-looking sense of solidarity, defensiveness and isolation from public accountability. It was said that this police culture had spawned a "blue curtain of silence" (Lewis, 1990) which had supported the emergence of corruption and mismanagement over previous decades.

A key strategy for reform saw the introduction of a new tertiary level program of education and training. The development and implementation of the program would be shared by two participating universities and the Police Academy. In place of what Fitzgerald referred to as the Academy's former "military model of training", a preservice qualification of one year's duration was introduced in 1991. This award, called the Advanced Certificate in Policing, featured content in social and behavioural sciences, communications, law, professional ethics and competencies, and it was considered equivalent to the first year of an undergraduate degree in criminal justice (Lewis and Prenzler, 1993; Criminal Justice Commission, 1993; Bryett, 1992). Upon graduation and swearing-in, the design of the new program called for a further year of intensive field experiences for rookies under the supervision of experienced officers.

Thus, in the early days of the post-Fitzgerald reforms, much attention was paid to the training and education of the recruits. However, another important area of (potential) change emerged from Fitzgerald's findings on the place of women in the Queensland Police Force. While women had comprised 25 per cent of applicants, in fact an "informal process (had) operated to keep the number

of female police officers selected in any intake to between 5 and 12 per cent" (Fitzgerald, 1989 p246). Many misconceptions, the Inquiry found, were attached to beliefs about women in policing. For example, there was the common belief that women lacked commitment to a career in policing. On closer scrutiny it was shown that over the five years prior to the Inquiry a greater proportion of men than women had resigned from the Force. Moreover, those women who had resigned had served longer than the males who had resigned (Fitzgerald, 1989 p246).

Shortly before the final report of the Inquiry was completed, the Queensland Police Force, finding itself in an increasingly untenable position, introduced a policy which aimed to raise the proportion of serving women to 7 per cent (an increase from the then 5.4 per cent). This meant a target was set at 20 per cent women in future recruit intakes. Commissioner Fitzgerald disagreed strongly with this type of "affirmative" strategy, reasoning that,

... the emphasis should be upon recruiting the best possible applicants for police service. The introduction of an inflexible female quota system for initial training intakes is unlikely to achieve this. Special programmes may be necessary to attract qualified applicants who may not otherwise consider a police career. This will result in the recruitment of people better suited to the crime prevention emphasis of the Force, irrespective of sex, race or religion (Fitzgerald, 1989 p246).

Recommendation C11(c) of the final report called for the "removal of past restrictions on the recruitment of women" and placed the emphasis on recruiting the best possible applicants for police service (p382). The subsequent removal of "past restrictions" opened the way for married women and those with children to become police officers as these were groups formerly denied entry to the police force (which soon after the Inquiry was renamed the Queensland Police Service).

Once past quotas and restrictions were removed, female recruitment rose to one-third of total entrants to the police service. The rapid increase in the numbers of women entering policing presented an opportunity to explore gender-related issues as these touch on a new generation of police officers following a period of upheaval and reform in a state police service. This is what the present study set out to do. Given the diversity of perspectives in the literature on women police which are discussed in the following section, the first aim of the study was to examine the characteristics of women early in their professional education and training and to explore how they themselves forecast their futures. Second, the entry of a large number of women provided an opportunity to identify whether there are any emerging signs of change or continuity in the conditions and experiences of women "in the job".

Perspectives on Women in Policing

Outside of Australia, the past decade has seen a number of major empirical studies of women police (Heidensohn, 1992; Martin, 1990; Jones, 1986). Surveys such as Lunneborg (1989) and Hale (1992) also offer comprehensive overviews of the growing periodical literature. While their

interpretations and perspectives vary, most studies demonstrate that women attempting to enter law enforcement over the course of this century have usually met with hostility, discrimination and harassment. There has been opposition from men (and some women) when women in significant numbers initially attempted to enter traditionally masculinised areas; for example, the case of female entry to general patrol work in the 1970s in Britain and the United States (Martin, 1980). Tensions and antagonisms emerged also when women began the long climb to command positions in these countries and elsewhere. One of the few Australian contributions (Sutton, 1992) says that anecdotal evidence points to a similar picture for this country and notes the paucity of research here to date.

The entry of women into policing in Australia has not received wide-spread attention from researchers or policy makers. An evaluation study of the early phase of the new Queensland program noted the increase in women entrants and acknowledged the need for the police service to develop "strategies to address the status of female officers", but then did not discuss further any possible implications and future directions (Criminal Justice Commission, 1993 pp26-28). There is an assumption among some of those familiar with recent developments that changes must now follow in local police practices and women's career opportunities simply because of the increased number of women entering the service; a sort of change through sheer-weight-of-numbers interpretation. This is by no means certain. Lidgard (1988b) claimed that it might be possible to reach a "take-off" point where about one-third of the police workforce is female. At this point, it is suggested, women then cease to be seen as an aberration from what men view as "real policing" so that they become increasingly accepted as colleagues and partners in the job. On the other hand, Ott (1989) also found that once the proportion of women rose above tokenism they were then seen as competitors and hence opposed by policemen.

In fact, the literature on women in policing presents a range of (sometimes apparently contradictory) interpretations about both the present situation and the future. Because the research on women in policing overseas comprises a complex range of issues around which varying levels of contention or consensus ensue, it remains difficult at times to identify major conclusions about the current status of women and about their futures in policing. One perspective continues to depict male antagonism toward women. For example, Balkin (1988) believes that many men feel psychologically threatened by the presence of female colleagues because the masculinised world of policing becomes increasingly destabilised. This happens because women are seen to disrupt the "natural order" by feminising traditional police practices. Hunt (1990) claims that male opposition arises from their anxiety about the supposed moral superiority of policewomen. She says that policemen suspect (and sometimes have confirmed for them) that women will not play by the rules of traditional "cop culture". They will not observe the codes of solidarity and silence, and will thus undermine the natural order by exposing police work to public scrutiny. While British research (eg Brown and Campbell, 1991; Brown, Maidment and Bull, 1993) suggests that younger policemen might display more accepting attitudes toward women, the evidence still points to continuing inequalities in deployment and career opportunities for women, along with negative attitudes from longer-serving male colleagues and supervisors.

A second perspective, however, is more optimistic and finds that there are relatively few differences in the experiences of women and men police. Again, while the issues being researched might vary, the findings tend to emphasise those things that women and men experience in common. Worden (1993) asserts that while women have been discriminated against, and still have yet to be fully integrated into American policing, her findings indicate that there are few differences in the ways men and women view their role, the community, or their colleagues. Likewise, Meagher and Yentes (1986) question the common belief that women, much more than men, enter policing because of their strong public service orientation. The authors found that women and men join the police for a range of reasons which are common to both. Love and Singer (1988) also find that while women police in New Zealand feel some concern about their capacity to handle violent situations, once again no gender differences were apparent on other measures of "psychological well-being, general and specific job satisfaction, or job involvement" (p98).

A third way of approaching questions about gender and police work makes an attempt to reconcile some of the apparent inconsistencies in findings arising from the two perspectives noted above. This line of reasoning says that while many features associated with the world of policing are commonly encountered by both women and men, the experiences are manifested or felt in different ways because of sex role socialisation and/or the gendered work environment of policing. For example, Dorsey and Giacopassi (1986) discovered similar levels of job-related cynicism among police officers: however they found that men and women experienced greatest levels of cynicism at different stages of their careers. Better educated women were more cynical later in their careers while males became cynical earlier on, although the research reported did not make clear the reasons for such differences. Johnson (1991) found similar levels of stress in her sample: however men and women officers reported different features associated with their stress. She found that "females were more likely to report feelings of being drained and used up by the job; men were more likely to externalize the burn out by treating citizens like impersonal objects or becoming callous toward people" (p15). Belknap and Shelley's (1992) study of women police in Ohio shows that intra-gender demographic differences arising from age, educational background, rank, length of service and race can have a significant differential impact on serving women's views of themselves, other women officers and policing in general.

The third perspective does not necessarily imply optimistic or pessimistic conclusions about the future for women police. Rather, it portrays a complex work environment and occupational culture where there are opportunities to be negotiated and challenges to be met. Nevertheless, it is important to note for the purposes of the current study that research such as Belknap and Shelley (1992) still concludes that there are major experiential differences between women and men which involve "considerable struggle for the policewomen to be viewed as competent and equal police officers" (p 64). In short, there exists a range of competing interpretations relating to women in policing. It is difficult to discern a dominant view of the future, although cautious optimism seems to characterise the few major book-length studies that have emerged. Even here, works by Lunneborg (1989) and Martin (1990) tend to reveal some uncertainty. On the one hand, they

suggest that much of the evidence points to a promising future, but on the other, there are notes of disappointment that further gains have not been made since the early 1970s.

The work of Heidensohn (1992) represents a major effort to situate debates about women in policing within the wider context of the role(s) of women in social control. In her comparative study of women police in Britain and the United States she notes that women have traditionally been accorded roles as agents of informal socialisation. In the twentieth century some women have come to see policing as an important means of access to the more formal arenas of social control where, armed with the legitimate authority of police powers, they can promote the safety of other women and children in particular, as well as the wider community. On the other hand, it is said that core male elements remain reluctant to share power with women, especially policing powers over other men. This reluctance is attributed to the fact that power over other males forms the very essence of traditional concepts of masculinity. The masculinist police culture, moreover, excludes women from access to vocational networks and knowledge, so that those women who do enter policing remain relegated to the lower echelons of the service. These competing hopes and fears are the powerful underlying forces shaping the experiences of women police officers.

Heidensohn refrains from making optimistic or pessimistic short-term predictions about the future. Rather, she claims that the progression of women in policing and other areas of law enforcement will have profound effects upon the power relationships between women and men in wider society. Because of such high stakes, women police must still confront a period of protracted struggle. The outcome of these tensions is uncertain and, because of the unresolved struggle, women are still not "in control" of (in the sense of having an equitable input into) their professional destinies in policing (Heidensohn, 1992 p247). The following study of police recruits finds much evidence to support Heidensohn's conception of policing as an arena of ongoing gender struggle for control. In the case described below, these tensions have persisted through a period of internal organisational reform where, in the opinion of some observers, the new conditions were supposed to be favourable for the progress of women police.

THE STUDY: METHOD

Two surveys were administered to police recruits enrolled in the Advanced Certificate in Policing at one university participating in the new program. Completion of the questionnaires was voluntary and anonymous. The first survey was completed during a session in the orientation week of the semester before the classes in the program had commenced formally. The survey had been trialled earlier (Hyde and Wimshurst, 1993) and was designed to gather biographical information about the educational, employment and family backgrounds of recruits. It consisted of closed, multiple choice and some open-ended items.

The 135 recruits who completed this survey were the total number enrolled in two consecutive intakes in the course for the second semester of 1992 (n=75) and the first semester of 1993 (n=60). Overall, 67.4 per cent (n=91) of respondents for the first survey were men and 32.6 per cent

(n=44) were women.

The second survey, linked to the first by a code number, was completed by volunteers from the same two cohorts toward the end of their respective semesters in the program. This exercise was completed during the latter half of a lecture period. Recruits could use up to thirty minutes to consider the task and write a couple of sentences for each of the three items. They were asked to briefly outline their anticipations of their professional selves five, ten and fifteen years into the future. One hundred and eleven students completed this survey, representing an 82.2 per cent response rate for those enrolled over both semesters. Of the 111 who completed the second survey, 65.8 per cent were men and 34.2 per cent were women. Females completed both surveys at a higher overall rate: 86.3 per cent of female enrolment responded compared with 80.2 per cent of male enrolment.

Ten women were interviewed from volunteers among the 44 women recruits. These 10 women were quite representative of female recruits from both semesters. Prior to recruitment, their occupations had ranged across tertiary student, clerk, teacher, salesperson, and health worker. Seven of the 10 had degrees and their ages ranged from 20 to 38 years with a median for the group of 23 years.

A number of items in the interview were designed to investigate further matters arising from the earlier written surveys. However, the main intention was to give women police recruits the opportunity to talk about their experiences and anticipations. Interviews were semi-structured and time limits were determined by the interviewees. Most chose to be interviewed alone and sessions lasted about one hour.

Cross tabulations were performed with gender as the dependent variable and chi-square statistical comparisons were made between gender and a number of biographical and anticipatory categories that were developed from an initial sample of the data. It seemed that these categories indicated some emerging themes of difference between male and female experiences. Relationships that were significant at the $p=.05$ level are discussed. Possible tendencies or trends, which were indicated by a significance level between .06 and .10 (following Belknap and Shelley, 1992), are discussed where they appear to be linked to the major themes.

As Meagher and Yentes (1986) have noted, female and male police officers display a number of common characteristics in terms of their backgrounds and professional aspirations. The current study begins by looking at the commonalities between the women and men recruits. There are, however, significant differences in their early experiences and outlooks which are related to gender differences. The discussion then goes on to examine the implications of these differences for the careers of women under five main themes.

SHARED CHARACTERISTICS OF FEMALE AND MALE RECRUITS

There were a number of similarities between female and male recruits. As noted earlier, of the total

135 recruits in the two successive intakes, 32.6 per cent were women and 67.4 per cent were men. The youngest was 17 years old and the eldest was a 46 year old man. The median age for both males and females was 22 years and almost two-thirds (65.9 per cent) of the entire group were 23 years or less. Eighty-six per cent were born in Australia. Indeed, when those born in New Zealand or the United Kingdom are included, the proportion from English-speaking backgrounds rises to 94.1 per cent.

The work backgrounds of men and women were also similar, although more of the women had been recent students. The largest proportion of recruits (22.5 per cent) had worked in sales and related areas. The next most common categories of recent experience had been as students (18.6 per cent) or in some para-professional area such as technicians (again 18.6 per cent). Only a small proportion of men (3.1 per cent) and none of the women had trade qualifications. Both women and men reported sport and various outdoor pursuits as their major leisure interests.

Respondents usually provided multiple reasons for joining the police service. The three most cited reasons were common to both men and women. These reasons were: the challenges that recruits saw arising from the variety and diversity of the work (85.9 per cent); career prospects (71.1 per cent); and job security (61.5 per cent). A Criminal Justice Commission study (1993, p106) of an earlier cohort had also found that 70 per cent of new recruits cited "job security" as the most important reason for joining the service.

When the recruits looked to the future, the first point that emerged was the heavy emphasis that they placed upon concerns of rank and promotion. This focus was rather striking in view of the very broad research question presented to them. The respondents were asked to look into the future at five, ten and fifteen years intervals and to write a brief statement about "what you see yourself doing" or about the "professional and personal attributes you would have". Another suggestion made to them was that they might want to speculate upon their ideal future compared with a more realistic estimate. In fact, virtually none of the recruits adopted this last option and relatively few addressed professional and personal attributes. Rather, they thought about the future in terms of what they might be doing (in the sense of deployment) and where they might be in the police hierarchy. References to themselves providing role models for fellow officers, or providing mentoring and leadership were comparatively rare, and there were few references to the development of personal (and professional) qualities such as wisdom, integrity, and care for others.

As with the biographical and other background characteristics noted above, men and women displayed some similar hopes and concerns for their futures. There was no significant difference between the proportions of men (41.1 per cent) and women (36.8 per cent) who had ambitions for promotion. Men and women anticipated enjoying their work in similar proportions, although for both groups the anticipation of job satisfaction was not an outstanding feature of their views of the future with only 16.2 per cent of the entire group talking about job satisfaction. Female and male recruits mentioned specific areas of specialisation at about the same rate - but as commented on below, there was also a greater tendency for women to make general references to the necessity for

specialising at certain points in their careers while not actually specifying particular areas of speciality. Looking ahead fifteen years, only eight men (11.0 per cent) and five women (13.2 per cent) believed they would have left the Queensland Police Service. Obviously, both female as well as male recruits saw themselves remaining in policing for a long period.

Thus, in summary, men and women entering policing share much in common. The majority have formerly been employed in sales and service industries or have been tertiary students. They have joined because they are attracted by the perceived challenges of the job, and women have the same aspirations as men for the future in terms of wanting career development and promotion and job security.

The emphasis on promotion and mention of specialist deployment seems, at first glance, to convey an impression of confidence and high self-esteem among women recruits. However, a closer reading of their comments from the extended interviews, and comparison of the data with what is known of the experiences of women in policing in Queensland during the 1970s and 1980s, suggest that the professional futures for women police might be more problematic and less straight-forward than currently assumed.

FEMALE AND MALE CONTRASTS: FIVE THEMES IN THE EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN RECRUITS

What might the professional future hold for these women police? This question is explored through the examination of a number of different themes that emerged strongly from the surveys and interviews with the recruits. The emergent themes are:

1. Continuity in the experiences of women police
2. physicality of policing
3. exclusion from areas of knowledge
4. ambivalence arising from experiences
5. coping strategies

Continuity in the Experiences of Women Police

The first theme looks at some indicators of possible change or continuity over the past twenty years and suggests that there is little evidence arising from recruit profiles to indicate that major changes for women police might be occurring. Lunneborg (1989, p34) notes that the "background of women officers is probably the least researched topic" and refers to this absence as a glaring omission in the literature. A number of differences between women and men relating to family and educational backgrounds emerged in the current study. First, only a small minority of women were married (6.8 per cent) compared with men (20.9 per cent). Second, over half (53.5 per cent) of the women stated that their fathers were managers, administrators or professionals, compared with 28.1

per cent of male recruits. Both of these differences were significant at $p=.01$.

There were also some strong ($p=.07$) gender differences in educational profiles. Some 47.7 per cent of women had a university degree compared with 29.7 per cent of men. If partially completed university studies are included, then these proportions rise to 63.6 per cent and 36.3 per cent respectively. Conversely, 36.3 per cent of men and 18.2 per cent of women had completed their education at year 12, the final year of secondary schooling. Another item relating to educational difference ($p=.06$) was that almost one-third (31.8 per cent) of women stated that they could speak a second language, compared with 17.6 per cent of male recruits. A further (intriguing) background difference ($p=.05$) was that double the proportion of women than men claimed to practise their religion.

Thus, a biographical profile suggests that recent female recruits entering the Queensland Police Service are (relative to their male counterparts) unmarried, well-educated, middle class and relatively religious young people. In order to examine indicators of change or continuity, a useful comparison can be made between the recruits in this study and the 650 recruits (cadets and probationaries, male and female) who entered policing in the period 1986-88 immediately before Fitzgerald's recommendations for reform (Lidgard 1988a).

The comparison between these two cohorts reveals apparent continuities and surprisingly few changes in relation to the profiles of female and male recruits. In fact, one of the few major changes is the obvious increase in the numbers of female recruits. In the period 1986-88 women constituted only 9.3 per cent of recruits. All of them were in their twenties and unmarried because the recruitment of married women was not permitted until 1988. A comparison over the past decade shows that while policing is now recruiting a few women older than thirty, and some are also married, the great majority remain young and unmarried as was the case in the 1980s.

Another indicator of continuity is the educational background of recruits, both women and men. There has been considerable public and media comment about the higher levels in educational backgrounds of current recruits when compared with those of previous entrants. However, examination of the facts reveals that by the mid-1980s the educational backgrounds of recruits overall rated as relatively high, with some 78.1 per cent having completed the final year of secondary school. What was noteworthy then and continues to be so is that women recruits consistently reached higher levels of educational attainment than their male counterparts. While the possession of a degree was a rarity among recruits in the 1980s, still 40.9 per cent of women compared with 21.0 per cent of men had undertaken some university study before entry.

The attraction of policing for well-educated women has a long history in Queensland. In the mid-1970s, the then Commissioner Ray Whitrod remarked that "while in fact it (had) been difficult to maintain regular intakes of suitable male probationaries, there (had) been an abundance of female applicants" (Queensland Police Department, 1976 p13). Whitrod relaxed the quotas (limits) on female entry to policing. He has claimed that his move to attract women "stemmed from my

decision to procure intelligence (in policing) - a quality in small supply when I began as Commissioner in 1971" (Whitrod, 1992 p2). During the latter 1970s and for much of the 1980s, under the conservative administration of Commissioner Terry Lewis, the situation for women police became tenuous, quotas on female entry were re-imposed, and their numbers declined. Nevertheless, irrespective of the fluctuating fortunes of women police in Queensland during the 1970s and 1980s under different Commissioners, the evidence is that for much of the time there has been a tendency to recruit women with high educational attainment relative to men. Current women entrants to policing in the 1990s simply continue this tradition.

Certainly, the educational backgrounds of male recruits have improved considerably, but this does not necessarily imply that they have more liberalised attitudes toward gender relationships in the world of work. Austin and Hummer (1994) found that half of their tertiary level student respondents "harbored unfavourable attitudes towards women as police officers". Perhaps more pertinent, the most negative students were criminal justice majors, the very people most likely to want to enter policing on graduation. The authors concluded that the nature and extent of opposition to women as police officers among even tertiary educated men had not changed much over the past decade. Moreover, the ongoing association of women with "intelligence", coupled with the pervasive sense of physicality discussed below, continues in the eyes of their detractors to undermine and cast doubt upon the commitment of women to "real" policing.

Figures for the mid-1980s cohort show that over half of the female recruits surveyed (54.2 per cent) claimed that policing was definitely not a career in which to remain (Lidgard, 1988a pp10-11). On the other hand, data presented earlier in this study show that the large majority of current female recruits see themselves remaining in policing for a considerable period of time. Yet while this might now be the anticipation of women in the 1990s, a closer scrutiny of their comments presents a less promising picture. It seems that very early in their training, indeed at a time when they have spent most of their program on a university campus rather than at the Police Academy, these female recruits were encountering the types of situations which have always disadvantaged women in policing. Four further areas of concern that emerged from the data are now examined.

Physicality of Policing

While we have already noted the reasons common to both men and women for becoming police officers, an area of significant difference ($p=.05$) related to their views about community service. A higher proportion of women (45.5 per cent) were drawn to policing by the opportunity to work with the public or to help people and serve the community. Only 27.5 per cent of men reported similar considerations. This differing orientation is also reflected in the observation that, when considering their futures, 34.2 per cent of female recruits compared with 20.5 per cent of males looked forward to becoming more closely involved with local communities through their duties. On the other hand, men mentioned two factors that differentiated ($p=.05$) them from their female colleagues. There was more likelihood of men talking in terms of the public respect, honour and authority that they felt was associated with becoming a police officer. Secondly, only male recruits

mentioned matters relating to protecting or guarding the community. Perhaps notions of guardianship are reflected in a further difference ($p=.05$) in that a much higher proportion of men were interested in martial arts.

A pervasive sense of the inherent physicality of policing comes through in the comments of women recruits. Here it seems that the supposed physical demands of policing dominate the thinking of women as well as men. One of the great, ongoing dividing lines between women and men police is based on the traditional association of police work with perceptions of the ever-present possibilities of physical confrontation. There is the taken-for-granted assumption that police officers must be always ready to contend with the dangers of physical violence. During the early 1970s, as women for the first time in large numbers attempted to enter the domain of street policing in the United States and elsewhere, the most common accusation levelled against them was that they would be unable to contend with the dangers of patrol work. Fielding and Fielding (1992), when reviewing their data on police socialisation in Britain in the mid-1980s, were struck by the constant reiteration of the point by male officers that women were not as physically capable of the rigours of street policing as men.

A pronounced feature of the interviews with female recruits in the present study was the emphasis that they themselves placed upon physical concerns. The issue cropped up in every interview and found its way into items that sometimes seem unrelated. Different respondents expressed different concerns and had differing opinions about the physical demands that were being made upon them. However, throughout their commentaries about their early experiences of police life, respondents returned to the issue of physicality.

There was a general consensus that while they always felt that they needed to devote their energies to the entire training program, they also believed that the males regarded physical prowess more highly. One woman observed that,

Males are frustrated with the educational bullshit but they just roll along. For girls there is more anxiety to do well because of the need to prove something - though for men the physical is most important and so a High Distinction in education (ie academic subjects) is not really impressive. Success in physical aspects is given the most attention. (Interview No.4)

Another felt that some of her fellow women were,

... having a problem being seen to be weaker, some had to prove themselves. Instructors choose a male to provide the examples in physical education 99 per cent of the time - (there is an) inbuilt inference that they will get it right first time and the female may not. (Interview No.9)

The few hours in the week that these recruits had spent in physical education classes at the Academy had encouraged a view among recruits that physical prowess still lay at the heart of policing. This notion had been exacerbated by the repeated slogan "same pay, same pain" by one of their instructors. Charles's (1981) research with recruits in an American police academy found that while males were quite prepared to accord recognition to female recruits for their educational

and technical competence in training, the men remained adamant that the women were inferior in terms of the physical requirements of policing. What is more, the physical factor seemed to subsume other concerns in terms of what constituted real preparedness for policing. The respondent quoted above (No.9) hoped that policing might change because of the increased number of female recruits, but she also thought that such changing attitudes would probably need to "come from above where things don't rely on physical ability".

These examples could be multiplied, but this sample illustrates the fixation upon physicality expressed by respondents. As they tell it, physical strength remains central to the mystique of police skill and effectiveness in the 1990s.

Exclusion from Areas of Knowledge

There is a sense even at this early stage of the women's careers that they anticipate narrowing horizons and potential exclusion from what Sutton (1992, p75) refers to as both the formal and informal "rules and agendas" which permeate the police culture. Potential limits to career awareness were signalled by differences in the comments of men and women about their futures. A pronounced difference ($p=.001$) was that where female recruits often referred in general terms to promotion, a very high proportion of men (75.3 per cent) compared with women (39.5 per cent) referred to specific ranks at points in the future. This applied particularly when recruits were speculating about where they might be after ten years in policing.

Men made significantly ($p=.05$) more references to being stationed in particular localities than did women. Even when looking forward ten years, the men were still specifying particular locations or regions at a greater rate than women. Serving "in the country" or "out west" was linked in the mind's of young men with personal happiness in terms of recreation and leisure interests. Looking further ahead, however, men obviously linked country service with ambitions about "being in charge" of a police station. While not reaching a level of significant difference, double the proportion of males (21.9 per cent) compared with females (10.5 per cent) were anticipating management and command positions in the future. An evaluation study within the service has also indicated that women officers who later apply for posting to small stations experience difficulty convincing selectors that they can competently and safely perform their duties in remote areas. Lack of such experience can then hinder career progress (Queensland Police Service, 1993 pp63-66).

When recruits mentioned possible areas of specialisation, men and women had some deployment aspirations in common. For example, women and men were equally interested in later becoming trainers/educators. Nevertheless, working with troubled young people remained significantly ($p=.01$) a female ambition. Criminal investigation was mentioned by a higher proportion of males (32.9 per cent) than females (23.7 per cent), although this was not a strong trend. Uncertainties about directions and career paths were again indicated by the tendency ($p=.06$) for women to make general comments about the need to specialise without actually identifying particular areas. This applied to 42.1 per cent of women compared with 24.7 per cent of male recruits.

There might be, of course, numerous reasons for the apparent uncertainties about their futures displayed by female recruits. However, lack of access to formal and informal career knowledge is again suggested by a significant ($p=.05$) gender difference in family backgrounds. Only about half the proportion of women compared with men had police or military links in their families of origin. The tendency for policing to run in the families of males (noted for example by Reiner, 1979) is much less pronounced for women, with perhaps a concomitant lack of opportunity for anticipatory occupational and subcultural knowledge.

Ambivalence

A fourth theme emerging from the study concerns the pronounced ambivalence to the experiences of policing embedded in much of the data provided by these women. The intensive interviews with them often elicited a host of contradictory comments about their experiences to date and their feelings about the future. Most respondents claimed that they had not experienced any discrimination and they believed that male and female recruits were treated equitably by academic and professional staff in the program. Some claimed that they experienced considerable boosts to their self-esteem when they found that the majority of male recruits would readily work with female partners.

There is no reason to doubt the sincerity or veracity of these perceptions. Yet such positive comments often sat uneasily next to qualifying statements, doubts and concerns. While very few dwelt upon personal experiences of discrimination, neither did any of these women express feelings of happiness or even satisfaction with their early experiences. As suggested, ambivalence seemed to be the dominant tone, a mood apparently related to their growing awareness by some of the contradictions and hurdles confronting women in policing.

A fairly common perception among the women was that they must prove themselves to be the "right stuff" for policing. As one commented,

Young men get away with more, they are less anxious to get it right - "boys will be boys". Women are more responsible and concerned to do 'good' and probably wouldn't get away with anything less than 100 per cent. (Interview No.2)

Or, from another interview,

(I) have seen the advantages of being a man in the job, I will have to work twice as hard to get the trust of other police - while men will be assumed to be capable on first sight and then have this assessment confirmed or otherwise, it will be assumed that a woman is useless first off, then she will have to prove herself. (Interview No.4)

They were, almost without exception, very aware of popular cultural views of women police officers. A number of respondents claimed that the major deterrence preventing more women from entering policing was the general view that policing is a masculine occupation. They felt that women feared being labelled "butch". Thus, one interviewee said that she was relieved to find

women police at the Academy to be "very approachable, mostly looking fairly feminine" (Interview No.10). Interviewee number 3 said that male recruits were supportive, but added that they "pour shit" on some women. She felt that policing would become a better career option for women - but added that promotion opportunities were "not so good for women". In like fashion, layers of ambivalence ran through the comments of all of these female recruits.

Ambivalent feelings about their role and place seem to characterise the outlooks of even experienced women police. Hotchkiss (1992) found that while her women informants were confident of their own abilities, they often shared the dismissive views of some of their male colleagues about policewomen. She interpreted this apparent contrariness as a coping mechanism, as "evidence of the perceived need for policewomen to fit in on male terms, to accept rather than challenge the conditions of their limited participation in order to be acceptable" (Hotchkiss, 1992 p57).

This "fitting in" is referred to by Martin (1990) as the "assimilation model" of female survival as police. She believes this model still prevails and that women spend an inordinate amount of time attempting to accommodate a host of competing and conflicting messages about what it takes to be a competent woman police officer.

These types of uncertainties and equivocations might also help to explain a feature of the "anticipatory" data. A noticeable difference between women and men related to comments about the gaining of competence. This was a significant difference ($p=.05$) when the recruits were talking about what they hoped to achieve after five years in the service. A higher proportion of women (31.6 per cent) compared with men (12.9 per cent) made references to developing competencies. In some cases this was expressed in terms of the need to learn the skills and develop the knowledge for effective day-to-day policing, or prior to seeking promotion or entering specialist areas. For others, competence was seen in terms of "learning the ropes". There was an awareness among women that one hurdle would be the disproportionate amount of time (relative to men) it might take to prove themselves in the eyes of colleagues and superiors. At the same time, it seems, they were already aware that they will need to master a range of time-honoured and job-specific female coping strategies. The meanings that women attached to notions of competence are addressed again in the following section.

Coping Strategies

The final theme explores the ways in which these neophytes anticipated coping with their future work environment. Since the 1970s when women in many police agencies began to move beyond their allocated and traditional preoccupations with female offenders and juveniles and into mainstream policing, they have had to grapple with the contradictory and discriminatory pressures of the masculinised definitions of the job. This need to come to grips with the meaning(s) of being a woman police officer remains true for female recruits in the 1990s. It became particularly apparent when these women talked about the ways they will cope. A number of them anticipated

harassment and sexist treatment from male colleagues in the future, while they claimed that male recruits, at least at this early stage, were generally supportive or neutral in their attitudes to women police.

Somewhat disconcerting was the number who conveyed the clear impression that in the face of harassment they would not take official action. They felt that they would somehow be able to deal informally with the situation. The anticipations of these recruits confirm the findings from other surveys which have reported the reactions of sworn officers when confronted with harassment. For example, one Queensland survey found that around 50 per cent of women police respondents claimed that sexual harassment and other forms of unlawful discrimination existed in the workplace. Yet, while an official anti-discrimination grievance procedure had been established, very few women had lodged complaints with their Sexual Harassment Referral Officer (Queensland Police Service 1993, pp68-75). Further afield, Daum and Johns (1994, p48) in the United States found that nearly two-thirds of their sample of women police had experienced some form of sexual harassment from a co-worker or supervisor, but that twenty-one per cent of them took no action at all (and) very few took strong measures to address the problem". Indeed, all of those in the present study who did mention the possibility of discrimination or harassment in the workplace, seemed also to favour the types of coping strategies outlined in the following case. The recipe for survival that this recruit has formulated reflects much that has been identified in the research literature from the 1970s onwards about the ways women cope as police officers.

The tertiary-educated young woman described here had obviously been able to steer her way through the early experiences of recruit training with little difficulty. Physically robust and a sports enthusiast, she found the male recruits supportive and, while she did not complain about her experiences to date, she could think of no highlights worth elaborating. She did, however, anticipate that there would be bias against female police particularly from, in her opinion, experienced male officers who might not share her non-confrontationist orientation to policing. She also believed that community attitudes reinforced many of the stereotypical views within the service about "butch" women police. She was clear about her intended ways of coping with a potentially non-supportive work situation. Her coping strategies involved

- (a) performing the job as professionally as possible
- (b) avoiding as much as possible proving that she is "better than men"
- (c) not expecting to make any changes to the system, and
- (d) developing a supportive network of acquaintances both within and outside of policing (Interview No.10)

The ways in which women cope with the pressures of policing and working in a masculinised environment have received attention over the years (see, Brewer, 1991; Jacobs, 1987; Wexler, 1985). Different classifications and typologies of coping have been identified usually with the aim of exploring how women "fit in" or adapt to male definitions. While there is common agreement in the literature that women police do not want to be "one of the boys", the characteristics of coping

outlined by the recruit above reflect what Wexler (1985) calls the "neutral-impersonal style", Jacobs (1987) refers to as the "professional officer", and Heidensohn (1992) calls the "professional orientation". According to this strategy, women strive to be professionally competent while maintaining a distance from male police culture. Rather than being seen as women attempting to do a man's job, they prefer to be seen as women doing a good job of policing.

But while this style of coping appears on the surface to be a positive reaction to somewhat stressful circumstances, it can produce further tensions. For example, there is the difficulty of demonstrating that one is competent and talented while simultaneously attempting not to attract undue attention by being seen as a competitor. These sorts of tensions are quite evident in the recruit's recipe for coping. The compliant professional orientation she plans to adopt no doubt achieves some progress in the status of women, but even those commentators who point to the positive responses of police agencies to women still admit that the changes occur at "glacial" pace (Walker, 1985). Women recruits in the post-Fitzgerald "reformed" Queensland Police Service have already begun to anticipate traditional survival strategies very early in their careers, essentially before they have even been exposed to the full brunt of the work environment.

CONCLUSIONS

The combined university and academy program upon which this study was based has ceased after three years (1991-93) and preservice training has returned wholly to the Police Academy. However, recruitment criteria remain very similar and the present study suggests that there is no reason to assume that in future the biographies of recruits will diverge from those discussed above.

The evidence from this study and some concluding issues noted briefly below support the need for extreme caution when predicting the likelihood of major changes in the experiences of women police. Factors which in the past have placed limitations on women continue to impact on the new recruits. For example, the ongoing powerful influence of the cult of physicality in defining police work has been discussed, and the assumption by women early in their careers of traditional ways of female coping has been noted.

While an increasing number of well-educated (young) women with a community-service orientation to policing are being recruited, it was also noted that these have always been the characteristics of many women entrants in Queensland. Now there are simply more women recruits with these characteristics. Some observers have been tempted to predict fundamental changes through strength-in-numbers. However, in addition to the data presented above (and while wishing to avoid a "woman-as-victim" outlook), it is also difficult to see how some wider social factors and conditions within the police service might support such an optimistic conclusion.

Wider social factors include media images of women as police. When the Queensland media report on women police the content tends to be either trivial or seems to carry some cautionary tale about the consequences of female deviation. There is evidence here to support Walklate's (1992)

contention that the public's view of police women, as reflected in the press, "remains largely conservative (and) that the wife/whore continuum operates". Her British research explored the emphasis placed upon the "sound morals" of women recruits in the reports written by their referees prior to entry. Good girls who become police officers, she claims, know their place and must remain good; those who deviate are sure to get into much trouble and strife.

On the Queensland scene this good/bad dichotomy must be quite apparent to women police officers and recruits. Two of the major policing "scandals" have focused on the (supposed) transgressions of individual women. One of these involved the resignation of the state's most senior serving woman from her chief superintendent rank amid much rumour and recrimination (*Sunday Mail*, 1993, April 4 p3; Aug 22 pp1,4-5; *Weekend Australian*, 1993, Aug 21-22, p9). The other case is long running and still awaiting resolution at the time of writing, with the woman officer charged by other police and their informers of conspiracy to commit a major crime (Dempster, 1992; *Sunday Mail*, 1992, Oct 25 pp12-13; 1994, Sept 18 p48). She has served some time in prison and there have been numerous inquiries and court cases over the past decade concerning allegations made against her.

The number of women in senior ranks remains extremely low. The resignation of the chief superintendent noted above, left eight female inspectors in a service of 6377 sworn officers. Thus, female role models for the influx of new recruits and middle-management mentors for serving police women are few and far between. Prenzler (1995) notes that the limited understandings of and approaches to Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) have resulted in some contradictory policies and/or practices within policing, thus exacerbating the ambiguities to which EEO is already prone (Thornton, 1990). One example was noted earlier with regard to the widespread awareness of officers of harassment and discrimination, then being countered by their reluctance to initiate formal complaint. It is important to note here how work culture can undermine the intentions of anti-discrimination policies. These women are, ultimately, police officers and "cop culture" places a premium upon self-reliance, toughness and loyalty to one's fellows. Resorting to the official channels to achieve justice might be seen as a sign of weakness and/or "dobbing" on other officers. The police service has launched an equal opportunity management plan and a few managers have displayed forward thinking, however the engagement in affirmative measures varies extensively across administrative regions. The United States experience (Felkenes, Peretz and Schroedel, 1993; Martin, 1991) has suggested that while most agencies will adhere to the letter of the law, they are either reluctant to embrace or fail to comprehend the spirit of EEO legislation and affirmative actions. The general picture is that police organisations will react to remedy inequalities once these have been highlighted and pressure is brought to bear, rather than adopting proactive approaches.

Perhaps this study also confirms Heidensohn's (1992) belief that women in policing have reached a cross-road. She notes that within what remains a masculine-gendered (social) control enterprise, "women have established their own activities against all the odds, and sustained them" (p247). But, given the slowness of change and possibility of reactionary backlash, she suggests that women

officers must become much more assertive in developing political and professional strategies to further their own interests. This is fraught with dangers in authoritarian organisations where powerful males, as individuals or in groups, will not readily share their own power. There might also be a tendency for police administrations to see women's progress in policing as a non-issue because it has been overtaken by "more pressing" personnel matters; it is seen as one of yesterday's problems. A senior woman (Waugh, 1993) in the New Zealand Police Department has claimed that a number of women officers there believe that in the 1990s equal opportunities have come to be dominated by concerns for the needs and rights of minority ethnic groups. They claim that the special needs of women in terms of career development have never been taken seriously by the male hierarchy, and have now been relegated even lower priority at just the time that police services have begun to acknowledge notions of equality of opportunity and affirmative action for other disadvantaged groups.

The conclusion to the present study must be that despite the recent large increases in female recruitment at the local level, Schulz's (1993 p97) observations about the unfinished revolution in policing in the United States pertains equally to Queensland. She writes that ... the revolution remains incomplete. A new generation of police officers - female and male - faces new challenges. Not only must they change the way they relate to the communities they serve, they must also change the way they relate to one another. Many issues surrounding the status of today's women in policing must be resolved before legal equality translates into a fully integrated police workforce.

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