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CHAPTER 3

The Nature of Police Work and Women's Entry Into Law Enforcement

Before the 1970s, nearly all police officers in the United States were white men; women comprised less than 2 percent of sworn personnel, and "policewomen" served in specialized positions. Racial and ethnic minorities also were greatly underrepresented in policing. Common language, job titles, and media presented images of police that were both gendered and linked to white working-class culture. In the past 30 years, the image of a police officer as a white man has been weakened, and both the number and proportion of women in policing have grown. By October 2003, women comprised 11.3 percent of sworn personnel (U.S. Department of Justice, 2005) and could be found in all specialized assignments and ranks, including chief. Nonetheless, women police in the United States still are underrepresented, regarded with suspicion by many men officers, and face discriminatory practices within the informal police culture and the formal organization. The limited numbers and similar barriers have been documented for women police officers in Europe (J. M. Brown & Heidensohn, 2000), Australia (Prenzler & Hayes, 2000; Sugden, 2005), the former Soviet bloc nations, and former colonial nations of Asia and Africa (J. M. Brown & Heidensohn, 2000; Natarajan, 2001, 2003).

Legislation, executive action, and judicial decisions have altered eligibility criteria, selection standards, and assignment and promotion practices that discriminated against women. The open and organized harassment encountered by the first women on patrol has largely disappeared. Yet, women officers still must cope with gendered organizational policies and practices, hostile work environments, and an occupational culture whose "cult of masculinity" glamorizes violence and denigrates women (M. Young, 1991, p. 192).

This chapter explores the history of women in policing, their broadened occupational roles since the 1970s, and the ways the work and police occupational

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culture contribute to the continuing resistance to women officers. Although the focus is on the United States, data we present on women in policing in England, Canada, and Australia as well as Europe and the rest of the world make clear that around the globe, women officers encounter similar challenges and barriers resulting from "the stereotypic cultural values of the police that may be seen as an almost pure form of 'hegemonic masculinity'" (Fielding, 1994, p. 47).

An Historical Overview: From Matron to Chief

Preliminary Phase: 1840–1910

Women first entered the criminal justice workplace in the early 19th century in the United States and England as prison matrons exclusively for women and girls. The next step was to go from prison matron to jail matron working with women and girls in police lockups, initially in the New York Police Department and subsequently in other large city agencies. Gradually, they extended their responsibilities beyond strictly custodial work but continued in work that reinforced their traditional role as caregivers to other women while simultaneously ensuring careers for these upper-middle-class women (Schulz, 2004).

The Specialist Phase: 1910–1972

In 1910, Alice Stebbins Wells became the first sworn woman officer in the United States. From then until the mid-1970s, "policewomen" were restricted in number, paid less than men, selected by different criteria from men officers, and assigned to work primarily with women and children. Wells sought an appointment as a sworn officer in the Los Angeles Police Department, convinced she could be more effective in preventive and protective work with women and children if she had police powers.

The early policewomen's movement had several sources. First, women of the "social purity" reform movement in the late 19th and early 20th centuries sought social change and staked out work roles that were extensions of women's domestic roles and their feminine characteristics. Many of the early policewomen were upper-middle-class women "eager to act as municipal mothers to those whose lifestyles they believed needed discipline," namely poor women (Schulz, 2004, p. 486). The few African-American policewomen hired worked in large city departments with African-American women and girls. They shared many of the educational and elite characteristics of their white sisters (Schulz, 2004).

Second, women's early successes in establishing a place for themselves in policing stemmed from the confluence of their aims with those of some progressive police reformers. Both sought to free policing from corrupting politics, upgrade personnel, and professionalize police work. In the 1920s, reform efforts were characterized by competition between two models of reform: a crime control or efficiency/managerial model and a social service/crime prevention model (Appier, 1998). The latter claimed that scientific police work could prevent crime by discovering and eliminating its causes. Wells and other women reformers espoused "crime

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prevention . . . as a recognized and growing part of police duty" (A. S. Wells, 1932, p. 15). Few reform-oriented men, however, mentioned the association of crime prevention or professionalism with policewomen. Rather, the policewomen's presence caused a dilemma: if preventing crime was the primary duty of the police, and if women were better at it than the men, then men would assume second-rate status within police departments.

Many leaders of the policewomen's movement understood the threat they posed to men and sought to reduce it. They created Women's Bureaus that were separated administratively, and sometimes physically, from the rest of the department. They avoided wearing uniforms and carrying guns, and often were required to have a college education, but encountered lower physical standards than the men. When their upper-middle-class backgrounds, higher levels of education, and sense of superiority resulted in tension and opposition from the mostly working-class men, policewomen often sought a peripheral role. Consequently, they were "kept at arm's length from the main organization and, perhaps, a little despised by the remainder of the force" (Hutzel, 1933, p. 3). At the same time, the Women's Bureaus and policewomen's insistence that they be in charge of them enabled them to create a mechanism for a few women to rise in rank (Schulz, 2004).

Women's inroads into policing came to a halt during the 1930s. Hiring was frozen during that decade. Moreover, the crime control model of police work, which viewed officers primarily as soldiers in a war against crime, almost totally eclipsed the crime prevention model. The crime control model, fostered by J. Edgar Hoover and the FBI at the national level, centralized control and adopted a military-style command structure to address police corruption. The crime control model also firmly reinforced male, working-class culture and values in police departments and reaffirmed the superiority of the masculine virtues of the fearless crime fighter who is able to overcome resistance (Walker & Katz, 2005).

For the next 40 years, a few policewomen gained assignments to detective, vice, and crime lab units, but the vast majority were assigned to juvenile work or secretarial duties. Their recruitment, training, salary, and promotion remained limited. In 1960, there were only 5,617 women in policing and security work in the United States (Census figures cited in Heidensohn, 1992, p. 55), and they comprised less than 1 percent of sworn personnel. Nevertheless, the women who entered policing after World War II were middle-class careerists, not upper-class feminists and "child-savers," and were increasingly dissatisfied with restriction to the "women's sphere" (Schulz, 2004).

In Europe and Australia, the early history of women in policing closely parallels that of the United States. In 1903, the first woman officer was sworn in in Stuttgart, Germany. By 1915, at least 35 German cities employed policewomen, and women officers had been hired in Denmark, Great Britain, Holland, Hungary, Latvia, Norway, Poland, Siam, Sweden, Switzerland (Schulz, 1998, p. 72), and Australia (Prenzler, 1998). During World War I, women were used to guard their nation's morals as women became controllers of other women's sexual conduct across the European continent. The factors affecting the hiring of women and the limitations on their duties and numbers found in the United States also were characteristic of these other nations. They too were influenced by broader movements such as international feminism and the human rights movement (J. M. Brown & Heidensohn, 1996).

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Nevertheless, local and regional conditions affected the pace and nature of the changing conditions for women in policing (e.g., Prenzler, 1998).

Between World Wars I and II, in Europe and Australia, policewomen's work continued to revolve around women and children. World War II saw women again charged with the guardianship of the nation's morals as they were expected to exert a restraining influence on women's sexual behavior.

From "Policewoman" to Chief: Changes Since 1972

Change for women in policing began in the 1960s and accelerated in the 1970s and 1980s in the United States. In the past decade, progress has continued, albeit at a glacial pace. In England and Australia, the integration of women began about a decade later but has paralleled trends in the United States. Women's integration in the former Soviet nations and those in Africa and Asia has been slower.[1] In 1961, a policewoman won a lawsuit against New York City and gained the right to compete in a promotional process not limited to women. Four years later, Felicia Schpritzer became the city's first woman sergeant (Bell, 1982). In 1968, the Indianapolis Police Department assigned two women to patrol duties; in 1972, the Metropolitan Police Department of Washington, D.C., became the first municipal agency to put a significant number of women on patrol (initially as an "experiment"). Since then, the representation of women in all types of departments has increased, and women have been integrated into patrol and virtually all other police activities.

Women's transformation from specialist "policewoman" to generalist patrol officer is related both to the police crisis of the 1960s and to social and economic changes in the status of women during that decade (discussed more fully in Chapter 1). Each reform movement contributed to a new role for women in policing by changing their place in the labor queues.

Police Crisis of the 1960s

In the 1960s, police faced a series of challenges. Violent crime rates rose. Low salaries and the retirement of World War II veterans resulted in "manpower" shortages. There were urban riots stemming from the civil rights movement and the police response to it, and rising economic and social expectations, but continuing poverty. The police encountered growing public frustration with "police brutality." Officers had to adapt to new procedures for protecting citizen's rights to due process resulting from several Supreme Court decisions.

In reviewing criminal justice system problems, two presidential commissions called for sweeping changes, with particular emphasis on the police. Their recommendations included higher personnel standards, improved management, greater use of science and technology, a reexamination of the meaning of police professionalism, and attention to police-community relations. They also called for subordination of strength and aggressiveness to the qualities of emotional stability and intelligence; greater sensitivity to minority problems in recruitment of personnel; elimination of discriminatory selection criteria; and hiring more officers who were college educated, persons of color, and women.

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The Women's Movement

The women's movement contributed to expanding the recruitment pool of women officers by changing gender stereotypes and values, and altering traditional concepts of masculinity and femininity. Although the women's movement did not assure equal opportunities for female officers, it stimulated a new social climate within police departments. Social norms and practices, ranging from standards of sexual behavior, appearance, and grooming to women's educational options and career choices, were challenged and changed during the 1960s and 1970s, fostered by and supporting challenges to the legal status quo.

Legal Changes: Legislation and Judicial Interpretation

Antidiscrimination laws contributed to the influx of women into police work. Before passage of the Equal Opportunity Act of 1972, many local laws and ordinances prohibited women from patrol assignments and promotions in rank. The 1972 Act extended to local police agencies provisions of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and expanded the powers of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to enforce Title VII. The Crime Control Act of 1973 required police departments with 50 or more employees that received $25,000 or more in federal grants to implement equal employment opportunity programs for women or face withdrawal of funds (Bell, 1982).

In the 1970s, many police agencies were sued for discriminating on the basis of gender, race, or both. Lawsuits contested departments' entrance requirements related to education, age, height, weight, and arrest records; their selection criteria, including written examinations, agility tests, and veterans' preference; and discriminatory assignment and promotion procedures (Potts, 1983; Sulton & Townsey, 1981). Many of these cases resulted in court orders or consent decrees that established affirmative action programs, including quotas and timetables for hiring and promoting women and persons of color. Other decisions supported plaintiffs' challenges to height and weight standards and to agility tests that were neither sufficiently job related nor adequately validated (Hale & Menniti, 1993).

To comply with emerging case law, police agencies modified recruitment practices, eligibility requirements, and selection criteria. Almost all agencies eliminated or altered height and weight requirements and modified physical agility tests that disproportionately eliminated women and Hispanic and Asian men.[2] Some agencies also replaced agility tests that emphasized upper body strength with physical performance tests that assess health and fitness. The new tests measure cardiovascular function, body composition, flexibility, and dynamic and absolute strength, and have performance norms adjusted for age and sex.

Police departments also revised written entrance examinations that adversely affected persons of color, and standardized oral screening procedures for both selection and promotion. Personal interviews were standardized, with a single set of questions administered by trained interviewers including white women and men and women of color. These newer procedures leave less room for arbitrary decisions, but candidates still tend to be judged on qualities, standards, or attributes associated with masculinity (e.g., self-confidence and assertiveness).

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The affirmative action policies adopted by many police departments significantly affected the representation of white women and men and women of color throughout policing and in supervisory positions (S. E. Martin, 1991). During the 1980s, the Supreme Court's reinterpretation of Title VII limited the use of affirmative action programs but did not eliminate them. By 1987, more than half of police agencies serving populations larger than 50,000 had implemented affirmative action plans. Recently, however, the court-ordered plans implemented in major cities 20 years ago have expired and have not been renewed at a comparable rate. The 2001 annual survey of police departments conducted by the National Center for Women & Policing reported that of the 247 agencies with more than 100 officers that responded to the survey, 40 had been under a consent decree at some time, but only 22 of those remained in effect. During the decade of the 1990s, only six departments reported being subject to new decrees (National Center for Women & Policing, 2002a).

This decline in court-mandated affirmative action increases the likelihood of diminished recruitment, retention, and promotion for women and persons of color in the coming decade. The impact of the implementation and termination of a consent decree is illustrated by personnel changes in the Pittsburgh Police Department, which was under a court order from 1975 to 1991. The order mandated that for every white man hired, the department was to hire one white woman, one African-American man, and one African-American woman. When the court order was imposed, only 1 percent of all officers in the Pittsburgh police were women. By 1990, the department had 27.2 percent women officers, the highest woman officer representation in the country. Following the lifting of the court order, the proportion of women hired dropped to 8.5 percent from the 50 percent rate mandated under the order. As of 2001, women's representation had dropped to 22 percent of the department's sworn personnel (National Center for Women & Policing, 2002a).

In addition to the effects of civil rights laws passed in the 1960s and early 1970 that altered police personnel practices, other Supreme Court decisions in those decades also radically altered traditional concepts of law enforcement. The "due process revolution" required police agencies to alter street justice practices such as arbitrary arrests, random searches and seizures, and other violations of civil liberties. The "tough cop" tactics characteristic of the crime control model of policing had become more restrained as the pendulum swung back toward a crime prevention model.

The Impact of Research

Because the initial assignment of women to patrol in large numbers in 1972 was regarded as an experiment, nine evaluations of women's performance were conducted to determine whether women could perform adequately on street patrol in diverse jurisdictions. These included Washington, D.C. (Bloch & Anderson, 1974), St. Louis (Sherman, 1975), New York City (Sichel, Friedman, Quint, & Smith, 1977), Denver (Bartlett & Rosenblum, 1977), Newton, Massachusetts (Kizziah & Morris, 1977), Philadelphia (Bartell Associates, 1978), California (California Highway Patrol, 1976), and Pennsylvania (Pennsylvania State Police, 1974).

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Although some gender differences were found, all the studies but the second phase of the Philadelphia evaluation concluded that men and women are equally capable of police patrol work. Some of the studies found women to be less proficient in the use of firearms and to have more accidents in comparison to men (St. Louis, Washington, D.C., and New York City); others reported that women have a "less aggressive" policing style, evidenced by fewer arrests (Washington, D.C.) and fewer citizen complaints (Denver). Morash and Greene (1986) identified a number of areas in which these evaluations were gender biased.[3] Nevertheless, the evaluation findings meant that sex could no longer be considered a bona fide occupational qualification for the job of patrol officer and that women had to be given an opportunity to serve on street patrol.

The Increasing Representation of Women in Police Work

These changes in policing and in the larger social and legal environment led to women's assignment to patrol duties in most large municipal, state, and federal law enforcement agencies by the end of the 1970s. From 1980 through the present, women's representation and responsibilities have steadily expanded despite resistance from most of the men. For example, in 1975, women constituted 2.2 percent of the sworn personnel in municipal departments (Martin, 1980). They comprised 3.8 percent of municipal officers in 1980, 8.3 percent in 1990, 10.9 percent in 2000, and 11.3 percent in 2004, as shown in Table 3.1. The table also indicates that women have consistently had greater representation in the large departments (where they comprise 16.4 percent of personnel) than in those that are smaller in size and that the gap has not diminished over the past 24 years. In addition, the decline in women's representation in the largest agencies between 2000 and 2004 suggests that to move beyond token numbers, more aggressive recruiting and retention efforts will be necessary.

Increases in the representation of women in law enforcement have occurred in agencies of differing types and have included women of color. Comparing data for 1990 and 2000 across agency types, as shown in Table 3.2, the proportion of women continues to be greatest in sheriff's departments. However, the table also indicates a decrease in women's representation from 15.4 percent of all deputies in 1990 to 12.4 percent in 2000. State police agencies lag behind municipal and sheriffs' agencies in hiring women. In 1990, women comprised only 4.6 percent of the sworn personnel; in 2000, that proportion had risen only to 5.9 percent.

Table 3.3 shows that by 2000, municipal and sheriff's departments that previously were almost exclusively white and male have become much more diverse. Among local agencies, nearly 12 percent of officers are African-American, including 9 percent of the men and 2.7 percent of the women; similarly, Hispanic officers have made gains. Hispanics comprise 8.3 percent, including 7.2 percent of men officers but only 1.1 percent of women officers. American Indians, Asian-Americans, and other groups comprise 2.4 percent of officers, almost all of whom (2.4 percent) are men. The proportion of officers of color in municipal policing (30 percent)

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Table 3.1 Women Officers in Municipal Policing by Agency Size: 1980–2004

	Large[a]		*Medium*[b]		*Smaller*[c]		*Small*[d]		*Total*	
	Number	*%*	*Number*	*%*	*Number*	*%*	*Number*	*%*	*Number*	*%*
1980	5,131	4.6	1,242	4.2	1,010	3.1	3,615	3.0	11,179	3.8
1990	15,673	12.6	2,851	8.2	2,363	6.2	7,494	5.2	28,335	8.3
2000	25,305	16.2	4,841	10.2	3,825	8.3	12,443	7.0	46,414	10.9
2004	23,989	16.4	5,191	11.0	4,230	8.9	10,497	7.9	49,837	11.3

Source: U.S. Department of Justice (1981, 1991, 2001, 2005).

a. Cities with populations greater than 250,000. In 1980, included 57 cities; in 1990, 62 cities; in 2000, 68 cities; in 2004, 69 cities.

b. Cities with populations between 100,000 and 249,000. In 1980, included 108 cities; in 1990, 127 cities; in 2000, 161 cities; in 2004, 174 cities.

c. Cities with populations between 50,000 and 99,000. In 1980, included 273 cities; in 1990, 321 cities; in 2000, 376 cities; in 2004, 391 cities.

d. Cities with populations less than 50,000. In 1990, included 8,997 cities; in 2000, 9,781 cities; in 2004, 10,028 cities.

Table 3.2 Full-Time Sworn Local Police, Sheriff's Deputies, and State Police in 1990 and 2000 by Gender

	Local Police		*Sheriff's Departments*		*State Police*	
	1990[a]	*2000*[b]	*1990*[a]	*2000*[c]	*1990*[a]	*2000*[d]
Number of officers	363,061	449,200	141,418	164,711	52,372	56,346
Percent men	91.9	89.4	84.6	87.5	95.4	93.4
Percent women	8.1	10.6	15.4	12.5	4.5	6.6

a. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics (1992, p. 3, Table 3; and p. 11, Table 28).

b. Hickman and Reaves (2003a, p. 4, Table 7).

c. Hickman and Reaves (2003b, p. 4, Table 7).

d. Reaves and Hickman (2002).

approaches their representation in the U.S. population, although across ethnic groups women continue to be greatly underrepresented. However, nearly a quarter (23 percent) of black officers are women, whereas white, Hispanic, and other (i.e., Asian-American and American Indian) women comprise 8, 13, and 11 percent of the officers of their racial/ethnic groups, respectively.

Several factors may contribute to the large proportion of black women among women in municipal policing. First, black women may view law enforcement as an attractive option compared to the narrow range of jobs traditionally open to them. Second, black women have long been activists and leaders in the black community. Becoming a police officer enables a black woman to wield authority in the African-American community and to work to alter an organization often viewed as oppressive.

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Table 3.3 Full-Time Sworn Local Police and Sheriff's Deputies in 2000 by Gender, Race, and Ethnicity

Number of Officers	*Local*[a] *449,200*[c] % Men	% Women	*Sheriff's Departments*[b] *164,711*[c] % Men	% Women
White	70.9	6.5	73.7	9.1
Black	9.0	2.7	7.0	2.3
Hispanic	7.2	1.1	5.3	0.8
Other	2.4	0.3	1.4	0.2
Total	89.4	10.6	87.5	12.5

a. Hickman and Reaves (2003a, p. 4, Table 7).

b. Hickman and Reaves (2003b, p. 4, Table 7).

c. Reaves and Hickman (2002).

Third, affirmative action recruiting messages aimed at African-American communities reach both women and men.

Women also have made inroads as officers in federal law enforcement agencies, although their representation varies widely. In 2002, for example, women comprised 28 percent of Internal Revenue Service law enforcement agents, 12.1 percent of the agents in the Immigration and Naturalization Service (which is the largest federal law enforcement agency), and only 8.6 percent of Drug Enforcement Administration sworn agents (Reaves & Bauer, 2003). Data from the FBI illustrate the growth in women's presence. In that agency, which had no women agents prior to 1972, women comprised 14.5 percent of the special agents by June 1996 and 18 percent in June 2002 (Reaves, 1997; Reaves & Bauer, 2003).

Women are slowly being promoted into supervisory ranks but continue to be underrepresented, particularly in the highest ranks. In 1978, women comprised less than 1 percent of the personnel above the officer rank in municipal agencies serving populations of more than 50,000 (Sulton & Townsey, 1981); by the end of 1986, women still made up only 3.3 percent of supervisory personnel in those agencies and were found mostly at the lower ranks (e.g., 3.7 percent of the sergeants but only 1.4 percent of supervisory personnel of a higher rank; S. E. Martin, 1990). Newer data from a survey conducted by the National Center for Women & Policing (2002a) that included responses from 247 agencies with more than 100 officers indicate that as of 2001, in large police agencies women comprised 13.5 percent of the personnel in line operation positions, 9.6 percent of supervisory personnel, and only 7.3 percent of top command positions. Comparing the distributions of women and men, 85.4 percent of the women are in line operations, 13.2 percent are in supervisory positions, and 1.5 percent are in top command, whereas 79.4 percent of the men are in line operations, 17.8 percent are in supervisory positions, and 2.8 percent are in top command.

In most law enforcement agencies, women of color also are underrepresented. They hold 4.8 percent of sworn positions and only 1.6 percent of top command

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positions, while they comprise 8.2 percent of the overall labor force over age 16 (National Center for Women & Policing, 2002a). More than half (60 percent) of the large police agencies surveyed reported no women in top command positions, and the vast majority (88 percent) reported no women of color in their highest ranks (National Center for Women & Policing, 2002a).

In small and rural police agencies (i.e., those with less than 100 sworn officers and in counties with populations less than 50,000), the underrepresentation of women is greater. Women hold only 3.4 percent of all top command positions, 4.5 percent of supervisory positions, and 5.3 percent of line positions.

In 1990, a breakthrough occurred when Elizabeth Watson became chief of the Houston Police Department, the sixth largest municipal agency in the United States. She served in that position until 1992, when a newly elected mayor selected a new chief. Between November 2003 and April 2004, five women were appointed chief in major police agencies in the United States: those in Detroit, San Francisco, Milwaukee, Boston, and Fairfax County, Virginia (a suburb of Washington, D.C.; Leinwand, 2004). While these promotions indicate that some women have finally risen to the top, women are chiefs in only 175 of the nation's approximately 18,000 police departments—or about 1 percent of agencies. Most of the women chiefs lead college and university police forces, three oversee transportation agency departments, and two head Native American tribal polices. The vast majority of women chiefs are located in small communities (Schulz, 2004).

Women's underrepresentation among supervisors, particularly in command staff positions, reflects the extent to which police management remains a gendered occupation. In fact, given the retreat from affirmative action, the National Center for Women & Policing (2002a) suggests that even the current number of women supervisors may represent the peak of women's achievement rather than the front of a new wave. The continued underrepresentation of women in police work generally and in supervisory positions is particularly disappointing in light of the 18 percent growth in the number of sworn police personnel between 1992 and 2000, which also opened opportunities for a substantial increase in new supervisory personnel.

The growth in the representation of women in police agencies in other countries is generally parallel to that of the United States. For example, according to Pru Goward (2002), Federal Sex Discrimination Commissioner, in Australia, women comprised 13.5 percent of various police forces in 1995 and 18.9 percent of sworn personnel in 2001 but continue to be concentrated at the lower ranks. In June 2001, women comprised 34.0 percent of the probationary constables, 28.7 percent of constables, 16.5 percent of senior constables, 7.2 percent of sergeants, 5.1 percent of senior sergeants, and 2.9 of senior executives (Goward, 2002). Although the first women officers were not employed in New Zealand until 1941, by 1984 their representation had increased to 5.2 percent, and by 2000 women officers represented 15 percent of the national force, although there were no women among the 15 members of the sworn executive staff (E. K. Butler, Winfree, & Newbold, 2003). In England, women make up about 17 percent of police personnel and have a limited share of senior rank. On the European continent, average percentages of women police range from 4 percent in Portugal and Belgium to 6 percent in Denmark,

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8 percent in Germany and Hungary, 12 percent in the Netherlands, and 13 percent in Sweden. Thus, women experience only token presence within most police organizations, particularly at the senior rank. There are no women in the highest police grades in Denmark, Ireland, or Portugal. Only Sweden and the United Kingdom have women at the chief officer rank (J. M. Brown & Heidensohn, 2000). In 1997, in France, women represented 7.7 percent of constables, 9.2 percent of inspectors, and 10 percent of superintendents (Maniloff, 1998).

The Nature of Policing: Scope of Work and Occupational Culture

Nature of the Work

Police officers are the gatekeepers of the criminal justice system, enforcing the law and arresting offenders. In addition, officers are expected to prevent crime, protect life and property, maintain peace and public order, and provide a wide range of services to citizens 24 hours a day. A common thread unifying these diverse activities is the potential for violence and the right to use coercive means to enforce the officer's definition of the situation to establish social control at that moment (Bittner, 1970). Policing has traditionally been regarded as "men's work" because it is associated with crime, danger, and coercion, yet people frequently fail to question the logical shifts in the statement that "coercion requires force which implies physique and hence policing by men" (Heidensohn, 1992, p. 73).

Crime fighting is the aspect of the job that for many years has been regarded by both officers and the public as "real" police work. It is visible, publicly valued, and the most satisfying part of the work for most officers. Detectives focus on investigating crimes and making arrests, are relieved of service or order maintenance tasks, and get more pay, prestige, and personal autonomy. The association of catching criminals with danger and bravery marks police work as a "man's job."

The daily reality of policing is far less glamorous. Most police calls involve requests for service and order maintenance tasks. One study of police activity in three California departments found that only 31 percent of all incidents involved officers in crime-related activities (i.e., apprehending felons or investigating and suppressing crime; M. K. Brown, 1981). Violence, even verbal aggression, is a relatively rare occurrence (Garner & Maxwell, 2002). Rather, policing involves officers with people at their worst—when they have been victimized, are injured or helpless, or are guilty and seeking escape. To be effective, officers must restore order in volatile situations and use interpersonal skills to gain compliance rather than bravado.

The Police Officer's "Working Personality"

The combination of danger related to unpredictable physical violence, authority to exercise force, and organizational pressures for efficiency has resulted in a unique set of behaviors and attitudes termed the officer's "working personality" (Skolnick,

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1994). Faced with danger, officers become suspicious. Because they have discretion to decide when and whether to use morally dirty means to handle problems, they are feared by and isolated from citizens. Isolation leads them to close ranks against outsiders and view themselves as a "thin blue line" between anarchy and order.

In an effort to inhibit the abuses of power and corruption historically associated with urban policing, administrators have adopted a quasi-military organizational structure and have imposed numerous rules on officers. Despite the elaboration of rule books, discretion is an essential part of the job. Street patrol requires situational decision making; rigid rules have little value in fluid and sometimes volatile situations. Consequently, most officers routinely violate or circumvent rules.

To protect themselves from supervisors who may punish rule infractions and from a citizenry viewed as hostile, officers have created a unique, cohesive occupational culture. Cops rely on fellow officers for physical protection, support, solidarity, and social identity. Their job becomes a way of life, and the occupational culture provides both an alternative morality and an identity (Fielding, 1994; Manning, 1997; Skolnick, 1994; Westley, 1970).

Occupational Culture

The informal work culture of street patrol officers has several "rules." Officers are expected to remain silent about other officers' illicit behavior, to provide physical backup to fellow officers, and to mete out street justice to persons who display disrespect for the police. Officers who fail to abide by these rules are not trusted by others and face ostracism, the silent treatment, and outright rejection as a partner (Westley, 1970). Other characterizations of the police ethos include the need to "show balls" (Reuss-Ianni, 1983) or display bravery (Kappeler, Sluder, & Alpert, 1998) and the norm of emotional self-management. An officer who displays too much anger, sympathy, or other emotion in dealing with job situations is not viewed as someone able to deal with the pressures of police work (Pogrebin & Poole, 1995).

Until the 1970s, police assured group solidarity by recruiting and selecting a homogeneous group of working-class white men. "Outsiders" were eliminated by physical requirements (women) and written tests and/or educational requirements (blacks and other people of color). Background investigations and personal interviews eliminated the remaining candidates who failed to express "correct" masculine attitudes, including toughness, conventional middle-class norms, and hegemonic heterosexuality (Messerschmidt, 1993).

Women continue to be disproportionately excluded by preemployment physical fitness tests that reinforce the masculine model of policing by maintaining the association of strength and physicality with the notion of the ideal police officer (Sugden, 2005). In the United States, the great majority (89 percent) of 62 large agencies that responded to a 2001 survey indicated that they use some form of physical agility testing prior to entry-level selection. However, there was little standardization regarding the physical capabilities that should be tested, the actual tests, and the criteria used to identify successful performance (National Center for

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Women & Policing, 2003). The study also found that departments that do not have preemployment physical agility tests have 45 percent more sworn women than those with such tests. The negative impact of these tests on women in light of the failure of agencies to require officers to pass physical testing or maintain fitness standards once they leave the academy, however, led the National Center for Women & Policing (2003, p. 2) to speculate that the purpose of the testing is "to screen out female applicants across the board."[4]

How much the culture has changed in response to external demands and internal pressure to employ women, persons of color, and gay and lesbian police in the past quarter century is unclear. Despite many examinations of such reforms as professionalization and community-oriented policing (COP), researchers have not adequately assessed the effect of increased diversity on the police culture in light of other changes in policing. Some studies have found that black and Hispanic officers have more positive attitudes toward community policing and are critical of their departments' handling cases involving excessive use of force. However, as Walker and Katz (2005, p. 162) observe, "the relationship between race and ethnicity, of attitudes, and actual job performance is extremely complex." Similarly, a National Research Council review found little evidence that African-American and Hispanic officers perform differently from whites in their interactions with citizens. In sum, the change in the composition of rank and file in police departments suggests that the homogeneous police culture has been weakened but has far from disappeared.

Recent Trends in Policing and Their Implications for Women and Persons of Color

For more than half a century, efforts to reform the police have focused on changing street practices to eliminate three categories of recurrent problems: corruption, police brutality, and alienation from the community (G. Sykes, 1985). In the 1970s, these issues were addressed primarily by "professionalizing" policing in a way that was narrow in scope and conceptually inaccurate. Professionalization included efforts to increase organizational efficiency and productivity by expanding top-down control, improving recruitment and training, hiring more white women and persons of color, and adding technology and resources. This contributed to tension between the traditional "street cop" and "management cop" cultures (Reuss-Ianni, 1983). It also has resulted in a policing style characterized as the "emotionally-guarded interactional 'style-without-a-smile'" (McElhinny, 1993, p. 310). Despite facing such emotionally wrenching situations as injury, death, and deranged persons, the "professional" officer is expected to avoided emotional displays.

Since the 1980s, police organizations have embraced a number of organizational changes and approaches to policing. In addition to increased diversity (including recruitment of gay and lesbian officers), these changes include adoption of COP, civilianization and privatization of law enforcement, greater use of emerging technologies, and, most recently, adaptations to address terrorism and other disasters. Each of these changes and their impact on women and other groups will be briefly discussed.

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Community-Oriented Policing

In the 1980s, community-oriented policing (COP) became the watchword for gaining public support by linking the officer to the community, neighborhood, and citizens in the "co-production" of crime control and public safety services and closing the communication gap between police and the communities they served (Skolnick & Bayley, 1986). However, COP has a variety of definitions. For some agencies, it has meant instituting particular tactics and strategies (e.g., foot patrol and storefront offices) or community relations programs (e.g., Neighborhood Watch and DARE). Others regard it as an innovation that transforms the professional model of policing to one that is "more focused, proactive and community sensitive" (Greene, 2000, p. 301), by reshaping the social and formal organization of police departments and their relationships with other organizations. Another group regards COP as a new philosophy or "set of ideas that can transform the structure, activities, operations, and even the culture of police departments" (National Research Council, 2004, p. 85). They expect COP to shift the emphasis away from an exclusive focus on crime control to one of crime prevention, community problem solving, and citizen empowerment.

COP requires police organizations to reconceptualize what is "real" police work. It shifts the focus from dealing with individual "crimes" after the fact to having officers seek to address recurrent problems affecting order and public services. Such an approach demands a loosening of the grip of traditional control-centered management to allow more officer discretion and autonomy (Greene, 2000). It calls for officers who have good interpersonal skills and are trained in problem identification, analysis, and solutions (Jurik & Martin, 2001).

The extent to which COP as implemented goes beyond rhetoric and actually redefines the police role, expands reciprocity in police-community relations, and decentralizes police services and command structures varies across agencies and still is unclear. A 1999 survey of local departments found that 64 percent reported having one or more full-time community police officer (Hickman & Reaves, 2001). However, these data may suggest that rather than transforming patrol officer behavior, a small percentage of officers are assigned to COP roles, while the majority of patrol officers to continue to serve as reactive "crime fighters."

Three recent studies support such a conclusion, whereas an extensive review of the research on COP to date found that while police are using a variety of tactics under the COP strategy, there is not yet enough evidence to determine whether community policing is a success (National Research Council, 2004). Zhao, He, and Lovrich (2003) compared survey responses from more than 200 municipal police agencies in both 1990 and 2000 regarding their prioritization of police "core functions." They found that rather than decreasing the emphasis on crime fighting, COP represents a comprehensive effort by local police simultaneously to control crime, reduce social disorder, and provide services to citizens. Pelfrey (2004) compared the attitudes and behavior of COP and traditional patrol officers. He found that COP officers are more likely to support problem-oriented and community-oriented concepts but are no less likely than traditional patrol officers to support traditional patrol concepts. Additionally, COP officers are more likely to engage in community

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policing tasks but also conduct traditional policing activities at similar levels as traditional officers. Both groups share a foundation of belief in the traditional practices of law enforcement. COP officers have simply augmented traditional attitudes and beliefs with largely favorable perceptions of community policing practices and tasks while traditional officers have negative views of COP.

S. L. Miller (1999) focused on the relationship of gender to community policing. Using interviews and observational data, she explored how men and women officers reconcile incompatible images of masculinity and femininity in enacting the COP role. She observed that community policing offers the prospect of a shift toward greater emphasis on and rewards for community service, crime prevention, and problem solving and a de-emphasis on crime fighting. However, its emphasis on activities that demand formerly feminine-labeled skills such as caring, informality, empathy, and communication also may be seen as "feminizing" the management of social control. For that reason, COP arouses opposition from men officers who see it as another effort to feminize policing and are likely to resist or undermine it. Thus, the success of COP rests on recasting such attributes into gender-neutral terms to gain support by a male-dominated police force (Fielding, 1994; S. L. Miller, 1999). To succeed, it requires recruiting a new breed of officers, training them in new skills, developing ways to more effectively measure their success, and avoiding officer burnout. Additionally, it requires neutralizing the negative attitudes toward COP of more senior field training officers (Haarr, 2001). Once an officer has worked as a COP officer, however, it appears to have a lasting effect in expanding the use of interpersonal skills and addressing community problems in the officer's subsequent assignments (S. L. Miller, 1999; Pelfrey, 2004).

Terrorism and Other Disasters

The attack on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, has made clear the need for the police to change to better address terrorism; similarly, Hurricane Katrina demonstrated the importance of responding to natural disasters more effectively. Terrorism is defined by the FBI as "the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof in furtherance of political or social objectives." It includes both domestic and foreign terrorism. The former is carried out by Americans on American soil, which accounted for about 80 percent of terrorist incidents and 90 percent of deaths before September 11 (Walker & Katz, 2005). Nor was the September 11 attack the first involving foreign terrorists. In 1993, the World Trade Center was bombed; in 1998, embassies in Kenya and Tanzania were bombed.

A decade before the September 11 attack, a survey had found that many departments were concerned about and taking some actions related to terrorism but that only 12 percent of respondents regarded their agencies as well or very well prepared for such an attack (Riley & Hoffman, 1995). Despite the creation of the Department of Homeland Security and pledges of billions of dollars to pay for training, equipment, and planning by first responders, a nationwide survey of local agencies suggests that only 19 percent have made extensive changes in preparation for a terrorist

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attack. Most have made modest changes (47 percent) or no change at all (9 percent; National Crime Prevention Council, 2002). Thus, law enforcement agencies remain poorly equipped to deal with large-scale disasters. They tend to devote limited resources to emergency planning and do so in isolation from other community organizations. The chaos that occurred before and immediately after Hurricane Katrina (including the inability of the police to stop looting and the flight of many police from New Orleans) illustrates the inadequacies of planning for and communication among police agencies in response to a disaster (albeit a domestic natural one).

Nevertheless, efforts to address the threat of terrorism have led to a variety of new demands on police agencies and officers. They now must respond to suspicious situations; provide extra security for buildings, critical infrastructure, and events; investigate terrorist networks; and improve planning and coordination among agencies, including law enforcement, public health, medical organizations, and the military. Many agencies (particularly large urban departments) have reassigned personnel to regional task forces and special units. They also are assessing local security risks, increasing planning and policy development, dealing with staff shortages due to deployments of National Guard and reserve military units, learning how to safeguard their own employees from new chemical and biological risks, and seeking ways to maintain open communication with the communities they serve while gathering new information and intelligence. These changes appear to have had limited effect on routine police work except to increase the proportion of sworn officers with special, non-patrol assignments.

The likely impact of terrorism or other disasters on women officers in policing is uncertain. Some suggest that the response has led to increased militarization of the local police and sales of new military technologies to local agencies (National Research Council, 2004). This would suggest a shift toward a more macho style of policing. However, others point to the importance of COP in developing interagency plans and intelligence gathering and foresee a new, more androgynous and innovative blend of policing in response to new threats. Thus, the impact of terrorism for women in policing is uncertain.

Civilianization and Privatization

Other structural changes in the police workforce and police organizations include shifting responsibilities for various functions away from the traditional sworn officer to civilian (non-sworn) employees of the police (i.e., civilianization) and to private police who are employed by commercial security companies (i.e., privatization). These, along with COP, are part of the rethinking of the ways that police deal with community-level crime issues and the effort to reevaluate the structure and functioning of police agencies. Both civilianization and privatization may have an impact on women officers' role and opportunities in public law enforcement. While each of these trends has been the focus of several reviews and studies (e.g., Bayley & Shearing, 2004; Forst, 2000; Kostelac, 2004), none addresses the implications for women.

The proportion of civilian police employees has grown from about 8 percent in 1950 to 18 percent in 1977, 27 percent in 1994, and 30 percent as of 2003 (Kostelac,

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2004). These workers, who are predominantly women, are paid less than sworn officers (or have positions as contract workers without job security and benefits) for carrying out a broad range of functions. Their jobs include those previously conducted by sworn officers (e.g., dispatching) as well as more technical positions in computer technology, forensics, research and analysis, and human resources (Forst, 2000).

Privatization is another response to the inability of public police to meet all social needs in terms of security and protection. Policing is increasingly privatized as commercial companies take over functions long held by public police institutions. These for-profit organizations are focused more on crime prevention because their job is to make crimes less likely to occur. With the growth of large private facilities like airports and malls that are used for primarily public activities, the role of private security in monitoring activities has grown. This may have a greater impact on women and racial/ethnic minorities since these groups are lower in the job queue and likely to be hired by private policing employers who offer lower pay and fewer benefits as well as limited mobility opportunities.

How these employees relate to sworn officers and whether there are gender differences in their assignments and their interactions with sworn officers are unknown. Does the growing opportunity to go into police work without the dangers and difficulties of being a sworn officer draw potentially qualified female recruits into civilian or private security positions, thereby reducing the pool of women for sworn positions, or are the recruitment pools separate? Do women civilians encounter the discrimination and sexual harassment that sworn women face, and do departments address these in similar ways? Is there cooperation between these two groups of women, or does increased civilianization threaten women officers and limit their growing numbers? Each of these is an unanswered question with a likely impact on women officers.

The Police Culture and Men's Opposition to Women Officers

Few occupations have been as fully defined as "masculine" or resistant to the integration of women as policing. Despite changes in both the nature of policing and the status of women, many men officers continue to believe that women cannot handle the job physically or emotionally and, therefore, should not be allowed to exercise the moral authority of the state or be integrated into policing. This hostile attitude has been characterized as "a huge if shadowy presence which hangs like a miasma" over women officers (Heidensohn, 1992, p. 65). Beyond the sexist attitudes of individual men, the work culture is characterized by heavy drinking, crude jokes, racism, and homophobia and demands that women who enter it "subsume 'male characteristics' to achieve even a limited social acceptability" (Young, 1991, p. 193).

Men's most vocal concerns about women as police usually are stated in terms of physical capabilities, but the scope of opposition to female officers is far broader and deeper. More than a quarter century ago, S. E. Martin (1980, p. 79) argued that

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the integration of women into police patrol work as coworkers threatens to compromise the work, the way of life, the social status, and the self image of the men.

Resistance to women's integration is related to the nature of the work, the occupational culture, and the manner in which these are used as resources for doing gender, and continues today, although in a less overt manner.

The Logic of Sexism and Women's Threat to Police Work

Jennifer Hunt (1984, p. 294) observed that "the policeman's world constitutes a symbolic universe permeated with gender meanings" that explain much of their behavior. "The logic of sexism" rests on their dualistic worldview that associates gender-stereotyped oppositions (i.e., masculinity/femininity) with various organizational symbols (e.g., street/station house), occupational themes and work activities (e.g., crime fighting/service and order maintenance), and situational meanings (e.g., public/domestic, dirty/clean). In each of the gender-stereotyped opposites, the item associated with the feminine is undervalued (Hunt, 1990).

From this dualistic perspective, men create an idealized image of policing as action oriented, violent, and uncertain. They define themselves through these images that are closely associated with the "masculine" side of contrasting pairs of gender-linked symbols and then use their work as a resource for doing masculinity. Thus, officers associate "real police work" with crime fighting that takes place on the street, often involves collusion in "dirty knowledge" of illicit activity, celebrates physical prowess and involvement in fights, demands emotional control in the face of danger, and evades formal rules. This viewpoint has been characterized as "street cop culture" (Reuss-Ianni, 1983). In contrast, supervisory, station house, and police academy assignments are associated with "feminine labor" involving "inside work" and women's skills. These are associated with the "management cop" culture disdained and resisted by "street cops" (Hunt, 1990).

Women threaten these working-class men's cultural norms, group solidarity, and definition of policing as "men's work" and themselves as masculine. Thus, the integration of women into street patrol has evoked strong opposition that men generally explain in terms of the physical differences between themselves and women, who tend to be smaller and weaker. While men assert that women's physical characteristics are the primary reason that women are less able to perform the job, their assignment to patrol poses a dilemma. In one of the few remaining occupations in which strength and physical ability occasionally are useful, women's presence implies either that the men's unique asset—physical strength—is irrelevant, or that a man who works with a woman will be at a disadvantage in a confrontation.

Three other less frequently articulated concerns also support men's resistance to women: the belief that women are "mentally weaker," the view that women are unable to command public respect as officers, and the concern that "moral" women will break the code of silence and expose the men's illicit activities. Besides providing less "muscle" to a partner, men regard women as "too emotional" and, therefore, unreliable in the face of danger. If women cannot be trusted to aid their partners in

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physical confrontations or to react to fearful or emotionally charged situations in unemotional and "objective" ways, they threaten the basic norms of police work. Many men assert that they patrol in a more cautious (and, in their view, less effective) way with a female partner.

Women's Threat to the Public Image and Citizen "Respect"

Women officers are perceived to threaten the rule that the police should maintain respect on the street. In some instances, the uniform and badge are insufficient; the officer's personal authority and manner of conveying it are needed to gain citizen compliance. Men in this society are accustomed to viewing women as objects to be dominated rather than authority figures to be feared and obeyed. Conversely, women are unused to exercising authority over men. Men officers, therefore, fear that citizens will deny or resist women officers' efforts to exercise police authority and that this challenge to authority will be generalized to the police. Yet the alternative scenario, a woman exercising authority over men, is also threatening to men officers' identities (Martin, 1980).

Women also threaten to expose the "police myth," which hides the demeaning nature of the work and sustains the public image as a successful crime fighter. They remind the men that

> they can only achieve illusory manhood by denying and repressing the essential feminine dimension of police work, which involves social relations, paper work, and housekeeping in the public domain. (Hunt, 1984, p. 294)

Women's Threat to Group Solidarity and Men's Identity

Women's presence also undermines the solidarity of the men's group by changing the informal rules by which officers relate to and compete with each other. The world of the men's locker room is filled with talk focused on sports, women's bodies, and sexuality that fosters men's bonds based on normative heterosexuality. Men officers virulently oppose homosexuality among police as a threat to group solidarity, police control of "deviant" behavior, and the hierarchy of sexualities. As the objects of much of the men's talk, women cannot participate in it on equal terms. Their integration raises the specter of sexual intimacy between officers. Such sexual ties compete with the demands of loyalty to the group that is essential in work involving danger. Despite the possibility of homosexual relationships, when all police were men, the department treated their sexuality as unproblematic as long as it was heterosexual. The fear of heterosexual competition among the men, however, causes organizations to try to eliminate sexuality and emotion from organizational functioning (Acker, 1992).

Women officers also threaten to disturb the informal distribution of rewards because officers no longer compete on equal terms. The "rules of chivalry" (i.e., code of gender interaction by which a "gentleman" relates to a "lady"), as well as the potential for the abuse of power to coerce sexual favors (in violation of the rules of

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chivalry), often come into play in a gender-integrated police force. In such cases, gender is invoked as some men offer, and some women accept, exemptions and "favorable" assignments by taking "unfair advantage" of their sex. Because within the men's status order, sexual dalliances are viewed as power perks, women who accept sexual bargains are targets of officers' resentment, but male supervisors who permit such inequality to arise among officers are not. Women who reject the "bargain" and sexual advances are punished with the label "dyke" or "lesbian" regardless of their sexuality; women who are open lesbians pose additional problems for the men since they are unavailable as sexual targets and untroubled by the lesbian label.

Men's opposition to the integration of women also reflects a "deeper concern about who has a right to manage law and order" (Heidensohn, 1992, p. 215). In fact, Heidensohn asserts, the view that "men 'own' order and have sole rights to preserve it" is the real but unstated issue underlying their arguments that women are unsuitable and will shatter men's solidarity. Men's resistance to women on patrol is better understood as emanating from a struggle over the ownership of social control.

Women's integration challenges men's use of police work as a means of doing masculinity. Men strengthen their gendered identities through doing work that is labeled "masculine" and by fostering the image of their jobs as "men's work." Gender segregation in the workplace, therefore, enables them to heighten the distinction between masculinity and femininity (C. L. Williams, 1989, p. 133). Preserving job activities labeled "for men only" simultaneously reinforces the association between masculinity and social control. If a man relies on another man, it is defined as "male bonding" or "camaraderie"; his reliance on a woman is viewed as a sign of weakness and, therefore, unmanly. The presence of women poses a bind for a man who wants to depend on his partner but does not want to depend on a woman. For many men, the simplest solution is to exclude women from patrol work. Since that is not possible except in very small departments, the most vigorous opponents of women deal with their presence by avoidance; the rest appear to view "good" women cops as "exceptions" but treat women as a group as outsiders.

Men police fear that women on patrol will threaten the public image of the cops since large segments of the population share the men's stereotypes of women as more emotional and less physically aggressive than men (Grant, 2000). The inclusion of gay and lesbian officers adds to the image concerns of the male officers about being "men's men."

In sum, the combination of danger and power over the mechanisms of social control has resulted in a close association between policing and masculinity. The men have opposed women's integration into their ranks as a threat to their definition of the work, occupational culture, social status, and self-image as men's men, which is a psychological "fringe benefit" of the job.

Barriers to Women Officers: Interaction, Ideology, and Images

Men express their opposition to women officers through interaction patterns that marginalize and exclude them. Women's social isolation denies them mobility

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opportunities by limiting information, mentors, informal training, and a sense of comfort on the job. They also face conflicting expectations and double standards regarding their performance. On the one hand, their visibility leads to higher performance standards than men confront; on the other hand, they encounter paternalistic treatment where little is expected of them. Sexual and gender harassment also are common occurrences. Each of these barriers is shaped by race-ethnicity and sexual orientation as well as by gender.

The resistance faced by the first women on patrol was blatant, malicious, widespread, organized, and sometimes life threatening (Bloch & Anderson, 1974; Hunt, 1984; S. E. Martin, 1980). Initially, many men refused to teach these women skills routinely imparted to new men; they failed to respond quickly or assist women seeking backup. Often, supervisors assigned women to dangerous foot beats alone (while men worked in pairs), overzealously enforced rules, depressed women's performance evaluations, sexually harassed them, and ignored women's mistreatment by fellow officers.

There were a few men who favored the integration of women into patrol and who assisted women. However, they did so at the risk of being ostracized by fellow street cops, and their actions on behalf of women tended to be viewed by other men as directed toward particular individuals rather than efforts to benefit women as a group (S. E. Martin, 1980). Today, the proportion of men who are comfortable working with women partners has grown substantially, but such men still rarely overtly resist the dominant attitudes.

Discrimination and hostility are less openly tolerated now but continue to permeate police organizations. A recent study found a consensus among experienced women officers that "policing has changed with the times [and] that the discrimination of the past is not present in the same form today" (Gossett & Williams, 1998, p. 68). Nevertheless, two thirds of the women perceived continued discrimination by colleagues, supervisors, and citizens in less overt form, including derogatory comments, inappropriate behaviors, and failure to take the women seriously. In the station house, frequent pranks, jokes, and comments that call attention to women's sexuality make it clear to women that they are "outsiders." For women of color and lesbians, harassment amplifies their outsider status. For example, lesbian women may be assumed to be masculine and therefore more competent than heterosexual women on the street, but are harassed due to their gender and heterosexual male officers' curiosity and hostility (S. L. Miller, Forest, & Jurik, 2004). By sexualizing the workplace, men superimpose their gender superiority on women's claims to work-based equality.

Interactional Dilemmas

Because women comprise only a small proportion of officers, they also suffer the consequences of tokenism (Kanter, 1977). Their visibility as tokens leads to little margin for error. At the same time, women are treated paternalistically, expected to do less than the men, extravagantly praised for doing an average job, denied opportunities to take initiative, and/or criticized for doing so (i.e., acting "like a man").

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They are also pressured to conform to gendered stereotypes as "mother," "little sister," or "seductress." The errors of an individual woman are exaggerated and generalized to all women as a class. Conversely, positive efforts to organize a women's association or advance an individual woman, regardless of her accomplishments, raises concerns about "favored treatment."

Both the physical and the social environment provide a variety of cues that reflect and maintain women's subordinate status. Physical arrangements make clear that both the street and the police station are "male turf." Locker room and lavatory facilities for women are limited; sexually oriented magazines "accidentally" left in the station still are common sights.

Double standards also persist regarding language, sexuality, appearance, and demeanor. Women face "language dilemmas" in deciding whether to curse (and use "male" language) or not (and give up the opportunity to make "strong" statements), whether to tolerate men's use of gross language, and how to deal with being called "hon" or "sweetheart" by colleagues. Women supervisors also must deal with refusal of male subordinates to acknowledge their rank. In fact, Haarr and Morash (2005) found that language harassment (defined as offensive use of profanity) remains a significant source of stress for women. Describing the work environment and double standards that women encounter, a woman sergeant in Susan Martin's (1990, p. 153) study summarized the situation this way:

> There's a certain finesse a woman has to have, a certain feminine grace. If you tell it like it is and don't watch your figure or fix yourself up or have what the men expect, you won't be given quite the preference. . . . For example, they let a capable woman go [from a detective assignment] because she's fat . . . yet they'll give breaks to the biggest male toad with a foul mouth.

Off-duty socializing also poses interactional dilemmas for female officers. The men often drink together after work and participate in team sports or other shared recreational activities. Women's limited participation in this informal socializing deprives them of an important source of information and feedback and the opportunity to make contacts, cultivate sponsors, and build alliances that contribute to occupational success (S. E. Martin, 1980). Although the "stag party" atmosphere of off-duty partying has diminished, women are only partially integrated into the informal activities and influence structure. Some women choose not to socialize outside of work due to family responsibilities or concern with gossip. Although it protects their reputations, this social withdrawal isolates women. Other women participate in social activities, but at the risk of sexual rumor and innuendo.

The Sexualized Workplace

Men maintain women's status as "outsiders" by sexualizing the workplace (Cockburn, 1991; Swerdlow, 1989). Women experience sexual propositions and threats as well as sexual harassment as a condition of work, including unwanted touching, comments that call attention to their sexuality or express antiwoman sentiment, and a variety of pranks and jokes (Hunt, 1984; S. E. Martin, 1980; Sugden,

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2005; M. Young, 1991). Women still find sex magazines, dildos, and vibrators in their lockers and mailboxes, and encounter betting pools on who will be the first to have sex with a new woman officer. Sugden (2005, p. 17) argues, "women are desexualised, hyper-sexualized and defeminised by male police officers as a means to confirm and stabilize the masculinity and heterosexism of policing."

Most women officers have experienced sexual harassment on the job. In one study, Susan Martin (1990) found that 63 percent of 72 women officers interviewed in five large urban departments recounted instances of sexual harassment on the job, including 25 percent who had experienced *quid pro quo* harassment. According to a 1990 Michigan State University study of 26 urban and rural departments, 12 percent of the women officers said they had been touched by supervisors in an offensive way in the past year; 4 percent said their bosses had tried to force them to have intercourse (cited in Cooper, 1992, p. A-10).

Studies conducted outside the United States also document high rates of sexual harassment of women officers in many nations. Jennifer Brown's (1998) survey of police personnel in England and Wales found that 70 percent of women officers experienced some form of sexual harassment directed at them personally in the six months prior to responding to the questionnaire, and 44 percent had experienced harassment often. Sutton (1996) reported even higher rates in Australia. J. M. Brown and Heidensohn (2000) cite similar studies finding sexual harassment in Belgium, Denmark, and Holland.

Regardless of how they react, such harassment is problematic for women. It is an important source of stress (J. M. Brown & Grover, 1997; Haarr & Morash, 2005; Texeira, 2002; Wexler & Logan, 1983); it isolates women from men colleagues and divides women. Although many women officers experience sexual harassment, they have not united or taken coordinated action to press for change. Instead, women tend to reproach other women, asserting that those who get sexually harassed "ask for it" through their demeanor or behavior. Such victim blaming makes the woman rather than her harasser the target of criticism.

The Intersections of Race, Ethnicity, Sexual Orientation, and Gender

The simultaneous effects of race-ethnicity and gender for women in policing rarely have been examined. Although sociologist Diana Pike (1992, pp. 275–276) observed that "being black as opposed to being female generates a very different organizational adaptation and response" because "black men do not challenge the quintessential police officer role in the same way women do," she ignored the unique situation of black women officers.

Men's initial resistance to the presence of women on patrol led to hostile treatment regardless of race. Nevertheless, men's different reactions to and treatment of black and white women reflect differences in cultural images and attitudes (Belknap & Shelley, 1992; S. E. Martin, 1994; B. R. Price, Sokoloff, & Kuleshnyka, 1992; Texeira, 2002; Worden, 1993). Because cultural images or stereotypes of white and black women differ, black women often are treated according to separate norms and images. They are less frequently "put on the pedestal" or treated as "ladies" or "little

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sisters" to be protected by white men. Rather, they are treated as "jezebels" (sexually aggressive women) or "welfare mothers" (i.e., seen as likely to get pregnant and take advantage of "light duty"; P. H. Collins, 2000).

S. E. Martin (1990) found that white women, particularly those who were physically attractive, were more likely than black women to get inside assignments and protection on street patrol. A number of black women observed that white men backed them up when they had a white partner but not when they had a black one. Belknap and Shelley (1992, p. 63) found that black women were less likely than white women to believe that fellow officers recognized when they had done a good job. Black women also report encountering racist stereotypes (e.g., that they are stupid) and outright racial harassment. Texeira (2002) observed that black women in law enforcement experience "racialized sexual harassment" and believe that they are being harassed *because* they are African-American women. As one black woman commented on the combination of race and gender problems she encountered (S. E. Martin, 1994, p. 393),

> Sometimes I couldn't tell if what I faced was racial or sexual or both. The black female is the last one on the totem pole in the department.

Lesbian officers confront additional problems due to the hegemonic masculinity and homophobic attitudes of many of the male officers. The first issue gay women encounter is whether to hide their sexual orientation (and, by staying "in the closet," hide an important part of their identity and life) or to "come out" and risk possible physical or verbal abuse and withdrawal of support from fellow officers. For many, the decision rests on both individual characteristics such as ethnicity and the organizational climate of the department (S. L. Miller et al., 2004). In addition, lesbian cops adapt to work demands by making an extra effort to prove themselves as competent officers. A survey comparing gay and straight women officers with gay men and white heterosexual men found that on a measure of gender-related attitudes toward policing, the gay women "out machoed" the white men, while the gay men scored no differently than heterosexual men officers. The authors (Myers, Forest, & Miller, 2004) suggest that nontraditional police officers still feel like outsiders who must prove they are tough enough to qualify for the job. In interviews conducted as part of the same study, many of the lesbians sought to gain acceptance as officers by separating themselves from "typical" female officers by hard work and proving themselves as "tough crime fighters."

Summary

This chapter has examined the work of patrol officers, the historical and current role of women in police work, and the sources of men's resistance to women's presence. Initially, women entered policing as specialists, doing work that was an extension of their domestic roles. Women's integration into police patrol in the United States was fostered by a number of factors related to both changes in the nature and

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organization of police work following urban unrest and changes in the social status of women, particularly legal changes following the 1972 Amendments to the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

The number of women officers has grown in the past three decades both in the United States and around the world. Currently, women represent only about 12 percent of sworn personnel in the United States and about 9 percent of supervisors. Similarly, they comprise about 15 percent of officers but a smaller proportion of supervisors in England, New Zealand, and Australia. Despite their increased representation, policing remains associated with masculinity, and the informal work culture continues to be strongly resistant to women because their presence threatens men's definition of their work and themselves. Women are perceived as a threat to the men's physical safety, group solidarity, and occupational identity as "macho" crime fighters. In addition, their presence undermines the close association of their work with masculinity and men's control over social order.

The increased emphasis on community-oriented policing in the past two decades has fostered a change in police ideology and a greater emphasis on communication with citizens, service to communities, and crime prevention. These characteristics are associated with femininity. Although one might expect this to have led to an increase in the representation and promotion of women, there is little evidence of such a change. Instead, police administrators' emphasis on changing the way the police do the job has resulted in resentment and resistance by many rank-and-file officers who are concerned about the feminization of policing. For COP to gain acceptance, the skills and activities must be defined in ways that are more gender neutral. The effects on women of other changes in policing, including civilianization, privatization, and responses to terrorism and natural disasters, are still unclear.

What is clear is that women officers encounter interactional barriers and gendered images that establish them as outsiders, sexual objects, targets of men's resentment, and competitors who threaten to change the rules of officer interaction. Compounding these stresses, black women officers face dilemmas arising from racist stereotypes, and lesbians encounter homophobia.

In addition to an informal work culture that marginalizes and excludes them, women enter a police organization with rules, policies, and practices that are far from gender neutral. These organizational barriers and on-the-street dilemmas for women and the manner in which they have responded to and overcome them are the subject of the next chapter.

Endnotes

1. For more data on the history of women in policing in the United States, see Appier (1998), Feinman (1986), and Schulz (2004). For studies of women police in Britain, see Heidensohn (1992), S. Jones (1986), and M. Young (1991); for those focused on Australia, see Prenzler (1994, 1998), Prenzler and Hayes (2000), and Sugden (2005); for women in New Zealand, see E. K. Butler et al. (2003); for studies on women police in India, see Natarajan (2001, 2003). For an international comparative perspective, see J. M. Brown (1997) and J. M. Brown and Heidensohn (2000).