

Women in law and enforcement: Changing roles and Problems

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Abstract

Throughout history, discrimination against women has existed. Some forms of prejudice are directed solely at the behaviour of women, their domestic roles, or the careers they have chosen. Women have persevered despite all of the persecution and now have rights that enable them to be more than just homemakers. It can be challenging to comprehend how women are treated unfairly in the current society. Some of this discrimination against women who choose to work in law enforcement will be examined through this review of the literature. This essay's goals are to address the moral dilemmas that women encounter on a regular basis in the workplace and what happens to new female law enforcement recruits. It is hoped that by throwing more light on the issue and bringing it to the public's attention, law enforcement would take additional steps to end the discrimination that women police officers face. This essay not only addresses the difficulties women encounter, but also describes the measures certain police agencies are trying to improve the working conditions for their existing and future officers.

WOMEN POLICE OFFICERS FACE ETHICAL CHALLENGES

Women in Law Enforcement: Moral Challenges Female Officers Face Women have consistently experienced discrimination from men throughout history. Women were not allowed to own land, hold public office, or have jobs in early civilizations. These rights are still not guaranteed to women in various parts of the world. Women had to wait years to receive the same rights as males in the United States. Women marched for their rights in the 1970s, and they eventually succeeded (Flannagan, 2017). Although women now have the same rights as men, discrimination against them is still present. The employment market is one of the main places where discrimination against women is prevalent. Girls are told they can be anything as they grow up and begin to consider the kind of profession they will choose. These girls discover that the employment market is very different after they become ladies and enter it. Gender ideology is the root cause of this. This is an effort to explain why men and women are treated differently (Zellner, 1972; Gaines & Kappeler, 2011, p. 97; Valentova, 2016; Ward, 2017). Gender bias affects women as well. Men hold this viewpoint to assert that women are unable to perform the task as well as men can. Men use both of these phrases to defend their treatment of women and to explain why they should not give a woman a job (Valentova, 2016; Ward, 2017; Zellner, 1972). This method of thinking applies to all areas of law enforcement. Males have always held the majority of positions in law enforcement (Freshour, 2012; Gaines & Kappeler, 2011, p. 97; Scott, 2005; Ward, 2017). The last few years have seen the implementation of policies requiring departments to recruit women. Women still only make up about 12% of law enforcement in the US as of 2013 (Gaines & Kappeler 2011, p. 99; Ward, 2017; Yu, 2011). Although there are fewer women in police enforcement officers has climbed from 11% in 2011, but this change is happening at a rather gradual rate (Gaines & Kappeler, 2011, p. 99; Yu, 2011).

RECRUITING DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN

The biological distinctions between the sexes must be explored in order to comprehend the differences between male and female recruits. Men and women differ from one other in a variety of ways. Men are perceived as being dominant, violent, strong, and masculine (Davis, 2005; Ward, 2017; Yu, 2011). (Davis, 2005; Freshour, 2012; Ward, 2017; Yu, 2011) Women are perceived as being nurturing, sensitive, frail, and compassionate. Men and women have been divided by these disparities throughout history. Perceived gender roles, which have to do with what a man and a woman do in the home, are another thing that separates men and women (Ward, 2017). Women were only associated with giving and nurturing roles. As a result, when women returned from work, they took care of their husbands, cooked, cleaned, and took care of the kids (Ward, 2017). For men, because they are perceived as being powerful and authoritarian, demanded that the man of the house have a job and handle maintenance on various household goods (Ward, 2017). Women became more visible in the workforce thanks to women's rights movements between 1865 and 1970 (Davis, 2005; Flannagan, 2017; Yu, 2011). Due to the fact that many jobs are still seen as hegemonic masculine (Barratt, Bergman, & Thompson, 2014; Scott, 2005), gender bias persists in the workforce. The idea that men are dominating because of their

independent personalities, competitive nature, and role as the major provider is what is meant by the phrase "hegemonic masculine" (Barratt, Bergman, & Thompson, 2014; Oxford Reference, 2018). Women are not considered capable of being police officers because they are seen as weak and reliant on men for support. Although traditionally viewed as a hegemonic masculine vocation, law enforcement is beginning to transform in recent years (Barratt, Bergman, & Thompson, 2014; Scott, 2005). The differences that women bring to the police force have been used by departments as a tool; this is covered in more detail later in the paper.

ISSUES WITH FINDING FEMALE OFFICERS

It makes sense that few women would be interested in entering the police force given that law enforcement has historically been a profession dominated by men. It is not true that women do not want to work in law enforcement; rather, it is because male-dominated law enforcement does not actively seek out female candidates. According to research, women have a poor opinion of the law enforcement profession as a result of the discrimination they have experienced over the years at the hands of law enforcement. The fact that many departments do not actively seek out women throughout the recruitment process is a major obstacle to hiring female police officers. Many departments believed they had to decrease their standards in order to solve the issue of attracting women officers (Gaines & Kappeler, 2011, p.102– 104). In addition to a physical agility test, recruits had to pass a written exam. The written test was usually not a problem for women, but the male trainers for the physical agility test would make them work harder (Gaines & Kappeler, 2011, p.107; Yu, 2011). Many of the female recruits would be forced to fail if this were done. Ethics-wise, the departments were aware that what they were doing was unethical, but many still carry it out. The male cops claimed that women couldn't do the job based on the results of the physical agility test (Barratt; Freshour, 2012; Gaines & Kappeler, 2011, p.107). This practise influenced the community of women to see the police force negatively.

QUESTIONS RAISED UPON BECOMING AN OFFICER, THE FEMALE RECRUIT

The female police join the more experienced officers in the field after the department has found and trained its female recruits. It can be challenging for the senior officer to accept rookie law enforcement personnel when they first begin their roles. This applies to female police as well, and gender bias may make things more difficult for them. Many police agencies still have male dominated demographic and anti-women attitudes (Ward, 2017; Yu, 2011). Because they think women are incapable of performing the duties required of them, male law enforcement agents develop a negative attitude towards women. According to the male police, female cops are too frail and unable to deal with the challenges of becoming a patrol officer (Davis, 2005; Freshour, 2012; Ward, 2017; Yu, 2011). When this circumstance does arise in a department, the female officers are transferred to desk work rather than regular patrol, which aids in giving new hires experience in the field (Barratt, 2014; Yu, 2011). The act of sexual harassment committed by male officers in the department is another problem that female officers encounter when they join the police force following their training. No matter what profession women chose, sexual harassment always was a problem. Sexual advances made by male police towards female officers are the most frequent kind of sexual harassment (Chavis, 2001; Davis, 2005; Ward, 2017; Yu, 2011). When this happens, the male cop will either talk about the sexual act he wants to conduct with the female officer or will show the female officer images of a sexual nature (Gaines & Kappeler, 2011, p. 101; Yu, 2011). Quid pro quo and a hostile workplace are two types of sexual harassment that female officers may encounter at work. The female officer will have her working conditions changed in the form of reduced hours, a promotion, or the need to complete an assignment when the quid pro quo type of sexual harassment happens (Chavis, 2001; Gaines & Kappeler, 2011, p.101; Yu, 2011). The scenario may become confrontational if the female officer continues to reject the advances in a sexual manner. The aggressor's threats or physical violence prevent the female officer from carrying out their duties when sexual harassment escalates into a hostile work environment (Chavis, 2001; Gaines & Kappeler, 2011, p. 101). According to Davis (2005), Freshour (2012), Gaines & Kappeler (2011), Ward (2017), and Yu (2011), sexual harassment is now illegal under Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act due to its prevalence and nature. Although it is against the law, sexual harassment nevertheless occurs in many police units. One case study of 72 female officers in a big department found that 63% of them encounter quid pro quo harassment (Hunts, as quoted in Yu, 2011). A further finding of the study was that these women did not disclose their sexual harassment because they feared reprisal from their managers (Hunts, as reported in Yu, 2011).

CONCLUSION

Women in law enforcement have been a topic of discussion throughout this research work. Sexual harassment and gender bias in law enforcement have been proved to be persistently serious issues (Barratt, 2014; Chavis, 2001; Davis, 2005; Valentova, 2016; Yu, 2011). Laws to improve the treatment of women in police enforcement have been passed, but they haven't had much of an influence on the departments. It has been demonstrated that for the transformation to truly take place, men's attitudes towards women need to change. It

has been established that women are equally capable of carrying out their duties as law enforcement officers as males are (Chavis, 2001; Davis, 2005; Freshour, 2012; Scott, 2005; Ward, 2017). The purpose of this essay is to draw attention to the moral dilemmas that women who work in law enforcement encounter. Although some departments are making an effort to eliminate attitudes and prejudice against women, progress is being made slowly. According to news sources from the Gastonia Police Department in North Carolina, Nancy Capistran is the department's Sergeant and "Today all detectives report to her." Except for one, they are all males" (Sperow, 2017). This serves to demonstrate how difficult it will be for law enforcement to change society's perceptions of women. Departments need to hire and keep female officers if they want to change the perception of women in law enforcement for the better. In order to effectively handle the problems that women face, law enforcement must retrain and promote female personnel. By elevating more women into leadership positions, the restrictive male mindset will either change or encourage unfavorable sentiments. To embrace the changes taking place, police agencies will need to set up programmes to work with their officers. Research has shown that having high-ranking female officers in police departments lowers the incidence of sexual harassment charges and enhances the working environment. Women who work in law enforcement are aware that nothing will be handed to them, and they don't expect things to be that way.

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