

A police service in transformation: implications for women police officers.

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Abstract

This paper presents an overview of current trends besetting the police service in England and Wales, including the reduction of resources through austerity pressures, changing patterns of crime such as rises in cyber related offences, greater victim focus, the introduction of graduate entry and changes in political accountability through the newly elected Police and Crime Commissioners. Secondary analysis of data enabled an assessment of the degree to which these impacts the employment and deployment of women in policing. As the gender ratio changes and reforms facilitate styles of policing with greater emphasis on the ethic of care it might be expected this will reflect more feminine values. The conclusion drawn is that the impacts of feminisation are somewhat overstated and remain rather fragile.

Key words: Policewomen; gender and policing; feminisation of policing; austerity impacts on policing; police transformation.

Biographical note

Jennifer Brown has research interests in police occupational culture particularly its gendered aspects and evidence-based policing. She was deputy chair of an Independent Commission of Enquiry into the future of policing. Most recently she was one of several collaborators on a Home Office funded project examining new graduate pathways into policing in England and Wales.

Marisa Silvestri's research interests lie at the intersections of gender, crime, justice, policing, leadership and organisational cultures. She is series editor for *Key Themes in Policing* with Policy Press and an editorial board member of *Policing and Society: An International Journal of Research and Policy*. She is chair of the British Society of Criminology's Women, Crime and Criminal Justice Network.

Introduction

The focus of this paper is the police service of England and Wales where currently women represent almost 30% of the officer establishment. Continuing the upward trajectory of women's proportionate share of the workforce is supported by a range of arguments. These include: fair representation in police organisations to ensure the interests of all the public are reflected in policy and decision making; demonstration of a commitment to equal opportunities; and, enhancing public perception of police legitimacy thereby encouraging co-operation with law enforcement (Shjarback and Todak, 2019). In addition, gender diversity is arguably a vehicle to improve delivery of policing at neighbourhood levels by tapping into feminine collaborative ways of working, reducing more aggressive tactics (Miller, 1999) and enhancing the ethic of care (Rabe-Hemp, 2008). As police organisations throughout the world acknowledge the importance of women's presence in policing and are looking to identify, establish and optimise the conditions for increasing women's representation (Rabe-Hemp and Garcia, in press), the positive numerical gains made by women in England and Wales is of considerable interest to police organisations in a global setting.

The police service has undergone considerable reform since the turn of the century, with the past decade alone witnessing some of the most radical attempts to bring about changes in the police role, its identity and governance – these changes are discernible both at an organisational and individual level. The aim of this paper is to present a critical review of the literature and undertake secondary analyses of available statistical data to demonstrate potential impacts on the employment, deployment, progression and future direction for women in policing. The analysis is necessarily selective and highlights the major contemporary internally focussed reforms which include: new governance arrangements with the introduction of the Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs); the professionalization agenda which mandates graduate entry level for new police recruits; the adoption of evidence-based policing to inform working practices; and the call for greater legitimacy through the development of a code of ethics and an emphasis on embedding the ideas of procedural justice theory. The analysis is situated within the wider external context of change, namely the climate of austerity and contemporary advances in use of digital technologies and consequences for new patterns of crime. Given that austerity and a rise in digital technologies are worldwide

phenomena, this paper provides new insights and analyses on the current and possible future state of gender representation within policing.

We characterise the police organisation as being in a state of flux and transition (Brown et al 2018a) and our analysis identifies the ways in which both internal and external forces simultaneously enable and inhibit the presence and progression of women in policing. We argue that when combined, these factors coalesce to impact the police's occupational culture, organisational structures and ways of working. More particularly, we note the gendered impacts of such reform and assess how each has already or may affect the scope for women in developing both policing and women's police careers.

Method

As defined by Grant and Booth (2009:97) this paper conforms to a literature review of recent and current research. As they point out a literature review seeks to identify what has been accomplished previously, consolidating and synthesizing findings in textual, tabular or graphical form and providing some analysis of their contribution or value. As literature reviews lack an explicit intent to maximize scope or analyse data, conclusions may be open to selection bias. To minimise this, secondary analyses were conducted on data bases of national statistics to present some confirmatory empirical findings. Hakim (1982:12) defines secondary analysis as "further analyses of a survey of social datasets that presents interpretations, conclusions or knowledge additional to, or different from, those presented in the first report or enquiry as a whole and its main results."

The literature review utilised Directory of Open access Journals; Emerald Management Xtra, Informaworld; JSTOR, Sage Journals Online; Swetwise and Google Scholar. Suffixed by England and Wales search terms included: women in policing; policewomen; austerity and policing; digital technologies and policing; professionalization and policing; policing vulnerability; ethics and policing; Police and Crime Commissioners.

Secondary sources included data from the Crime Survey of England and Wales (CSEW)ⁱ, Office for National Statistics (ONS)ⁱⁱ; Home Office Statistical Bulletins on police numbersⁱⁱⁱ; the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)^{iv}; Complaints data from the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) (formerly Independent Police Complaints Commission)^v. Data were extracted to show historical trends and analysed to reveal any gender differences. In addition, some secondary analyses were conducted on data from a previously published survey by one of the authors (Brown et al 2018b) for the purposes of this paper. Chi-square tests were conducted to determine any statistically significant gender differences in probationer officers' use of Evidence Based Policing principles.

Literature Review and Secondary Data Analyses

We identify two of the main external drivers that have impacted policing in England and Wales as austerity resulting in reduced budgets and decreased officer numbers and developments in digital technologies contributing to changing patterns of crime. We then describe internal reform in governance arrangements with the advent of the elected police and crime commissioners (PCCs) together with the professionalization agenda mandating graduate entry and the introduction of evidence-based practices. We then show how these have affected the police occupational culture.

Contextualising Austerity

As a consequence of the global financial crisis and the UK's fiscal deficit, the 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review (HM Treasury, 2010) of the Coalition Government called for major reductions in public expenditure in England and Wales, including an unprecedented 20 per cent cut in the police budget (Millie, 2013). In the event, the police service suffered an 11% percentage real-terms funding reduction in 2010-11 and 25% in 2018-19 (National Audit Office, 2018). Perhaps the most tangible impact was an 18% reduction in the size of the total police workforce, including officers, police and community support officers, and other non-warranted police staff between March 2010 and March 2018. Figure 1 details the overall picture (compiled from Home Office Statistical data) showing that between 2004 and 2009 there was a steady increase in officer numbers but between 2010 and 2018 there was a reversal with a 15.1% decrease.

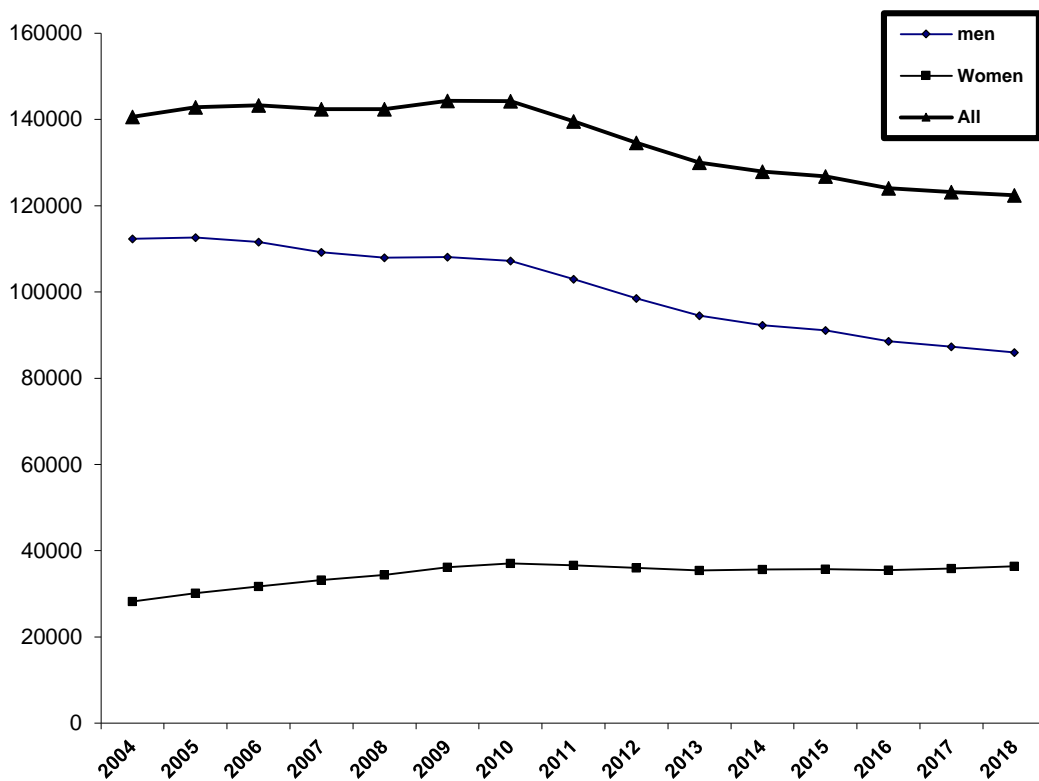


Figure 1: Numbers of police officers by gender 2004-2018

Data extracted from Home Office Police Workforce, England and Wales statistical Bulletins March 31st 2004 to March 31st 2018.

Increasing the representation of women in policing corresponding to the gender ratio of the population will, it has been argued, bring positive benefits: contribute to more justice focussed organisations that are more responsive to public needs (Schuck 2018); build better relationship with communities (Silvestri, 2015) and act as a catalyst for organisational change (Rabe Hemp, 2018). The data show a pattern of women’s progressively increasing percentage share of the workforce. A closer examination of the statistical returns, conducted by the present authors, finds that from 2004 to the high watermark of 2010 when numbers peaked, the percentage of women increased from 20% to 26%. In this period men’s numbers were actually already declining (by 3.7%). In the downturn (2010 - 2018) the overall percentage of officers declined by 15% with men proportionately bearing the greater impact: numbers of women officers decreased by 1.7% compared to 19.7% of men.

Secondary analysis of the rank data reveals that there was a significant reduction in the number of chief superintendents, from a total of 540 in 2004 to 288 in 2018. Again, this trend shows a differential rate for men and women. There was a 55% decrease in the number of male chief superintendents between 2004 (N=497) and 2018 (N=223) with a corresponding increase of 56% for women from 43 (2004) to 65 (2018). Figures 2 and 3 show the pattern of gains and losses for all supervisory ranks between 2004 and 2010 and 2010 to 2018.

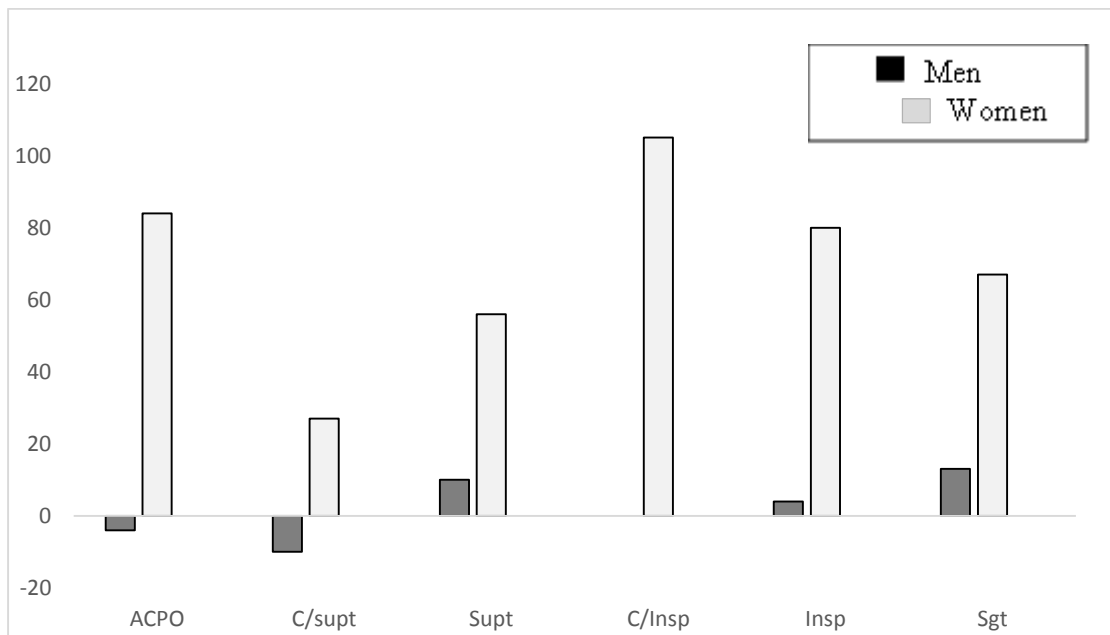


Figure 2: Percentage gains and losses by rank and gender between 2004 and 2010

Data extracted from Home Office Police Workforce, England and Wales statistical Bulletins March 31st 2004 and March 31st 2010.

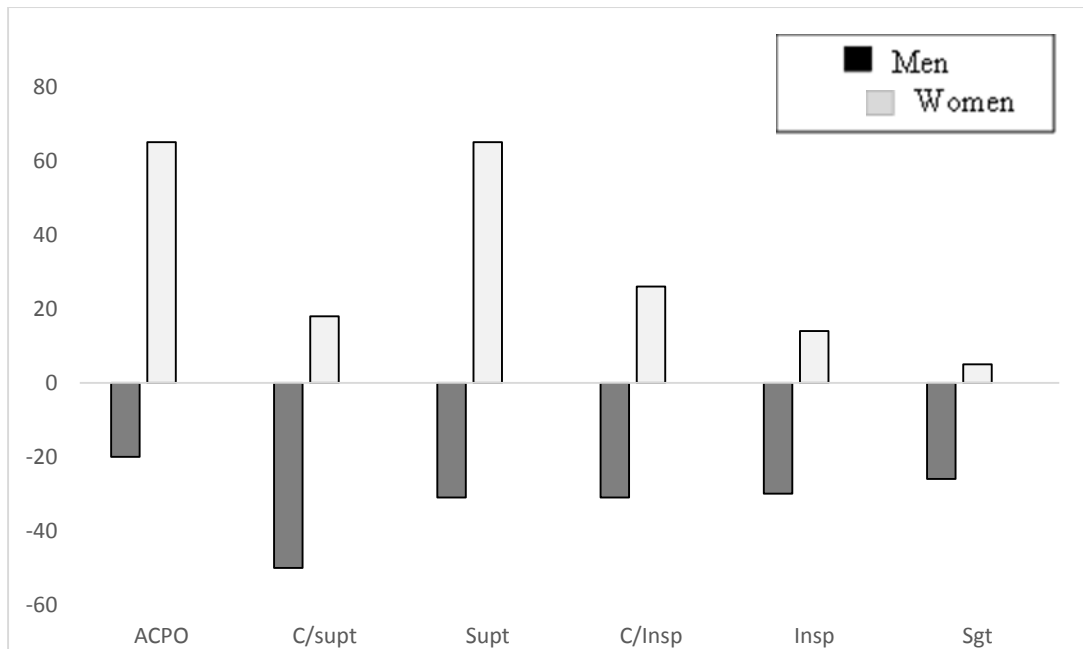


Figure 3 Percentage gains and losses by rank and gender between 2010 and 2018

Data extracted from Home Office Police Workforce, England and Wales statistical Bulletins March 31st 2010 and March 31st 2018.

So overall, austerity reductions in police numbers has probably slowed the rate of increase for women’s presence in policing but has not particularly affected the upward trajectory of police women’s representation nor had an adverse impact on their occupancy of senior rank. The recruitment rate for women increased from 24% in 2004 to 31% in 2010 reaching 34% by 2018. Leaving rates for women in 2018 were 5.7% of the total number of serving women compared to 7.4% for men. This is a reversal of the situation in 2004 where the corresponding percentage of leavers were 25% for women and 5.5% for men. There are a number of possible explanations for these trends. On the one hand, men are more likely to have been affected by the imposition of Police Regulation A19 whereby officers with full pensionable service may be required to resign on the grounds of efficiency and has been used by 15 police forces since 2010 to dismiss groups of older, often more senior, officers as a way of reducing their workforce sizes in response to cuts to their budgets (Crawford, Disney and Simpson, 2016). On the other hand, Ward and Prenzler (2016) report some forces have actively sought to enhance the recruitment of women by facilitating flexible working arrangements and child care support.

Changing Patterns of Crime

In England and Wales overall rates of crime and crime types are measured by the Crime Survey of England and Wales and Police recorded crime statistics (Tilley and Tseloni, 2016). Measurement is not without its problems (Maguire, 2012) but there is a recognition that over the last decade there has been a discernible shift in levels and patterns of crime (House of Commons Home Affairs Select Committee, 2018). Levels, falling since the 1990s, have more recently shown an upward trajectory (ONS, 2018). Figure 4 shows the composite rates.

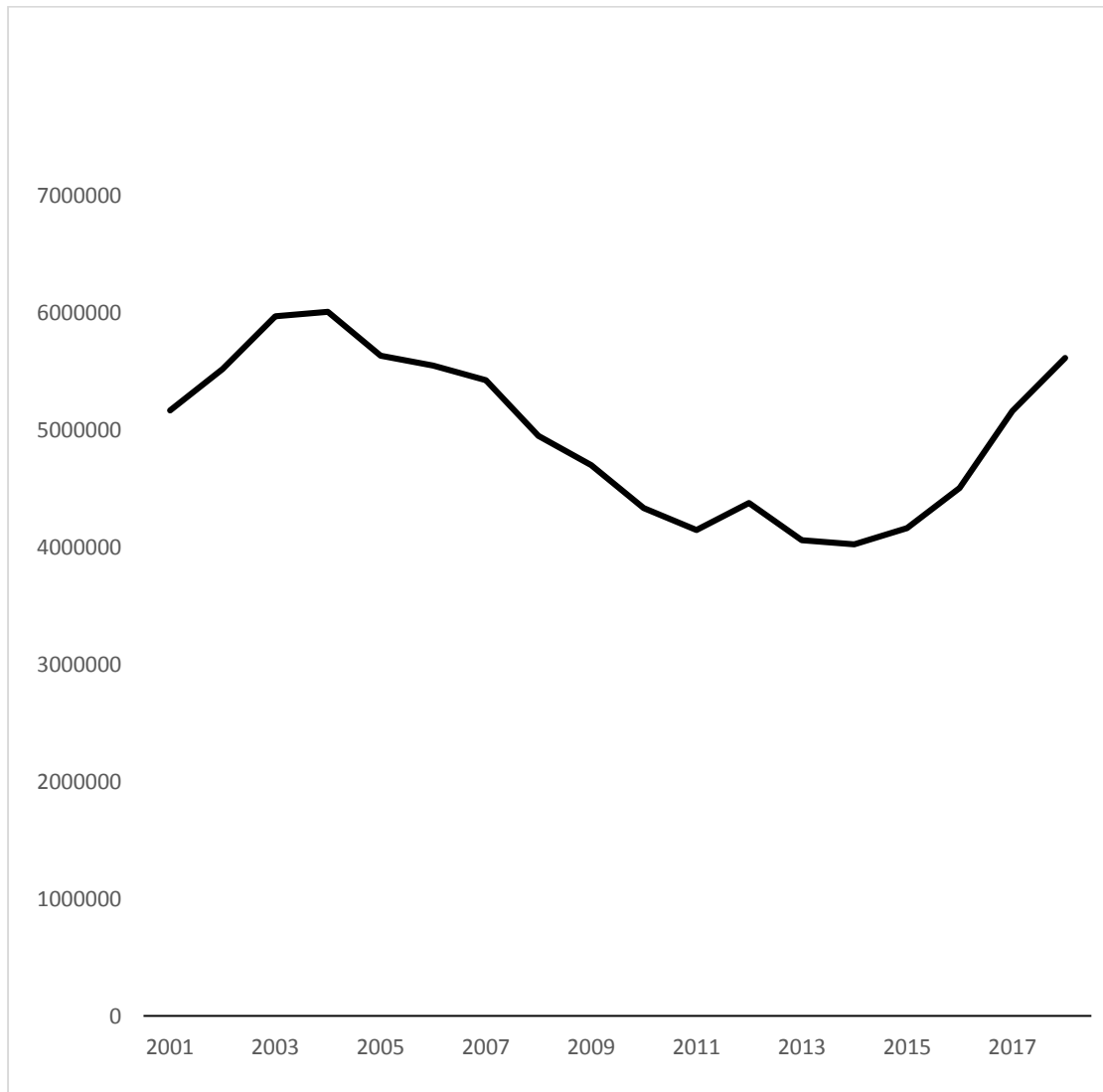


Figure 4 Overall crime rates 2001-2018 (ONS, 2018)

Data extracted from the Office of National Statistics

Disaggregating this pattern, ONS data reveal that whilst overall, violent crime was falling between 2003 and 2013 by 15%, rates for harassment and stalking, which disproportionately affect women, increased by 41% during the same period. The overall upward trend in all violent crime increased by 56% from 2014, whilst that for stalking and harassment increased by 81%. Similarly, during the same time periods the number of reported rapes increased by 24% (2003-2013) and by 62% between 2014 and 2018. The House of Commons Home Affairs Select Committee (2018) observed that the number of child sex abuse (CSA) cases recorded by the police increased by 178% between the years ending March 2007 and March 2017, including a 187% increase in recorded rapes of girls under the age of 13, a 355% increase in rapes of boys under 13, and a 511% increase in the abuse of children through sexual exploitation. The latest statistics show a particularly sharp increase in a number of specific CSA offences recorded in the last five years, including a twelve-fold increase in sexual grooming. The rise in the global 'Me Too' movement provides further evidence of the pervasive and universal nature of sexual violence against girls and women (Bisom-Rapp,2018).

Westmarland (2001) discusses the various moves encouraging the police to devote more effort and resources into dealing with sexual violence during the 1990s which saw organisational changes including the introduction of better training and creation of specialised Domestic Violence, Family Protection and Child Protection Units. More recently the Police Service provision has come under considerable strain (Towers and Walby, 2012). They estimate that 31 per cent of the funding to the domestic violence and sexual abuse sector from local authorities had been cut between 2010/11 and 2011/12. Nine per cent of women (320) seeking refuge were turned away by Women's Aid on a typical day in 2011 due to lack of space. Independent Domestic Violence Advisers also experienced funding cuts – of eight major advice service providers supporting 13,180 clients, two faced funding cuts of 100 per cent, three cuts of 50 per cent, three of 40 per cent and two of 25 per cent. The police service finds itself picking up the fallout (Charman, 2017). In addition, there have been new requirements to investigate historic cases often resulting from failures of earlier inquiries such as the Savile sex abuse scandal (Williams and Stanko 2016).

Computer misuse has only recently been recorded but is clearly increasingly contributing to the volume of crime. The UK is reportedly the third largest global

consumer of child abuse images, behind the USA and Canada. The ONS (2018) estimates that there were 3.2 million fraud offences in the year ending March 2018, including 1.7 million cyber-related offences (54% of the total). Based on these figures, approximately one in six offences are incidents of online fraud, and fraud (more broadly) is now the most commonly-experienced crime, accounting for 42% of all estimated offences. The Home Affairs Select Committee report on the future of policing chose to focus on the rising demand in relation to online fraud (which they recognised was in desperate need of a fundamental overhaul (para:66)).

Digital Technologies

Technological advancements have shaped policing in many important ways over the last several decades (Koper et al, 2014). In the UK, predictive policing algorithms have been in use for more than ten years to identify geospatial locations that are most at risk of experiencing crime and to then pre-emptively deploy resources to where they are most needed – ‘predictive crime mapping’ (Babuta, 2018). Other recent advances include video surveillance systems, and vehicle license plate recognition (Koper et al, 2014). The Home Affairs Select Committee’s (2018) conclusion however is that notwithstanding the potential, “police forces’ investment in and adoption of new technology is, quite frankly, a complete and utter mess” (para 186) and currently the police service is failing to meet the challenges of the 21st century. The Committee had serious concerns about the police service’s digital capabilities, including the skills base of officers and staff, especially in the areas of child sexual abuse and online fraud, noted above.

Koper et al (2014) conclude that in order to meet these challenges proper levels of training are essential, as well as systematic and continuous follow-up, in-service training, reinforcement and ongoing technical support, especially in analytics. Moreover, they suggest the police must address traditional and long-standing philosophical and cultural norms if they are to reap the full potential benefits of technology. Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (2017a) note that new skills are rarely brought into policing through recruitment. The inspectorate is of the view that forces need to take urgent action and if insufficient investment is undertaken, the workforce will not be equipped to meet future policing demand or public expectations. At present computer technology is “outdated, of poor

quality and often fails to connect across an individual police force, let alone across all forces in England and Wales or to other public sector organisations” (p:xx).

Clearly there will be a need to recruit those with appropriate IT skills. Yet there is not only a national shortage of people having cyber security skills (National Audit Office, 2013) but also a gender disparity with men filling 86% of available cyber security roles (Caldwell, 2017). If we look to the wider context, boys outnumber girls taking computer sciences at school in the ratio of 19:1 (Joint Council for Qualifications, 2016). Figure 6 shows the disparity of students taking computing sciences as a degree subject by gender. Whilst only 4% of all students take computer science, the gender gap between men and women is increasing.

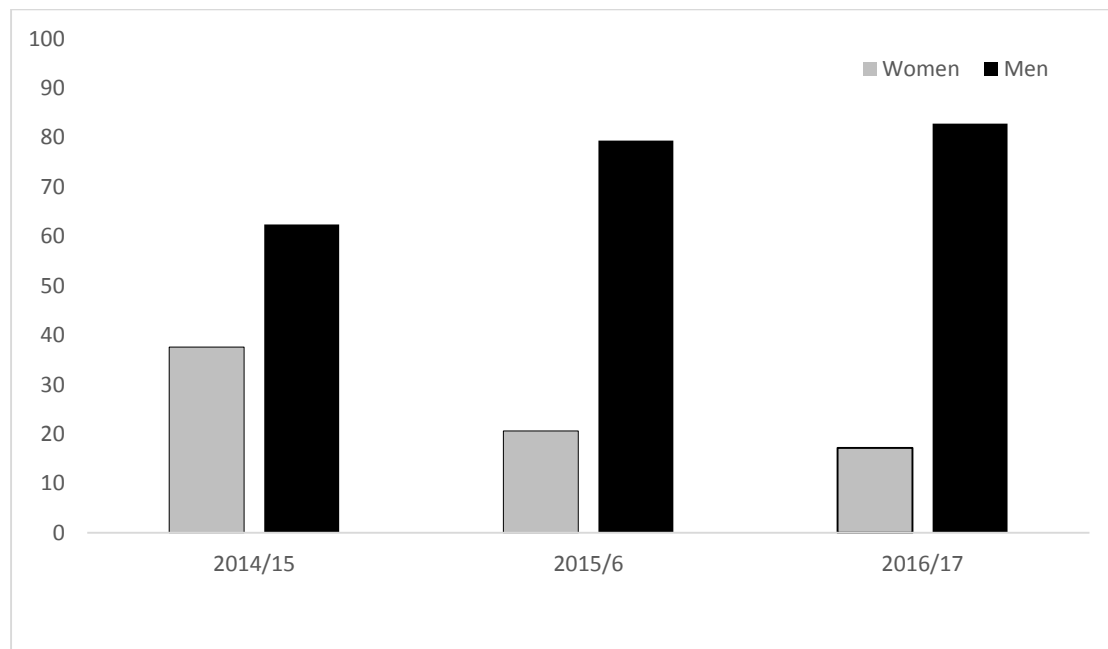


Figure 5: Gender gap in university students studying computer sciences 2014-2017

Data extracted from Universities and Colleges Admissions Data

Peacock and Irons (2017) suggest the choices pupils and students are taking is in part due to gender stereotyping of occupational options, male faculty members dominating computer science and IT departments and the “old boys” network that dominates the field. Police occupational culture has been implicated in sceptical attitudes towards crime analysis and use of IT. Cope (2004) discussed the solidarity facet of police

culture, shown to be more important to men, which tended to “exclude analysts” (p197) as well as de-valuing analysis.

Governance Arrangements and Policy Priorities

In 2012, locally elected Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) were established in England and Wales replacing the previous Police Authorities who were part-time committees of councillors and magistrates in use since 1964, (McDaniel, 2018). As well as hiring and firing the chief constable, all PCCs have responsibility for developing a local crime and policing plan (Loveday, 2018). McDaniel, (2018) concluded that the dominance of individual PCC’s personality seems to have recreated many of the problems associated with police attitudes of the 1970s. PCCs, like the chief officers and police authorities of the past, now appear to believe that they know what is best for the community without actually asking them. Moreover, McDaniel believes that the ethos of community-oriented policing, developed in the 1970s to explicitly counteract a professional police mind-set, has faltered and spawned the very form of insular police governance that it was designed to counteract. McDaniel’s evaluation of the PCCs’ role in delivering community policing is highly critical in that there is limited evidence within the police and crime plans to suggest that the ‘deliverables’ are actually based upon community needs and wants. These plans neither pinpoint the particular concerns of different neighbourhoods nor reconcile cross-sectional views.

Higgins (2018) found as the number of staff available for core neighbourhood work diminished, accounts of those working within neighbourhood policing suggest that it is under strain. That strain is manifest by co-option of neighbourhood policing into crime related activities such that neighbourhood officers were frequently required to carry out reactive functions. In some cases, formal community priority setting meetings have fallen into disuse or been discontinued. Moreover, Higgins (2018:14) suggested that the Neighbourhood Policing Programme trinity of “visibility, engagement and problem-solving, delivered by ring-fenced, geographically dedicated personnel, seems increasingly unrealistic and ill-adapted to current challenges of hidden harm, online crime and constrained resources.” More likely, community officers are responding to calls for service from the public, investigating crime, engaging in public-protection work and generally find themselves dealing with ‘whatever is happening here right now’. This represents a reversion to a more

masculinised reactive mode of policing characterised by Bittner's (1974) classic statement about police intervention being 'something-is-happening-that-ought-not-to-be-happening-and-about-which-someone-had-better-do-something-now.'

Professionalization, Graduate Entry and Evidenced Based Policing (EBP)

The idea of professional behaviour was mooted in a study of policewomen by Heidensohn, (1992:145). She found the women she studied frequently spoke of using professionalism as a way of demonstrating their skills within the male dominated environment within which they worked. This term was used to convey doing things by the rule book, doing things properly, treating the public (including offenders) well, and working extremely hard.

The professionalization agenda now involves accredited learning at university level, continuous professional development and adherence to a code of ethics (Green and Gates 2010). In the past there had been some experiments in recruiting graduates, but for the most part the training of police officers remained with the police themselves. The progression towards a significant role of higher education and involvement of universities in the modern era has been part of a wider reform movement driven in part by past corruption scandals, performance failures, loss of public confidence and economic pressures. The UK's College of Policing (formed in 2012) established graduate entry pathways, the Police Education Qualifications Framework (PEQF), as the routes to becoming a police officer in England and Wales (Wood, 2019). These routes are either pre-entry degrees or a post-employment apprenticeship degree.

In terms of propensity to go to university, women were more likely than men to begin a degree in 2018: 36.7% compared to 28% respectively (UCAS, 2018). Moreover, across all subjects, Smith and White (2015) indicate being white and a woman enhances the likelihood of graduating with a first class or upper second degree class. Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students achieve lower degree outcomes than white students who enter university with similar pre-entry qualifications and from the same socioeconomic and educational backgrounds (Tatlow, 2015). Kay Decker and Huckabee (2002) in looking at the raised educational hiring requirements in one American Police Department found the greatest adverse impact was calculated to be on

black women applications and the least detrimental effects would be on white women candidates.

In the UK a proportionately greater percentage of women from BAME backgrounds apply to university in England and Wales compared to white women (Noden et al 2015). Although British ethnic minorities are generally more likely than their White British peers to go to university, some ethnic minority groups remain strikingly under-represented among students attending the UK's most selective (Russell Group) institutions. Boliver (2015) found whilst 1.1 per cent of 15–29 year olds in England and Wales are of Black Caribbean heritage, this compared to just 0.5 per cent of students at the top performing Russell Group of universities. Similarly, 2.8 per cent and 1.2 per cent of 15–29 year olds are of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin respectively compared to only 1.8 per cent and 0.6 per cent of students at Russell Group universities. Indicative research (albeit with a small sample of 51) arising from the Police Now graduate conversion programme (Brown et al, 2018b) shows that selection was made only from graduates with firsts or upper seconds and a high proportion (44%) came from the Russell group of universities. This evidence suggests that recruitment for the graduate conversion programmes and the pre-entry graduate degree routes should work in favour of women but could disadvantage BAME candidates. There are as yet no apprenticeship degrees for policing. Breakdown by gender of participants in other degree apprenticeship programmes shows a 66:34 ratio in favour of men (Office for Students, 2017). So here there is potentially a reverse gender trend. As yet it is not known what the relative proportions of recruits will apply through the three entry routes. If the apprentice degree route provides the greater volume as anticipated by Wood (2019), then this may disadvantage women.

Lumsden and Goode (2018) suggest that the move towards professionalization increases emphasis on the evidence-based 'what works' research in policing in keeping with developments in evidenced based practice in the other professions with whom police officers interact. The House of Commons Select Committee noted these reforms have caused disquiet in some parts of the police service (para 194) and officers themselves have some ambivalence towards evidence-based approaches (Lumsden, 2016; Kalyal, 2019). It is challenging to discern gender differences in receptivity to and application of EBP principles in the practice of policing. Telep and Somer (2017)

looked at American officers understanding of EBP. But because of the gender imbalance in the sample no gender differences emerged in the provision of an accurate definition of evidence-based policing by officers in their study (Telep personal communication 22 January 2019). In a subsequent paper Telep (2017) suggested there was some indication that male officers might be somewhat more traditional in their mind set about effective strategies. Female officers were overrepresented amongst the most receptive officers in the sample, suggesting female officers may be generally more open to EBP than male officers.

Brown et al (2018b) looked at the teaching of EBP principles to cohorts of graduates from the Police Now programme. The trainees had some basic classroom teaching and a follow up master class in EBP principles. They then undertook an EBP intervention when working as a neighbourhood officer. Some further analysis was carried out for this paper. Overall there was no statistically significant difference between men and women officers in the number of EBP criteria they applied to their projects. Women however, were more likely than men to consider the evaluative dimension of EBP (Chi square 5.9 $p < 0.15$ $df = 1$) or actually apply data to their evaluation (Chi square 4.5 $p < .033$ $df = 1$). Whilst not statistically significantly different, 33% of the women trainee officers opted for what might be thought of as topics with greater feminine values (i.e. domestic violence, vulnerable victims, public safety, street begging) compared to 16% of the men. The male officers were more likely to choose anti-social behaviour, drug related offending and off-road bikes or motorcycle offences. Differences here should be treated with some caution because at least twice as many women graduated in a social science degree which may have had a socially relevant research component compared to men who were three times more likely to have graduated with either a law or science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subject degree (Chi-square 7.7 $p < .05$ $df = 3$).

Legitimacy, Ethical Conduct and Procedural justice

As implied above, the professionalization agenda has stimulated the production of a code of ethics by the College of Policing. Concerns about public confidence in the police has led to the introduction of ideas from procedural justice to improve the quality of police-public encounters (Bradford, 2014). The underpinning principle of procedural justice is that the citizen is more likely to defer to and obey a direction because they

respect and accept the organisation's legitimate authority rather than sanctions imposed for disobedience (Hinds and Murphy, 2007). Judgements about legitimacy in turn are influenced by the fairness and respect with which people perceive they have been treated. The procedural justice literature from the United States (Sunshine and Tyler 2003) and Australia (Hinds and Murphy 2007) show a strong and consistent relationship between the public's perceived levels of procedural justice and police legitimacy.

Brown et al (2018a) have argued that police occupational culture dominated by a male majority and a masculine ethos has been implicated in unethical practices and misconduct. Notwithstanding the introduction of the code of ethics where there is an explicit requirement to report misconduct, Westmarland and Rowe (2018) found there remains a reluctance by police officers to do so. They suggest this is often motivated by the internal solidarity of the police occupational culture and loyalty to fellow officers. In responding to hypothetical ethical scenarios they reported no gender difference in either perceived seriousness of a potential offence or in likelihood of reporting it in a sample of British police officers. Interestingly, in a study of American police officers, Schuck (2014) found women officers showed higher levels of empathy and concern which in turn were related to fewer citizen complaints and negatively associated with hypermasculinity values linked to more rudeness towards citizens.

Generally speaking, in terms of actual unethical behaviours, women officers have been found to incur few discipline infractions (Waugh, Ede and Alley, 1998). An analysis of the Independent Police Complaints Commission (now renamed as the Independent Office for Police Conduct) complaints data (see figure 6) shows an increasing trend in the number recorded up to 2015 with a downward trend from 2016. The overall increase is 30% over this period notwithstanding a decrease in police staffing levels. These complaints are made by the public against all people serving within police forces including members of the special (voluntary) constabulary, non-warranted support staff as well as officers. About a third of complaints are of neglect of duty, a third incivility, impoliteness and intolerance and the remaining third include oppressive behaviours and lack of fairness. It should be noted that only about one in ten complaints are substantiated.

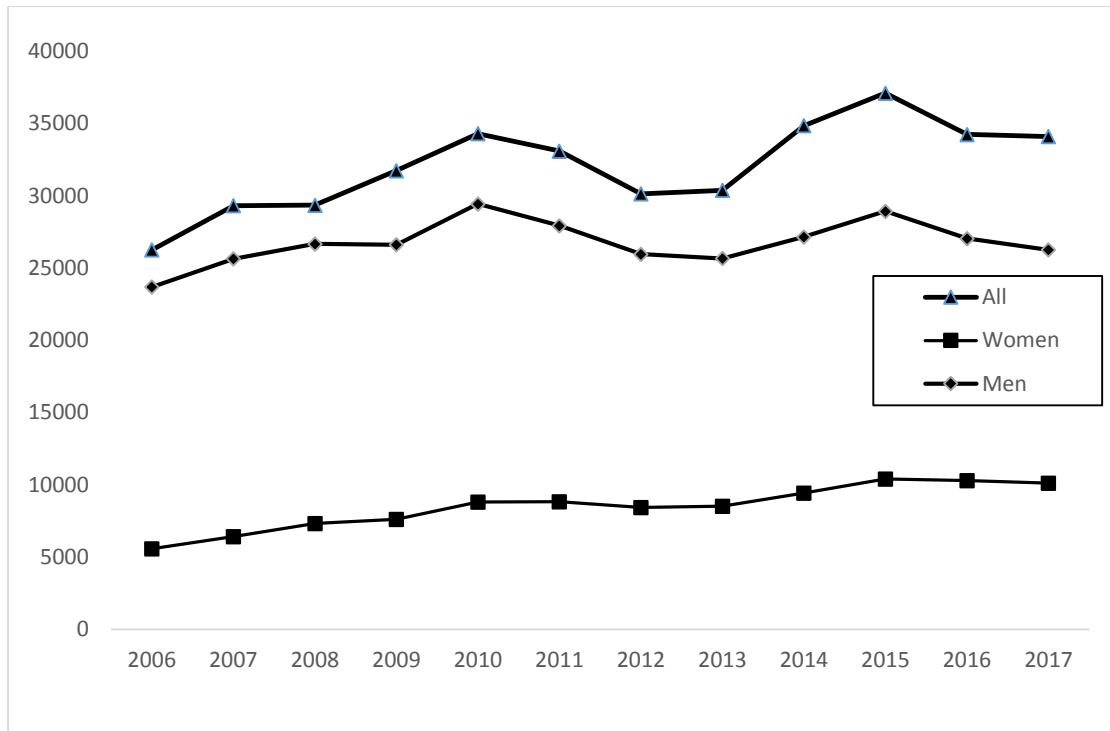


Figure 6: Number of recorded complaints by the public against the police 2006-2017
Data extracted from the Independent Police Complaints Commission archive and the current web page of the Independent Office for Police Conduct

Given that complaints are recorded for all staff, a calculation of the overall percentages of complaints for both genders in 2017 is 12% for women and 20% for men (this compares with 8% for women and 18% for men in 2010). It is not possible to separate out results by gender just for police officers nor to analyse the different pattern of complaints for men and women, but the statistics suggest rates of complaints are rising for both men and women, but the latter still lag behind the former.

More worrying is the revelation that some, mostly male, police officers use their positions of trust to abuse and exploit people with whom they come into contact. A joint report by the IPCC and ACPO followed the case of a Northumbrian police officer who was jailed for life in 2011 for a number of serious sex attacks on women he met through his job. The report identified that this abuse of power is a form of corruption (IPCC/ACPO, 2012). HMICFRS (2017b) reported 436 allegations of abuse of authority for sexual gain received, or received and finalised, by police forces in England and Wales during the 24 months to 31 March 2016.

There is also evidence of abuse occurring within forces. Brown et al (2018a) report the occurrence of sexual harassment experienced by at least a third of senior women in their sample. A major review of the occurrence of sexual harassment in the Victoria Police Service, Australia indicated its wide scale presence but importantly located the causes of sexual harassment as being entrenched in police culture (Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission, 2015). The review indicated that attitudes such as toughness and resilience found in the police, mirrored societal gender-related social norms. Attributes of logic, invulnerability, managing one's emotions, being objective and able to settle disputes through strength were commonly held and widely shared constructions about masculinity and included a need for men to be aggressive and competitive, strong and decisive as well as being sexually confident and assertive. Male promiscuity was not only tolerated but also celebrated with men being granted 'immunity' for their inappropriate sexual behaviour in the workplace.

Discussion

Arguably, moves towards community (neighbourhood) policing, greater recognition of sexual violence as a policing priority, more collaborative interagency working and moves to create a graduate profession of policing advances feminizing tendencies in policing. Notwithstanding an increase in the numbers of women officers and their greater presence in senior rank, the present trends besetting policing in England and Wales have militated against feminising influences.

The paradigm of community policing stresses communication, familiarity, and building trust and rapport between the police, community and partner agencies, both statutory and non-governmental organisations (Miller, 1999). An essential ingredient is gaining support of and engaging with the public and partnering with community organisations (Schuck, 2018). Researchers have argued that women may be better suited to these particular police tasks because of their abilities and skills as women and assertions that female officers provide more helping behaviours to citizens (Rabe Hemp 2008). Miller (1999) suggests community policing was the means of legitimizing feminine characteristics in police work, by giving officers a way to do gender in a more socially accepted manner. It has been argued that principles embedded in the philosophy of community policing represent a feminisation of social control (Schuck, 2017).

When the Home Office published its Safe and Confident Neighbourhoods Strategy it aimed to consolidate neighbourhood-level partnership working (Home Office 2010). However, these proposals were brushed aside by the incoming coalition government which introduced a programme of sweeping police reforms, including, the introduction of elected Police and Crime Commissioners (Higgins, 2018). McDaniel (2018) suggests that PCCs were meant to re-invigorate community policing. More particularly, legislation required the PCC to have regard to the views of people in their area. Ideally every individual within a neighbourhood should be treated as a valued and distinctive service user, each with their own distinctive crime problems and resident concerns. We conclude from the foregoing that austerity pressures combined with the policy preferences of Police and Crime Commissioners have resulted in a reversion to the more muscular reactive “fire-brigade” policing (Bittner, 1974) and away from more individually focussed community-oriented neighbourhood policing.

The research commentary to inform the effectiveness of policing and capacity to meet new demands of vulnerability and safeguarding presents a mixed picture. On the one hand, HMIC is optimistic following a national review of policing Domestic Violence that “police attitudes towards victims of domestic abuse and frontline officers’ understanding of the importance of dealing with victims in a supportive and sympathetic way are improving” and further “at a time of significant financial challenge, forces have continued largely to protect their dedicated teams or other resources that focus on public protection work, which includes domestic abuse” (HMIC 2015:8). Charman (2017) looked at the experiences of new recruits in a UK police force. She noted no differences in these young men and women’s motives for becoming police officers which reflected a strong public service ethos. In adapting to the occupation culture, Charman (personal communication 25th January 2019) observed:

“My interpretation was that this wasn't a case of the female police officers changing their behaviour to try to fit in with a more masculine and macho environment but actually that the changing nature of the job brought with it, at long last, a recognition (perhaps an acceptance) that the skills required of a modern police officer were different from popular belief. All were focused on working with a team and the community- oriented aspects of the job.... They were most looking forward to helping people.... These attitudes and behaviours would I suppose have traditionally been seen as the 'softer' skills associated with female police officers but perhaps should increasingly be regarded as simply 'policing activities'. Maybe the behaviour of male officers has moved more towards

traditional conceptions of female officer behaviour to fit in rather than the other way around!”

On the other hand, Stanko and Hohl (2018) concluded the impact of training has not brought about desired improvements in practice with failures attributable to the lack of proper analysis of internally generated statistics and linkage to the body of informative academic research.

Research implicating gender differences in approach to sexual violence investigations also yield mixed results. Sleath and Bull’s (2017) systematic review shows some studies demonstrating male police officers blame rape victims at a higher level compared to female police officers and other studies that have not found gender effects. Alderden and Ullman (2012) looked at a large Mid-Western Police Department to find no differences between male and female detectives’ likelihood of making an arrest in cases of sexual assault and women officers were not necessarily more sensitive towards victims. They propose that introducing more women alone to investigate may not bring about improved outcomes for complainants. Silvestri (2017) has also cautioned against a focus on the numeric in measuring organisational change, arguing that any increase in the number of women in policing in England and Wales does not automatically result in positive organisational change. It is however worth conducting further research exploring if the increase in women’s presence has made an appreciable difference.

The professionalization agenda and the creation of a graduate profession of policing may advantage women if they take the pre-entry degree route but could work to their disadvantage if the preferred route for most recruits is the apprenticeship degree. Generally speaking, more women go to university and there is some indicative evidence that they may be more amenable towards evidence based policing practices. But there is a severely limited pool of women suitably qualified in computer and cyber technologies to combat new patterns of internet-based crime. This suggests a more limited role for women compared to men in the future recruitment of IT specialists within policing. Problems in recruitment, of both men and women, with appropriate skills will impact successful innovation in investigations of CSA, fraud and other cyber related crime. Caldwell (2017) suggest the gender skills gap will reduce the talent pool,

and potentially compromise effectiveness as more gender diverse teams outperform male only ones. Police occupational culture has been implicated in negative attitudes towards evidence based policing practices and use of IT. Cope (2004) indicates that the solidarity aspect of police culture being more important to men, often excludes, the mostly women, analysts. Atkinson (2017) in a study of Police Scotland found that intelligence analysts were de-professionalised through a process of “infantilisation” particularly by means of sexual harassment. The analysts are often civilian women. Atkinson found the presence of strong patriarchal dispositions within the police culture (p246) resulting in the subordination of femininity. The informal occupational culture subverted formal efforts to professionalise intelligence analysis. Cultural resistance was a key factor in Canadian officers’ unwillingness to embrace EBP (Kalyal, 2019) in order to maintain their image as crime fighters.

The extent to which women’s increased representation in leadership positions has made an appreciable difference is also of significance here. Silvestri and Paul (2015) suggest women have a greater affinity with transformational leadership styles emphasising participation, co-operation and consultation which accord with changing emphasis from reactive to more progressive proactive evidence-based policing and community and neighbourhood oriented models. However, they are of the view that police organisations continue to value and reward transactional styles of leadership (p196) with women leaders still encountering a great deal of resistance. Furthermore, Laverick and Cain (2015) concluded that accountability and monitoring mechanisms are under threat and austerity has bitten into mainstreaming equality and diversity to the degree that sustainability of the progress made is questionable. Although there has been a real terms percentage increase in the number of women gaining promotion to chief officer rank, the actual numbers are small and Brown and Silvestri (in press) suggest that there has been some loss of momentum attributed to allegation of bullying and harassment of some women chief constables by the newly elected PCCs. Brown et al (2018a) show senior women in policing still suffer discriminatory treatments and feel that they struggle to have their voices heard and authority accepted. Schuck (2014) concludes that the difference women bring to policing have yet to be embraced by front line officers and that police administrators have yet to value and reward these differences.

Conclusion

Professionalization, transformational models of leadership and the shifts towards community policing arguably promote more feminine values of collaboration and communicative styles of policing. This consolidates a feminization process that Westmarland (2001:46-49) comments was stimulated by equality legislation in 1975 (the Sex Discrimination Act) which integrated the previously separate police women's department and Miller's (1999) observations with the advent of community policing. This heralded an opening up of posts to both to men and women meaning movement across previously gender segregated policing tasks. More recent reforms in policing represents a further challenge to the traditional model of reactive policing based on random preventative patrolling towards more targeted and proactive interventions (Diderichsen, 2017). Styles of policing that increasingly rely on a community focus, evidence-based practice and greater appreciation of the needs of the vulnerable may be thought to advance more feminine values to the tasks of police. At first glance, a police service in transformation appears to herald positive outcomes for women. With an upward trend in the number of women police, it would be all too easy to assume a syllogistic reading of change, in which the contemporary drivers and contexts outlined in this paper, are aligned with the gains made by women. We remind readers of our argument that the increased representation of women in policing has for the most part coincided with the loss of men in policing. This position reflects a review of labour forces across Europe and North America. In their analysis of nine countries, Karamessini and Rubery (2014) argue that in the aftermath of financial crisis, the employment gap between women and men narrowed, but only due to a deterioration in men's employment position rather than in improvements for women.

The shoots of feminisation of policing detected by Charman quoted above may be fairly fragile. The combination of a retreat from neighbourhood policing, reinstatement of more reactive preventative patrolling together with internal pressures exacerbated by falling resources and the move away from active promotion of equality policies (Laverick and Cain 2015) are more likely to result in a restoration of masculine aspects of the police culture. Shjarback and Todak's (2019) study of American police agencies shows an association between a department's level of professionalism and adoption of

community policing initiatives and the proportion of women in supervisory and middle management positions. They argue that whilst professionalization and evidence-based policing should be accompanied by increases in women holding more senior rank, internal drivers are more likely to continue to inhibit rather than progress gender representation and change will more likely be brought about by external politics.

But the present state of external policies, notably austerity measures has affected police numbers in England and Wales and types of workload, with police finding themselves picking up the shortfall of funding provision elsewhere, e.g. becoming the agency of last resort for those with mental health problems (HMICFRS, 2018). Economic conditions of trying to do more for less and political control by elected PCCs have affected policing priorities. The uplift in standards of education and advances in digital technologies place new demands on officers. All of these reforms and changes have a gendered dimension and by and large adverse gendered impacts. In our view there will have to be a convergence of both internal and external policies before we see a dramatic rebalancing of policing.

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