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Police Culture and Gender: Revisiting the 'Cult of Masculinity'

Introduction

The sheer volume of research concerned with documenting police culture serves as an important reminder of the ongoing significance of 'culture' as an enduring site within which to explore police identities. From a host of early works on police culture in the US & UK (Banton, 1964; Cain, 1973; Rubinstein, 1973; Skolnick, 1966; Westley, 1970), academic interest in developing understandings of police culture has preoccupied scholars for the last fifty years or so. Indeed the concept of police culture has become so routinely accepted that it now appears somewhat clichéd and as an 'unquestioned orthodoxy' (Sklansky, 2007:20). More recent work in the field has however, resulted in some fruitful and critical exchanges about the various dimensions, validity and usefulness of the concept of police culture (Atkinson, 2016, Bacon, 2014, Cockcroft 2013, Loftus, 2009; Paoline & Terrill, 2013). The tenor of such critical conversation is encapsulated neatly by Bacon (2014:103) when he notes that despite its explanatory power, extensive usage and influence, the concept of police culture remains somewhat 'complicated, contested and, at times, contradictory' - the collection of papers in this special issue is testament enough to this. In this paper I want to draw out some of this complication, contestation and contradiction to drive forward debates about gender and police culture. In doing so, I also want to respond to Cockcroft's (2014:11) suggestion that there has been a simultaneous 'over-intellectualizing' and 'oversimplifying' of the concept of police culture. In relation to gender, I argue that there has been a significant oversimplification of police culture.

This oversimplification is perhaps best understood when situated against the persistent consensus within policing scholarship that confirms that policing is gendered at individual, structural and cultural levels (Dick et al, 2014; Silvestri, 2015). Despite the presence and participation of women within policing for well over a century now, policing continues to remain the preserve of (white) men and there is no evidence of a fully integrated police organisation where women represent 50% of the officer workforce and enjoy an equivalent share of the full range of roles and ranks within the police hierarchy (Van Ewijk, 2012). Figures for England & Wales stand at 28%, though workforce data simultaneously indicates considerable variation in the number of women in policing across jurisdictions (BAWP, 2014) and across ranks, with women in senior ranks currently standing at 21% for Chief Inspector and above. In explaining this lack of gender representation, scholars have drawn significantly on the police culture literature in which 'machismo' and the 'cult of masculinity' feature heavily as the culprits. Here the 'macho' nature of policing and its cultural manifestations infused by ideas danger, excitement and the need for 'physicality' are to blame for all of the ills perpetrated in the name of gender, both between officers and in their citizen interactions. The resounding power of such narratives can be found in, Loftus's (2008: 756) recent revisiting of police culture in the twenty-first century. Here she provides a convincing and depressing account of the persistence of an 'impervious white, heterosexist, male culture'. And whilst I do not wish to dispute this, far from it, I do wish to revisit the concepts of 'machismo' and the 'cult of masculinity' and emphasise the ways in which the uncritical acceptance of such terms has significantly stunted debate and analysis of the variation and complexity in gendered performance and identities within policing.

In order to locate alternative sites of gendered meanings within organisational culture, the paper draws on the work of organisational theorist Joan Acker (1992) whose concern lies with exposing the gendered substructure of organisational life – something I return to later in this piece. It is through such a lens that we can begin to identify some of the more complex and multiple meanings that come to define the 'ideal' worker within policing. Revisiting the cultural meanings of what it means to be a police officer has particular resonance given the ongoing police organisation's emphasis of bringing about cultural change through greater diversity within its ranks. Operating within a radically different landscape from the 1970s, (when women were formally integrated into policing) the rhetoric of contemporary diversity agendas, through the calling of more women (and other underrepresented groups) into policing has taken on a transformative dimension in the race to bring about cultural reform.

What follows is an exploration of two key gendered principles and beliefs about doing policing. Firstly, it reviews well-established arguments about the 'cult of masculinity' and its association with 'physicality' as an explanatory tool for understanding gender within policing. In so doing, the paper challenges the idea of the 'cult of masculinity' and accounts of how gender is played out and experienced within policing. It also suggests that scholarship on gender and police culture remains fairly static and locked into overly simplistic and reductionist analyses of what this might actually mean and how this in turn might impact on women and men working in policing and on the communities they care for and control. It is not my intention here to diminish the importance or to displace the 'cult of masculinity' as an explanatory tool but rather to revisit it and assess its utility in the twenty first century.

Secondly, in challenging conventional accounts of masculinity within policing, the paper goes beyond traditional accounts of physicality and explores the way in which the concept of *'time'* is a key constituent in the cultural set of understandings and belief systems about what it means to *be* a police officer and to *do* policing. The concept of time here is understood as multifaceted and linked to the operation of gendered power. The ways in which time is used, valued and understood within policing (and organisations more broadly) is central to the maintenance of gender inequalities in public and private life. An appreciation of how the police organisation defines and confers meaning to the concept of 'time' enables a transgression of existing conceptualisations of the discriminatory nature of police culture and offers a more nuanced account of where and how we might surface alternative gendered cultural understandings of policing and what it means to be a police officer. A focus on 'time' is particularly germane given the considerable ongoing police reforms to reconfiguring 'time' in the police career (through the provision and support of part time and flexible working and direct entry routes). This paper suggests 'time' as a potentially transformative site within which to bring about significant cultural change. In advance of that and to enable a wider context within which to situate my argument, the paper begins with a brief overview of the some of the criticism levelled at the scholarly body of work on police culture.

An Oversimplification of Police Culture?

Without wanting to rehearse well established debates, it is worth reminding readers briefly here that much of the writing on police culture has already been critiqued for being overly simplistic in a number of ways. Firstly, for its tendency to slip into cultural determinism, with

police culture all too often treated synonymously as the cause and effect of police misbehaviour. Here we have the unfortunate syllogistic reading of police culture as universally pejorative. Secondly, work on police culture has been heavily critiqued for its lack of appreciation of the differences in culture that might exist. Readers will be familiar with Robert Reiner's (1992) seminal argument that police culture should not be read as 'monolithic'. And lastly, the critique that police culture has been portrayed as 'static' and unwavering in its resistance to change and ultimately to blame for the lack of success in police reform agendas. Responding to such criticism, considerable progress has been made toward 'intellectualising' the study of police culture. Contributions by Chan (1997), Waddington (1999) and Paoline (2003) have certainly opened up a space in which a more 'appreciative' reading of police culture might be possible. The multiplicity and variation in across police ranks, role and specialisation has also been increasingly explored by researchers looking to expand the idea of the existence of culture(s) within policing (Reuss-Ianni and Ianni, 1983; Young, 1991; Hobbs, 1988, Punch, 1979, Cain, 1973, O'Neill & McCarthy 2012). And, the capacity of police culture to undergo change and transformation has been further emphasised by various commentators (Chan, 1997; Loftus, 2009, 2010, McCarthy, 2102; Silvestri et al 2013). While Chan (1997:73) reminds us of the power of individual officers to be 'active' in 'developing, reinforcing, resisting and transforming cultural knowledge, Loftus (2010) further emphasises the potential power of wider reform agendas to bring about change, citing community policing, the advent of new public management, changes to recruitment demographics and the ongoing politicization of the police as providing possible opportunities for changes/ dilutions in culture. For a comprehensive review of these criticisms and developments in police culture scholarship, see Cockcroft (2013).

Studies on gender and policing more particularly have also been subject to considerable oversimplification. From the very outset it is important to stress that much of the work on gender has focused on women, little is actually known about men's experiences of policing through a gendered lens as men or through a theoretical lens of masculinity (though Barrie and Broomhall's (2012) excellent edited collection provides an illuminating insight of the histories of men and masculinities in policing). And with the growth in diversity discourses, studies on women and policing have become increasingly focused on counting how many women have been recruited, documenting where they are located and assessing their contributions to policing in relation to their male counterparts. Whilst I have argued elsewhere of the futility of focussing on the numeric and on women's specific contribution to policing, its significance to debates about culture lie in relation to ideas about the effects of a 'critical mass' on organisational change. Designated by organisational theorists as a point at which there is an opportunity to shift dominant meanings and cultural understandings within organisational settings, the theory of critical mass suggests that changes to culture are most likely to be enabled when minority groups achieve a presence of around 35% (see Childs and Krook, 2008 for a good review of this concept). I will return to the damaging effects of such standpoints later but for now, suffice to say that such a relentless focus on numbers has been at the expense of a more meaningful exploration of the various gendered cultural formations within policing and how these might hinder women's representation and progression. In short, I argue that in its current form, the police rhetoric on diversity represents an oversimplification of what is possible within policing together with a lack of awareness of how this rhetoric is experienced and received within policing. It does not fully confront the realities of women's cultural experiences

within policing and serves as a distraction to more fundamental debates about the realities of a gendered police culture that is simultaneously inclusive and exclusive, enabling and disabling; and progressive and regressive.

Doing Gender – Exploring the Police Substructure

There is much to be gained from studying the work of organisational theorists when exploring organisational culture. Acker's (1990, 1992) seminal work on gendered organisations remains an important starting point for exploring hierarchical organisations. In her work, she argues that organizations provide forums within which cultural images of gender, beliefs, symbols, accepted routines and ways of working are produced and then reproduced by individuals and organizational structures. Gender in this context is defined as a contextually situated process rather than as an individual characteristic. Instead of a characteristic that people have, gender is something that individuals *do* with their behaviour and organisations *do* through the gendering processes and structures. In this way, she argues that 'meaning and identity are patterned through and in terms of a distinction between male and female, feminine and masculine' (Acker, 1992: 146). It is through the construction of such 'gendered personas' based on the creation of difference within institutional settings that organisations are able to routinely perform gender. Inherent in this is the idea that concepts of masculinity and femininity are not biologically determined or reflective of natural differences but that they are socially learned and reinforced (West & Zimmerman, 1987). *Doing* gender then, involves a 'complex of perceptual, interactional, micro political activities that cast particular pursuits as expressions of manly and womanly "natures" '(West and Fenstermaker, 1995:9). The concept of the gendered 'ideal' worker transcends the police service and can be located in a range of work settings, see work by

Hale (2011) on the military; Ainsworth et al (2014) on firefighting; Johnston and Hodge (2014) on private security work and Ness (2012) on the construction industry. In the case of policing, the casting of police work as an expression of 'manliness' has been central to the project of policing and to the construction and identity of the 'ideal' police worker – I return to this later in the paper.

Embedded in Acker's theory is the notion that whilst organizations present themselves as gender neutral, where organizational roles and management hierarchies assume a 'universal and disembodied' worker, the reality is the far from this. If we adopt a gendered reading of organizations, it becomes clear that organizations are not gender neutral but rather are arenas in which gender is present and purposeful but obscured through gender-neutral discourses which conceal the embodied elements of work. If we are to surface the embodied elements of work and the reproduction of gendered identities, we need to consider Acker's further ideas about the 'gendered substructure' within organizations – that is, the social practices that are generally understood to constitute an organization rest on certain gendered processes and assumptions. In defining this substructure, Acker (1992:255) argues that:

> 'The gendered substructure lies in the spatial and temporal arrangements of work, in the rules prescribing workplace behaviour and in the relations linking work places to living places. These practices and relations, encoded in arrangements and rules, are supported by assumptions that work is separate from the rest of life and that it has the first claim on the worker'.

In this paper, I focus on some of the temporal arrangements of police work that form part of the powerful narrative in the construction of a police identity. As a hierarchical and

bureaucratic organisation, the police service lends itself well to such theoretical insight. In line with Acker's work, this paper argues that the police service and its organisational structures are not gender neutral. Rather, the police organisation is premised on an 'ideal worker'. This ideal worker is male - it is men's bodies, sexuality, and relationships to life beyond work that are subsumed in the image of the 'ideal' police worker. Moreover, the imagery of men and masculinity permeate organizational processes and cultural beliefs, marginalizing women and ultimately contributing to the maintenance of gender difference and segregation within organizational life. In order to better understand the presence and persistence of gender inequalities in policing then, an appreciation of the ways in which police work and the police career is patterned through beliefs about the 'ideal' worker is fundamental.

The 'Cult of Masculinity' - *Doing* Gender through 'Physicality'

Good old fashioned machismo has been at the heart of debates about policing, police culture, the exclusion of women from policing and the failure of police reform agendas. Commentaries on the 'macho' state of policing can be found throughout the decades. In 1978, Manning described police culture as ' Essentially a masculine culture with an emphasis on virility, toughness, masculinity, and masculine interests such as sexual triumphs, sports, outdoor life, and so forth' (Manning, 1978:249). And machismo was to be become a key motif in Reiner's (1992) core characteristics of police culture. In deciphering the 'cult of masculinity' Fielding's (1994: 47) outlines the stereotypical values of such masculinity, suggesting that it could be read as an almost pure form of 'hegemonic masculinity', composed of:

> '(i) aggressive, physical action; (ii) a strong sense of competitiveness and preoccupation with the imagery of conflict; (iii) an exaggerated heterosexual orientation, often articulated in terms of misogynistic and patriarchal attitudes to women; and (iv) the operation of rigid in-group/out-group distinctions whose consequences are strongly exclusionary in the case of out-groups and strongly assertive of loyalty and affinity in the case of in-groups'

Subsequent writers have gone on to emphasise the gendered and sexualised nature of police culture with its attendant association with the cult of masculinity described above (Brown, 2007; Heidensohn 1992; Morash and Haarr, 2012; Westmarland, 2001; Rabe-Hemp, 2009). With its emphasis on physicality, the 'crime fighting' model of policing holds much in line with such a characterisation. With physicality and a capacity for force, deemed as 'natural' for men, police work becomes a means whereby men differentiate masculinity from femininity and in turn policing becomes the so called 'natural' preserve of men, as Heidensohn (1992:73) reminds us ' [A]n elision which is frequently made [is that] *coercion* requires *force* which *implies physique* and hence policing by *men*'. I remind readers here of the importance that Acker (1992) attaches to the way in which gendered organisational cultures operate – that is, organisations actively provide opportunities that facilitate, perpetuate and sustain the construction of gender differences and it is through such patterning of difference that we come to understand cultural meanings and identities. Through the construction of such differentiation between women and men, it is easy to understand how women become 'outsiders' and deemed 'deficient' and 'unsuited' for the job of policing.

A policewoman's perceived lack of physical presence, tough physique and, above all, masculinity has long been used as a rational and legitimate reason for their exclusion. Assertions that the work of policing is too dangerous for women or that the situations they

may encounter in their daily work are too physically demanding for them to handle contribute to a discourse in which the hegemonic model of masculinity is one in which to be masculine is to be strong and physically aggressive (Connell, 1987). The lack of physical strength and the ensuing problems in violent situations has remained a consistent justification offered by policemen for women's continued differential deployment and their negative view of policewomen over the past century (Heidensohn, 1994). Women's experiences of exclusion on such grounds can be found in the narratives of early policewomen. At the turn of the twentieth century, women worked in separate policewomen's departments, with a focus on providing 'specialist' work with vulnerable women and children in need of rescue from 'moral' danger - the task of 'fighting crime' or 'policing men' was designated an all-male preserve (Brown and Heidensohn 2007; Schulz 1995, Segrave, 1995, Jackson, 2006).

Faced with the reality that women are now fully integrated into policing and can be found working across a range of police roles, including those roles that reflect forms of hyper masculinity, such as firearms, it might be assumed that such justifications for their exclusion based on physicality no longer hold sway or validity in the twenty first century. Sadly, the traditional 'cult of masculinity' within policing remains intact. Bethan Loftus's (2008) work on police culture provides an unflinching account of the resounding power of gender within policing. More recent research by Atkinson (2016: 13) on Scottish policing further confirms the presence of the 'cult of masculinity' within police culture. Citing the 'body' as a key site of cultural work in reproducing a gender regime in police intelligence work, he argues that female bodies are frequently sexualised by police officers and discriminated against and the 'hegemonic masculinity apparent in police culture is privileged'. Providing new insights into

the gendered nature of police culture through an exploration of the interactions between sworn police officers and civilian intelligence workers, Atkinson evidences the ongoing negative and discriminatory effects for these women, noting that patriarchal dispositions within policing remain, with the intelligence analyst being subject to a police culture which defines such work as 'administrative work' and not the task of 'proper' policing. In this way, Atkinson argues that the 'gender regime' (Connell, 2006) is upheld and sustained – with intelligence work constructed as 'feminine' and 'women's work'. Moreover, findings from his study suggest the *infantilisation* of such roles with intelligence analysts described by police officers to be 'dependent, ignorant, immature, powerless and un-knowing (Atkinson, 20016: 9). Through the construction of such difference, women become subordinated and ultimately 'accept a patriarchal bargain; becoming passive, inactive, dependent and child-like, and thus marginalised to the periphery of police work' (Atkinson, 2016: 14)

While the persistence of the 'cult of masculinity' and its association with men *doing physicality* remains a dominant narrative in policewomen's experiences across the world (Prenzler and Sinclair, 2013; Natarajan, 2014; Rabe Hemp, 2009), work by Terpstra and Schapp (2013) in the Netherlands presents an interesting deviation. Whilst many of the officers in their study reported that their image of police work was closely related to physical strength and courage – that is, the 'crime fighter' model, only a minority of officers thought that women were not suitable for this work leading them to conclude that:

> 'Compared to the standard model of police culture, many Dutch police officers are not conservative and generally do not share the idea (any longer) that police work should be only a male affair' (Terpstra & Schapp, 2013: 70)

Whilst such findings might be drawn upon to suggest evidence of an improved and progressive landscape for women police – in terms of their acceptance as crime fighters – the importance of such findings add further fuel to the suggestion that machismo is alive and kicking. The idea that both men and women subscribe to the crime fighting role within policing is a regressive step and confirms broader narratives about the value of police work in the twenty first century. Despite the opportunities presented to radically reconfigure the cultural conceptualisations of being a police officer through a greater emphasis on community work, care for victims and better investigative skills, the police orientation to action, danger and excitement does not appear to be waning. Research continues to demonstrate that tackling domestic abuse and neighbourhood disputes remains outside of officers' perceived remit and at the lower end of officers' 'sense of crime hierarchy' (Loftus, 2009:92). That said, it would be unfair here to emphasise police women and men's active complicity here without a fuller appreciation of the broader perpetuation and growing state support for a 'crime fighting' mentality within policing. Critical reflections on contemporary policing by Loader (2014) emphasise the ways in which government reform agendas are strongly underpinned by a motivation to 'liberate' the police to undertake the role of 'crime fighter'. In short, the cultural construction of the 'ideal' police worker continues to be routinely achieved through doing physicality. And, whilst this is an important facet of police culture, this is only one gendered manifestation of police culture. As women begin to progress through police ranks, such cultural constructions of police masculinity maintain less utility and resonance. Here, I want to turn my attention to the importance of 'time' as a fundamental but underexplored cultural trait of policing. I remind readers of Acker's notion of the gendered substructure and its emphasis on the 'temporal' arrangements of work in prescribing the 'ideal' worker.

Doing Gender through 'Time'

In the same way that 'physicality' has been drawn upon to explain women's unsuitability to the work of policing, adopting a temporal lens enables an exploration of alternative cultural prescriptions of the 'ideal' police worker – this has particular resonance for those seeking career progression and a place in police leadership. The concept of 'time' here is explored in relation to the *police career model* and in its *everyday* expressions. Strongly structured and linear in style, officers for the most part, begin their careers at the bottom and work their way up a series of structured ranks. That said, attempts to reconfigure this model can be seen in the recent changes enabling alternative career routes through 'fast track' career options and direct entry to the rank of Inspector and Superintendent. These are important changes and may well impact upon the way in which the time is performed and perceived within policing. It is however somewhat premature to assess the impacts of such change, so for now it remains the case that the police career is best described as a tightly structured model. In his study of chief constables, Reiner (1991) emphasised the considerable time and endurance required by officers in their journey to achieve leadership. Whist achieving a place in the senior ranks is a major feat in and of itself for all officers (male and female) the police career ladder is experienced in different and more acute ways by women. I have argued elsewhere that it is not simply the protracted length of time that characterises the police career that contributes to women's lack of progression within policing but that the management of *everyday time* that is central to fulfilling the appropriate cultural requirements of being a police leader. The cultural prescriptions of police leadership are enmeshed within a 'full time and uninterrupted' career profile. And whilst there is nothing official to prohibit police leaders from having worked part-time or taking a career break on

their journey to the top, unofficial narratives suggest the cultural markers of the 'ideal' police leader - credibility, commitment and competency - are best achieved through the possession of a 'full time and uninterrupted' career status (Silvestri, 2006). Undertaking part-time or flexible working practice within policing goes against the cultural ideals of the ideal police worker, with part time officers often perceived to be 'less professional and less committed' – as workers who enjoy 'privileges' rather than 'entitlements'. In 2013, a survey conducted by the Independent Police Commission revealed that 18% of survey respondents indicated flexible working is either discouraged or not tolerated in their forces, while only 7% said flexible working is positively encouraged. Accounts describe a culture in which part time and flexible workers are perceived as 'a burden', 'too difficult to manage', as 'partially committed' or conflated within the 'sick, lazy and lame' categorization. The gendered implications are clear - whilst all officers (both male and female) experience the pressure to accumulate and demonstrate credibility, commitment and competence and to *do* time as the police career prescribes, for the most, it remains the case that men have more access to the resource of time and thus are more likely to be able to work full-time and without interruption. Research indicates a strong belief amongst women in policing that engaging in such arrangements adversely affects their promotion and career prospects. In practice, part-time work tends to be seen as deviation from the full time norm of policing, as a 'concession' to women who have family responsibilities. This, in turn, affects the promotion aspirations and opportunities of policewomen, representing an 'irresolvable conflict' between balancing family commitments and a career in policing and a major barrier for women looking to progress to police leadership ranks (Silvestri, 2006).

Alongside the police career, the gendered importance of time can be seen in its *everyday* expressions. Organisational theorists have long recognised the ability to *give* and *do* 'time' as a hugely desirable attribute for those seeking to climb the career ladder – this has taken on even greater significance in an increasingly competitive climate in which organisations are undergoing radical structural reform and under conditions of austerity in which workers are expected to do more with less. Such a reality certainly resonates with contemporary policing. Research on police inspectors by Turnball and Wass (2015:516) suggest the normalisation of 'extreme/ over' work within policing where officers feel compelled to work excessive hours, with a 'regular and expected demand to work "beyond the call of duty"'. With all police officers required to work as directed (that is, according to the 'exigencies of duty'), the tendency toward 'extreme/over' work becomes a key expectation and feature of being a police leader. With Superintendents working 50-60 hours per week, and more than one in ten working 60-70 hours per week (Donaldson-Feilder and Tharani 2011) and Chief Officers routinely working 70-75 hours per week (Caless, 2011) the concept of 'time' features heavily within the cultural narratives of police leadership.

The message to those aspiring to and those working within police leadership is less about the exclusionary justifications embedded in the traditional 'cult of masculinity' with its emphasis on physicality and more about the need to demonstrate an unstinting commitment to the job by being present and ever-available – something I have referred to as the 'smart macho culture' of police leadership (Silvestri, 2003). As a result, 'extreme/over' work is reproduced in the everyday expressions of operational policing and is maintained through the normative foundations of police culture upon which rests the ideal officer with an exaggerated sense of mission. The intensification of a management

culture characterised by the ability 'to get things done' through working long hours and in a 'full-time' capacity has become a key feature of organisational life and has come to be an important indicator of one's commitment and stamina. Again, the gendered implications are obvious, with men more likely to be able to comply with the long hours culture required for most senior jobs (Silim and Stirling, 2014; Tomlinson & Durbin, 2010). In this way, time-serving has become a core constituent of the 'smart macho' management culture that characterises police leadership and is a fundamental resource for building the identity necessary for the police leader (Silvestri, 2003). Turnball & Wass (2015) remind us that given the exaggerated sense of mission that police officers typically display towards their role, it is hardly surprising that officers' acceptance to do extreme work is expressed in relation to officers' personal commitment. This temporal dimension further secures men's identity as different to women and better suited to the 'ideal' cultural prescriptions of doing police work. In developing their blueprint for the future of policing in relation to gender, Dick et al (2014) have argued that thinking more creatively about the temporal structures and how and why they are enacted is an important locus of transformation. They also recommend that the design of police work and the long hours culture should be a key target for future reform because it is this which reproduces some of the dominant 'myths' about policing that are embedded in what people *do* and in their sense of identity as police officers.

Concluding thoughts:

While the academic endeavours cited above have enriched our understanding of police culture immeasurably, there remains a sustained, over simplified and unflinching attachment to the idea of police culture as monolithic, static and negative. Through its

challenge to the presentation of masculinity in its singular form within policing, i.e. the 'cult of masculinity', I hope this paper contributes something to the 'intellectualising' project of studying gender and police culture. Drawing on a gendered lens to explore the organisational settings within policing, I have suggested a multiplicity of gender representations and performances within policing and encourage those interested in police culture to think in plural terms when considering masculinities, femininities, identities and culture(s). The 'cult of masculinity' with its emphasis on physicality is but one of various cultural prescriptions of what it means to be a police officer in relation to gender. Its cultural manifestations may well feature in the lives of the rank and file but it does not necessarily best capture the cultural dynamics and experience of those holding rank. Here the 'smart macho' culture and its expectation of leaders to *do* and *manage time* assumes dominance - there are other unwritten cultural expectations: including, the need to demonstrate 'tough and forceful' behaviours, symbolised by an aggressive, competitive and performance driven leadership style – see Silvestri, 2003 & 2007 for a fuller discussion.

Indeed the same can be said for women working in leadership and management roles beyond the police organisation. Drawing on interview data with women managers working in IT, finance and the medical industry, Due Billing (2011: 298) critically questions the continued use of the 'male' as the norm when it no longer resonates with many women's experiences, emphasising that 'variation, complexity and contradictions may be lost when holding onto essentialist understandings such as the male norm'. Allowing for greater complexity then enables a more nuanced and authentic account of gender to emerge – it also ultimately provides reform agendas with a greater chance of success. The police service is clearly committed to improving the representation of women within policing and diversity

discourses certainly present as enabling, progressive and inclusive. This reading belies a somewhat alternative reality. Alongside a rather stubborn focus on increasing the number of women into policing, police diversity discourse suggests that women may bring with them 'alternative' and 'better' policing. Organisational proponents of critical mass certainly suggest this as a positive way forward, as Holgersson (2013: 463) notes 'homosocial circuits can be challenged if persons that deviate from the norm are included'. The significant level of police reform in relation to the reconfiguring the police career in recent years (through enabling direct entry and flexible working practice) is also being hailed as evidence of a commitment to developing diversity within policing. My argument is a simple one – tackling the gendered nature of police culture requires a much more complex appreciation of the ways in which gender is routinely accomplished within policing. In this paper, I have argued that entrenched attitudes and an unwavering attachment to a '*crime fighting*' mentality together with a police career model that emphasises *time* through 'extreme/ over' work are but two resources which enable difference to be constructed between men and women and sites in which credibility, competence and commitment are defined and redefined in ways that women become defined as 'unsuitable' and 'deficient' to the work of policing.

Recruiting more women into the police service without fundamentally re-thinking or altering the foundations or the 'substructure' (Acker, 1992) within which they undertake their work does not bode well for long term organisational change. The police service may be well on its way to becoming a more inclusive, enabling and progressive organisation through its commitment to diversity but it needs to be mindful of the simultaneous undoing of such progress at a cultural level. Loftus (2008) has documented the considerable resistance and resentment held by white, heterosexual male officers towards the

institutionalisation of diversity within the policing. Here we are left with a situation in which equalities and diversities discourse is perceived by the majority to be political correctness gone too far. That said, Loftus (2009) maintains the powerful impact of the 'diversity agenda' and 'identity politics' on the cultural realm of policing, noting the significant 'interruption' caused by the arrival of 'new *politics of policing diversity'* (Loftus, 2009:35, italics original). Thinking ahead, there is much scope for police research to further consider the complexity within 'identity politics' and to map out the various 'inequality regimes' (Acker, 2009) that intersect with one another. In this way, analysis on exclusion might begin to integrate and incorporate gender with other forms of persistent inequalities prevalent within policing, including those based on race/ethnicity, sexuality and class (Holdaway, 2013; Jones, 2014; Rowe, 2007). With an increased pluralisation of policing and prediction of further growth in the police family and policing roles, Atkinson (2016: 13) calls for a 'broadening of the cultural vista' when exploring police culture(s). There remains considerable scope for further conceptual development in relation to police culture and gender. Such work will serve as an important check on the ways in which gender symbols, patterns and beliefs about 'real' police work and 'ideal' workers are being redrawn and repositioned across an increasingly complex policing landscape.

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