LEADERSHIP IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE

STREAM LEADER: ANNE WORRALL

THURSDAY 24 JULY

10.00am – 11.00am:
1. Gendered Justice: the impact of masculinist leadership models on how justice is dispensed in our communities
   Susan Harwood

2. The Gendered Nature of Leadership and Power within Policing
   Barbara Etter

11.30am – 1.00pm:

Women and Leadership in Criminal Justice
Roundtable Discussion
The session will focus on the experiences of women working in the criminal justice system and the challenges of being in managerial and leadership roles in professions that have traditionally been male-dominated. Anne Worrall (Keele University and UWA) Barbara Etter (WA Police) and Heather Harker (WA Correctional Services).

2.45pm – 3.45pm

1. Engaging Men To Progress Gender and Leadership Equity In The Workplace
   Michelle Ray

2. Policing, Gender And Working Time: The Case Of The Part-Time Detective
   Sara Charlesworth
There is little gendered analysis of how the masculinist leadership models that prevail in policing impact on how justice is served, or not served in our communities. In this paper I show that when a “gender lens” approach was applied to an Australian policing jurisdiction we were able to create a better understanding of how an “excess of men” [Sinclair 2004] in leadership and decision-making roles often translates into poor experiences of justice for women [and men] in the broader community. A search of earlier literature shows that there is some consensus for the argument that more women police - and more women police leaders - means better policing and in turn, better outcomes for the community. Frances Heidensohn proffers some explanation for this view in suggesting that social control is something at which women excel:

It is inescapable that women’s involvement in social control has often been outstandingly successful, if by success we count the curbing of vice or crime, or the reduction of public disorder. (Heidensohn, 1992: 26)

Diana Grant (2000) suggests that such consensus constitutes a unifying theme in much of the scholarly literature, and is based on an assumption of gender difference:

The view that policewomen will create a positive impact is illustrated by Martin (1980), discussing how women’s greater role flexibility means they are able to display more range and adaptability than men in their approach to policing, because they can draw upon both masculine and feminine ways of communicating (Grant: 2000: 54).

My research shows that despite these views, the presence of women within policing and the notion of women as leaders continue to be resisted, contested, and challenged by their male colleagues. At the same time, stereotypical images, myths and false conceptions about women feature prominently in research on women in policing and many of the researchers present women’s experiences in policing in the context of a distinctive police culture. I argue that previous research has been inhibited by a lack of understanding of how to study the culture of policing; insiders keep much of what goes on in police work to themselves and make it difficult for outside researchers to provide a nuanced account. It is against this backdrop of limited in-depth knowledge about the gendered workplace culture of policing organisations that I designed, developed and applied a feminist research methodology. This approach engaged my insider teams in learning how to use a “gender lens” to examine the day to day processes, attitudes, behaviours and policies that had contributed to an excess of men in leadership positions in their own organisation. The application of a non-hierarchical research model within such a culture produced some significant challenges; however, I discuss how the teams-based methodological approach contributed to some very positive outcomes, including a greater understanding of the link between a hostile culture for women leaders in policing and poor quality of response to women in the community.

**Keywords:** gendered leadership; dense masculinity; women in policing; gendered justice

**References:**


THURSDAY 24 JULY
10.00am – 11.00am:

The Gendered Nature Of Leadership And Power Within Policing

Barbara Etter  WA Police; Edith Cowan University; Barbara.Etter@police.wa.gov.au

The paper is written from a senior sworn female police practitioner’s perspective. It draws on the academic literature but also reflects on personal experience and observations to provide comment on the current situation in relation to gender and power, in the context of police leadership.

The paper will commence by setting the scene in relation to the percentages of women in policing in Western Australia and Australia, and will provide figures on the percentages of Commissioned Officers (Inspector and above) and the very low numbers of women in the Senior Executive (Assistant Commissioner and above). Whilst significant reforms have occurred in the last decade or so in relation to organisational structure, culture and management style, policing organisations are still essentially hierarchical and militaristic organisations that value “heroic” leadership, a male managerial model and a command and control style of management. The numbers of women have not reached critical mass so for many women it is still a challenge to be accepted and there is often a need to prove their worth and “fit in”.

For women police leaders, there is still a real challenge in accessing, maintaining and utilising power to achieve organisational outcomes and to prove their competence, whilst at the same time maintaining their own identity and personal integrity. For instance, they may not be prepared to trade information as freely as male counterparts. There is real pressure to conform to and not “rock the boat” or challenge the status quo in any significant way. An inclusive and collaborative management style is often regarded as evidence of being too “indecisive” and not “tough” enough. Undermining can also be a common experience for senior women, in the form of not being taken seriously by males or not being kept informed or included in key decision-making processes. A more extreme example of undermining was clearly seen within the Victoria Police during Office of Police Integrity hearings involving the Media Director, a male Assistant Commissioner and the Association. Key players were seen to be undermining the leadership of Australia’s first female Commissioner, Christine Nixon.

Women in policing need to understand power and influence, and the associated organisational politics, in order to succeed and to become much-needed agents of change. Domination and marginalisation are not attractive options for policewomen. Strategic networking can be an important source of power for the few women who do make it to the upper levels of policing. Sponsors and mentors, particularly powerful male police leaders, can be of great assistance. The author will reflect on her personal experiences in this regard. As a lateral entrant to policing at senior levels in two Australian jurisdictions, she has experienced first-hand the challenges of establishing credibility and an effective power base.

Policewomen need to work on building their personal power and tapping into the more hidden political processes as they cannot just rely on formal positional power. Coercion and formal authority generally are no longer a realistic option. Over-reliance on formal power may lead to employee compliance but not commitment. A more liberating and empowering type of leadership is what is needed in modern organisations. Policing needs significant cultural and managerial reform to succeed in the future and women should be key contributors in this regard.

**Keywords**: policing, leadership, gender, power, women

**References**:


**THURSDAY 24 JULY**

2.45pm – 3.45pm

**Engaging Men To Progress Gender and Leadership Equity In The Workplace**

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In today's society how far are we willing to go to enable promotion and progression of gender and leadership equity in the workplace? What 'outside the square' options could women contemplate and develop to combat existing gender barriers? What if fresh thought is applied to existing conundrums amassing support along the journey? What new challenges and leaders lie ahead, and are both genders willing to explore them at least, and embrace them at most?

Traditional gender roles and characteristics still tend to dominate today's working landscapes. Women have long headed a campaign for equity and leadership in the workplace with little positive result. To date, Australian statistics demonstrate that gender equity is progressing very slowly, if at all and in some instances it is going backwards. Traditional methods of improving practical female rates of participation are having minimal effect.

Women are measured and held accountable by men. The majority of men would seem to possess little genuine appreciation of the equity gap. This may be attributed partly to the male ego and ignorance, however despite their best intentions women may also contribute to their own stagnant collective progress.

Let's recognise where we are still failing to overcome obvious barriers to progress and how we can create an innovative, universally successful way around and through them.

Are both genders sufficiently open minded to allow for every option available, no matter how confronting, simplistic or testing to progress gender and leadership equity in the workplace? If we begin to engage both genders, then women and men, both individually and collectively, can participate through simple action to help shift and redistribute the status quo. Both men and women have a responsibility to reengage change in this arena.

This discussion paper reflects on the current status of each gender in terms of equity and leadership in the workplace. It challenges existing thought and practices through self awareness and language to strengthen understanding and increase participation of both genders in the change process. It then suggests, from a practitioner viewpoint based on sixteen years experience working in male dominated environments, how both genders can expand their thinking to progress gender and leadership equity by offering simple, practical and achievable actions, embracing a way ahead for positive change.

Literature and statistical data is drawn from a combination of sources including Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency; the Police Federation of Australia Women’s Advisory Committee; authors such as Steve Biddulph ‘Manhood: An action plan for changing men’s lives’ and K. Leigh-Ed, ‘Women Respond to the Men’s Movement: A Feminist Collection’.

**Keywords:** Progress, Equity, Workplace, Gender

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THURSDAY 24 JULY
2.45pm – 3.45pm
Policing, Gender And Working Time: The Case Of The Part-Time Detective
Sara Charlesworth

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Part-time work has been identified as a key mechanism to retain women in policing (Lynch 2005). However, its uptake remains low and gendered. In Australia just over four percent of police employees work on a part-time basis. While the uptake of part-time work in policing services is overwhelmingly by women, it is also uneven across policing services; ranging from 22 percent of Tasmanian female police officers to three percent of female police officers in the Northern Territory. There is also evidence of the variable quality of part-time work in policing with many jobs located at the bottom of the police hierarchy with limited career prospects. The uneven uptake and variable quality of part-time work suggest that the organisational context is crucial. The paper draws on collaborative research with Victoria Police that examines the constraints and options for quality part-time work (Charlesworth & Whittenbury 2007). The paper starts with and returns to a discrimination complaint pursued by a female detective who wanted to work on a part-time basis. While she was ultimately successful, her case highlights the complexity of the resistance to part-time work within policing and indeed within many male-dominated organisations.

The paper explores the forms this resistance has taken and the organisational interrelationships of gender and working time, specifically around full-time and part-time work. It highlights firstly the persistence of several cultural and institutional barriers to the acceptance and integration of part-time work, not least what has been aptly described in the context of UK Policing services as a ‘part-time, part able, part committed’ discourse (Jenkins 2000). It then examines the gendering of this resistance illustrated in the case of the part-time detective, wherein access to reduced hours to facilitate women’s caring responsibilities is treated as less acceptable than access to access to rostering and reduced hours arrangements to facilitate men’s outside commitments, such as study or sport. Finally, the paper canvasses prospects for change. The research findings suggest, on the one hand, that improving the quality of part-time work in policing services is not possible without significant change to organisational culture and practices to ensure that part-time work is an integrated rather than a marginalised form of employment. On the other hand, the findings also suggest that to be effective, such changes need to address the organisation of policing work more generally, challenging both the way in which tasks are allocated and rostering and working time arrangements organised around an assumption of a male breadwinner full-time norm. Developing alternative working practices in policing then can provide an important strategy for bringing about real organisational change, not least to the masculinist construction of police work (Silvestri, 2003, 89).

Keywords: gender, policing, part-time work, discrimination, working time, work organisation

References: