Empowering Women in Blue Uniforms—Gender and Police in South Africa

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Abstract

Gender in the police force has received scant attention by researchers, although there are complex social dimensions at play in how male and female law enforcement officers relate to each other in the workplace. Given the fact that males predominate in the police force, their female counterparts are often marginalised due to their sexual orientation and certain stereotypes that prevail about their femininity. Male officers perceive female officers as physically weak individuals who cannot go about their duties as this is an area of work deemed more appropriate to men. Based on this perception, female officers are discriminated against in active policing and often confined to administrative duties. This study looks at how female police officers are discriminated against in the global police culture across the globe, the logic of sexism and women's threat to police work, men's opposition to female police work, gender representivity in the police force, and the integration and transformation of the South African Police Service to accommodate female police officers. The study highlights that although police officers are discriminated against globally, in the South African context positive steps have been taken to accommodate them through legislative reform.

Keywords: gender; policing; equality; masculinity; transformation

Introduction

The issue of gender and the police, or the power relationships between men and women, is a form of organisational diversity that policing organisations both nationally and internationally have to grapple with in the 21st century. A tendency has been noted for many decades all over the world, in developed and as well as developing countries, that the number of women police officials employed within law enforcement organisations

is much lower than for men. This paper provides an understanding of gender relations and the power dynamics of women in the policing profession and serves as a prerequisite for understanding police culture and the way women and men are affected by political processes and social development. A gender-based approach to policing begins with the recognition of the differences between women and men. Achieving gender equality is essential not only for the benefit of women, but for the benefit of all peoples and each nation. Gender is an important consideration in development. It is a way of looking at how social norms and power structures affect the lives and opportunities available to different groups of men and women. An analysis of the feminist movement, the contributions made by women within law enforcement agencies, and contemporary issues concerning women and policing is provided from a global and a South African perspective.

Gender and the Emergence of Gender Equality

The concept of unequal gender relations in the workplace was furthered with Ester Boserup's influential work in the early 1970s, which challenged the notion of women as passive beneficiaries of development. She called for a focus on Women in Development (WID), to acknowledge the contributions of women's often-invisible labour. Following frustration with the slow progress of WID, other approaches emerged that criticised the WID approach as being one of simply "add women and stir." The Women and Development (WAD) discourse emphasised the need for structural changes in the global political arena (World Bank 2012).

The Gender and Development (GAD) approach followed, focusing on larger inequities and unequal relations. GAD advocates called for a deeper understanding of the socially constructed basis of gender differences and how this affects relationships between men and women. They argued for an improved understanding of power relations and the gendered nature of systems and institutions which impact on the lives of women and men. Rather than incorporating women into the current patriarchal system, GAD advocates argued for the transformation of the system into one characterised by gender equality.

Further, states have continued to call for progress towards gender equality through a number of international agreements, regional platforms and conferences. At the 1995 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing, the most influential conference to date, states committed themselves (in the Beijing Platform for Action) to establishing mechanisms to promote women's rights—including national action plans, gender strategies and legal frameworks.

In 2000, states confirmed their commitment to reducing gender inequalities through the United Nations Millennium Declaration. This was expressed specifically in the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) which called for the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment. Three indicators were chosen to represent this goal: 1) the ratios of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education, 2) the

share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector, and 3) the proportion of seats held by women in national parliament. While progress has been made to highlight women's issues and experiences in development programmes, national laws and political decisions, attention to gender is often inconsistent.

Globally, more women than men live in poverty. Women are also less likely than men to receive basic education and to be appointed to a political position nationally and internationally. In most societies, women have lower social status than men, producing unequal power relations. For example, women have a lower status in families, communities and society. They have less access to and control over resources and they have less of a say in decision-making than men. Compared with men, women control fewer political and economic resources, including land, employment and traditional positions of authority. Acknowledging and incorporating these gender inequalities into programmes and analyses are therefore extremely important, both from a human rights perspective and to maximise the impact on socio-economic development. The World Development Report (WDR) (World Bank 2012) highlights the importance of directly targeting the persistent constraints and obstacles to women's equality (especially in areas of economic empowerment, educational gaps, household/societal voice, and violence against women) in order to enhance productivity and improve long-term development outcomes. Gender equality is also important for sustainable peace, and there is a growing body of empirical evidence suggesting that a higher level of gender inequality is associated with higher risks of internal conflict (World Bank 2012).

Police Culture in a Global Context

Traditionally, socialisation in the workplace is conceived as the process through which a beginner learns the skills, knowledge and values necessary to become a competent member of an organisation or occupation. In policing, this involves not only learning the laws, procedures and techniques of law enforcement and order maintenance, but also acquiring a range of organisational skills, attitudes and assumptions that are compatible with other members of the occupation. Successful socialisation often involves a personal metamorphosis—and not always a positive one. Research studies have consistently shown that while most recruits join the police with high expectations and lofty ideals, by the time they graduate as police officers, many have become disillusioned and cynical about police work and the police organisation, although they remain firmly committed to their vocation and solidarity with their workmates. It may be questioned why this happens. Central to previous assumptions about police socialisation is the notion of police culture—a system of shared values and understandings, which is passed on from one generation of police to the next (Chan 2004).

The concept of police culture in the criminological literature is loosely defined. As far back as 1977, Manning (1977, 143) referred to the "core skills, cognitions, and affect" that define "good police work." It includes "accepted practices, rules, and principles of conduct that are situationally applied, and generalized rationales and beliefs" (Manning

1989, 360). Reiner (1992) equates it with the "values, norms, perspectives and craft rules" that inform police conduct. Skolnick (1966) speaks of the "working personality" of a police officer—a response to the danger of police work, the authority of the police constable, and the pressure to be "productive" and "efficient" in police work. Reiner (1992, 11–29) isolates certain features of police culture that are related to this "working personality," including a cynical view of the world, a machismo and racist attitude, a strong sense of solidarity with other officers, and a conservative political outlook. Police culture is not, however, primarily negative. It is seen to be functional to the survival of police officers in an occupation considered to be dangerous, unpredictable, and alienating. The bond of solidarity between officers offers its members reassurance that the other officers will "pull their weight" in police work, that they will defend, back up and assist their colleagues when confronted by external threats, and that they will maintain secrecy in the face of external investigations (Goldsmith 1990, 93–94). The development, transmission, and maintenance of this culture are assumed to be also related to the demands of police work (Reiner 1992, 109).

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

Jennifer Hunt (1990) observed that the policeman's world constitutes a symbolic universe permeated with gender meanings that explain much of their behaviour. The logic of sexism rests on their dualistic worldview that associates gender stereotyped oppositions (i.e., masculinity/femininity) with various organisational symbols (e.g., street/station house), occupational themes and work activities (e.g., crime fighting/service and order maintenance), and situational meanings (e.g., public/domestic, dirty/clean). In each of the gender-stereotyped opposites, the item associated with the feminine is undervalued (Hunt 1990). From this dualistic perspective, men create an idealised image of policing as action oriented, violent, and uncertain. They define themselves through these images that are closely associated with the "masculine" side of contrasting pairs of gender-linked symbols and then use their work as a resource for doing activities related to masculinity. Thus, officers associate "real police work" with crime fighting that takes place on the street, often involves collusion in "dirty knowledge" of illicit activity, celebrates physical prowess and involvement in fights, demands emotional control in the face of danger, and evades formal rules. This viewpoint has been characterised as "street cop culture" (Reuss-Ianni 1983). In contrast, supervisory, station house, and police academy assignments are associated with "feminine labour" involving "inside work" and women's skills. These are associated with the "management cop" culture disdained and resisted by "street cops" (Hunt 1990). Women threaten these working-class men's cultural norms, group solidarity, and definition of policing as "men's work" and themselves as masculine. Thus, the integration of women into street patrol has evoked strong opposition that men generally explain in terms of the physical differences between themselves and women, who tend to be smaller and weaker. While men assert that women's physical characteristics are the primary reason that women are less able to perform the job, their assignment to patrol poses a dilemma. In one of the few remaining occupations in which

strength and physical ability occasionally are useful, women's presence implies either that men's unique asset—physical strength—is irrelevant, or that a man who works with a woman will be at a disadvantage in a confrontation.

According to Martin and Jurik (2007), three other less frequently articulated concerns also support men's resistance to include women: the belief that women are "mentally weaker," the view that women are unable to command public respect as officers, and the concern that "moral" women will break the code of silence and expose the men's illicit activities. Besides providing less "muscle" to a partner, men regard women as "too emotional" and, therefore, unreliable in the face of danger. If women cannot be trusted to aid their partners in physical confrontations or to react to fearful or emotionally charged situations in unemotional and "objective" ways, they threaten the basic norms of police work. Many men assert that they patrol in a more cautious (and, in their view, less effective) way with a female partner.

Discrimination and hostility are less openly tolerated now but continue to permeate police organisations. A recent study found a consensus among experienced women officers that "policing has changed with the times [and] that the discrimination of the past is not present in the same form today" (Gossett and Williams 1998, 68). Nevertheless, two thirds of the women perceived continued discrimination by colleagues, supervisors, and citizens in less overt forms, including derogatory comments, inappropriate behaviours, and failure to take the women seriously. In the station house, frequent pranks, jokes, and comments that call attention to women's sexuality make it clear to women that they are "outsiders." For women of colour and lesbians, harassment amplifies their outsider status. For example, lesbian women may be assumed to be masculine and therefore more competent than heterosexual women on the street, but are harassed due to their gender and heterosexual male officers' curiosity and hostility (Miller, Forest, and Jurik 2003). By sexualising the workplace, men superimpose their gender superiority on women's claims to work-based equality.

Most women officers have experienced sexual harassment on the job. In one study, Susan Martin (1990) found that 63% of 72 women officers interviewed in five large urban departments recounted instances of sexual harassment on the job, including 25% who had experienced *quid pro quo* harassment. According to a 1990 Michigan State University study of 26 urban and rural departments, 12% of the women officers said supervisors had touched them in an offensive way in the past year and 4% said their bosses had tried to force them to have intercourse (cited in Cooper 1992, 1–10). Studies conducted outside the United States also document high rates of sexual harassment of women officers in many nations. Jennifer Brown's (1998) survey of police personnel in England and Wales found that 70% of women officers experienced some form of sexual harassment directed at them personally in the six months prior to responding to the questionnaire, and 44% had experienced harassment often. Sutton (1996) reported even higher rates in Australia. Brown and Heidensohn (2000) cite similar studies finding sexual harassment in Belgium, Denmark, and Holland. Although many women officers

experience sexual harassment, they have not united or taken co-ordinated action to press for change. Instead, women tend to reproach other women, asserting that those who get sexually harassed "ask for it" through their demeanour or behaviour. Such victim blaming makes the woman rather than her harasser the target of criticism.

Despite their increased representation, policing remains associated with masculinity, and the informal work culture continues to be strongly resistant to women because their presence threatens men's definition of their work and themselves. Women are perceived as a threat to men's physical safety, group solidarity, and occupational identity as "macho" crime fighters. In addition, their presence undermines the close association of their work with masculinity and men's control over the social order.

Perceptions of Gender, Police Culture and Men's Opposition to Women Officers

The growing interest in gender issues in policing and substantial literature on the topic highlight the difficulties that women have experienced in police agencies in both Western and developing countries. The common explanation for this is that policewomen are often viewed negatively by policemen who feel that policing is and should be a male profession. Consequently, policewomen commonly experience negative stereotyping relating to their abilities, as well as discrimination. Women are also more often involved in stereotypical roles such as in administrative duties or working in units focused on crimes against women and children (Newham, Masuku, and Dlamini 2006). Despite this, there is growing recognition that women can add considerable value to the profession of policing. It has been argued that women bring a different approach to policing; for example, they are less inclined to use force to solve problems and rely more on communication skills (Morrison 2005, 20).

A South African study conducted by Newham, Masuku, and Dlamini (2006) using in-depth interviews found that about half of the male respondents from each racial group made statements revealing that they believed that females did not make good police officers. Typically, they thought that women should be restricted to office work. According to a white male captain (cited in Newham, Masuku, and Dlamini 2006, 37),

> there are more than enough women in the police now. If there are 24% women in the police, then they must get rid of some because policing is not a woman's job. I do not think they belong here, and this is my personal opinion. Women should be employed to work in the [client service centre] and help with paper work at the station, not be involved in operational work. They cannot work as detectives or in crime prevention because they become a burden when you are out there.

Furthermore, a black male constable (cited in Newham, Masuku, and Dlamini 2006, 37) asserted that

the problem is that they do not have the kind of courage that men have. I will not feel safe working with a woman because they do not have the kind of courage men have. You see, men can take risks and most women would not take risks. There are few of them who can do that. I will feel unsafe working with women, not because I am sexist but because women cannot take risks. They fear guns.

From the same research the remaining half of the male respondents indicated that they thought women could make good police officers and were an asset to the organisation. However, these respondents sometimes limited women officers' usefulness to stereotypical positions. A black male inspector said "women make very good police officers, especially when it comes to rape cases. I had dealt with rape cases before and it was so difficult for me as a man. But women can acquire more information than men and they are very sensitive. They know what to ask and how. They are also very patient and understanding" (cited in Newham, Masuku, and Dlamini 2006, 37). A white male inspector said the following: "I have no problem with women being promoted or employed in the police. In fact, when women are properly trained they tend to do their work very well as compared to men. Men are impatient and prefer to use force even when it is not necessary to do so. I have no problem if women pull their weight in the police" (2006, 37).

Similarly, in the research undertaken by the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) (Newham, Masuku, and Dlamini 2006) almost all female respondents were very positive about the contribution that women could make to the South African Police Service (SAPS). A black female superintendent (cited in Newham, Masuku, and Dlamini 2006, 37) responded as follows:

> We are trained to be responsible and caring and this is what we bring to the police. These values are so important today in the police because we are working with communities. The philosophy of policing requires people with problem-solving skills, leaders who can lead from the front and women have those skills. I do not want to engage in the sexist debate of whether we make better police than men because it will take us nowhere. The issue for me is that the organisation definitely needs more women.

An Indian female constable (cited in Newham, Masuku, and Dlamini 2006, 37) recounted her experience:

> Men think women are not comfortable with doing the "men's jobs." I remember this guy at a bank machine who tried to take advantage of a poor woman. When the flying squad passed, he hides and then reappears. I told this guy I was a police officer and I am demanding that he leaves this place or I will arrest him. He laughed at me and told me I was a fake. I took him by surprise and arrested him and called the van to pick him up. When we checked this guy he was wanted for robbery.

A few respondents felt that gender was irrelevant to the question of what made a good police officer. Rather, they highlighted that it had more to do with the character of the individual than his or her gender. Nevertheless, policewomen felt that they were unfairly

restricted to carrying out certain tasks (generally involving office work), or that they had to prove themselves through engaging in risky actions (for example, high-speed car chases) before they were accepted by men as equals. Negative attitudes towards female police officers were apparent in a number of statements made by male interviewees. This suggests that police diversity training should also focus on gender (Newham, Masuku, and Dlamini 2006).

The South African Perspective on Gender and the Police

South Africa made the transition to democracy in 1994. With it came the then much-needed restructuring of the police force. This included amalgamating the old South African Police (SAP) and the 10 "homeland" police services into one national police service. This included changing the ranking structure and restructuring the various operational and support units within the SAPS. The SAPS was formed in terms of the South African Police Service Act, 68 of 1995 (RSA 1995).

The democratic elections in 1994 resulted in many constitutional changes. A Bill of Rights was promulgated in 1996 which defined the rights of all individuals within the South African society. In the new Constitution of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996 (RSA 1996), Section 9 (3) states that "[t]he State may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language or birth." Discrimination against women came to the fore when the equality clause of the Bill of Rights was addressed in the Constitution. It brought into perspective gender discrimination, which was regarded as a crime against human rights. In the context of policing, this perspective encouraged women to assume a professional role in South African policing. The transformation of the SAPS by the country's first democratically elected government started in 1994. From a militant and racist organisation serving the interests of a numerically small white elite, moves were made to transform the SAPS into a democratic institution that would reflect the demographic diversity of the country and serve the interests of all South Africans.

Women have been, and to a certain extent still are, part of a minority group in the South African Police Service, but the past decade has seen a steady infusion of females into this once male-dominated occupation. Van Kessel (2001) argues that gender is often neglected when the transformation of the SAPS is concerned; gender provides a useful variable with which to explore police organisational culture and the extent to which it has changed, following transformation initiatives. In this respect, the Constitution of South Africa also lays down that the South African Police Service has a responsibility to prevent, combat and investigate crime, maintain public order, protect and secure the inhabitants of the Republic and their property. It further expounds that the police should uphold and enforce the law, create a safe and secure environment for all people in South Africa, prevent and investigate anything that may threaten the safety or security of

communities and ensure that criminals are brought to justice and participate in efforts to address the causes of crime.

Reform efforts after 1994 concentrated primarily on the front end of the criminal justice system—i.e. the visible component of policing. Community policing has been the principal of police efforts to make the service more acceptable to the South African public—in reality the focal point has been as important a tool for transforming citizens' views of the police as it has been to change the attitudes among police officers themselves. The transformation of the policing component of the criminal justice system is still far from complete. Serious problems characterise the system; these are primarily in the area of detecting crime, prosecuting offenders, and incarcerating the convicted.

The issue of gender, or the power relations between men and women, is another form of organisational diversity that the SAPS had to struggle with. Van Kessel (2001) argues that gender is often neglected when the transformation of the SAPS is considered, due to the predominant focus on race. As with race, gender provides a useful variable with which to explore police organisational culture and the extent to which it has changed, following transformation initiatives. Of course, there are many other ways in which police organisational diversity can be explored.

The SAP was a male-dominated institution. While there had always been women in the SAP, they were largely confined to administrative work. It was not until 1972 that there was a deliberate recruitment of, initially, white women; women from other racial categories were recruited from the1980s onwards (Brogden and Shearing 1993). Nevertheless, the number of women recruited into the SAP was marginal in comparison to the number of men. In 1995, out of the 202 brigadier posts (the fourth-highest rank at the time), 80% were white males and only one woman held this rank. Women officers constituted 18% of the total police force and made up only 11% of the ranks of commissioned officers (Rauch 2000, 123).

It was not until 1997 that the SAPS drafted what it called the "Credo for Affirmative Action." This document stated that "in order to manifest commitment to this policy and constitutional responsibility, the South African Police Service shall strive to reflect the demographics of the country in all occupational classes and at all levels of the organisation at national and provincial levels, in terms of race and gender" (SAPS 1997). As Newham, Masuku, and Dlamini (2006, 17) observe, at "this point the goals set for the organisation included ensuring that middle and senior management levels comprised at least 50% black people and 30% women by the year 2000."

While race had dominated the focus of organisational representivity, the issue of gender equity increasingly began to receive attention. In 2002 National Commissioner Jackie Selebi (2000) spoke strongly about women's empowerment in the SAPS:

> I would like to see more women in the SAPS empowering themselves to break into traditionally male dominated fields, such as the Special Task Force, the Dog Unit, the

Water Wing and the Air Wing, not to mention certain Detective-oriented fields and indeed Top Management. All members of the SAPS must realise that the days of discrimination, stereotyping and prejudice against women—or indeed against any person—are at an end. The invaluable contribution that women have made, can make, and are making in the development of our country and the strengthening of our democracy [is] being recognised. The time has come for me to throw down the gauntlet and challenge the women of the SAPS: seize the opportunities that are available, carve a role for yourselves in the South African Police Service and pave the way for the women who will follow.

Policing and Gender Representability

Police work in all societies is seen as a "man's job"—this is evident from the fact that in most countries of the world women are poorly represented amongst police personnel. Australia, with 29.9% of women in its police service, and South Africa, with 29%, are among the world leaders in this respect, but the exceedingly low numbers of women elsewhere testify to substantial barriers to women's access to police work, and to problems with retention of female staff once employed (UNIFEM 2007).

Despite the widespread initiatives to promote equal employment opportunities and gender mainstreaming, there is a huge gender imbalance in police organisations across the world. The problem is more severe in Africa and Asia. History tells us that women were not allowed to enter police organisations on the African continent until the 1950s and 60s. Baffa (2011) notes that the "Australasian Council of Women and Police Journal published in 2006 indicated that women make up 20.9% of all police officers in Australia, 18.1% in the UK, 12.7% in the US, and the ratio varies between 2.2 to 19.1% in Asia." Furthermore, an assessment by the Institute for Security Studies in collaboration with the Eastern African Police Chiefs Cooperation Organisation (EAPCCO) Secretariat (cited in Baffa 2011) "indicates that the ratio of female officers is lamentably low in the Eastern Africa region, Seychelles being an exception. In some countries, such as Burundi, it goes down to 3%. Again, the ratio declines sharply as rank level increases. In this regard, there is no exception among the countries."

As Baffa (2011) explains,

[t]he imbalance is an injustice to women. It is discriminatory and contrary to equal employment opportunity imperatives. From the service recipient's perspective, it is also a matter of social injustice because the imbalance accounts to denial of the right of access to female police officers by female offenders and female victims of crime. As the gender imbalance continues, women's impact on the law and order agenda and styles of policing will continue to be limited. The discrimination and other forms of gender-based violence will also continue to persist. In fields dominated by men, women face many barriers like opposition and resistance, organisational policies promoting gender separation, differential assignments, and sexual harassment.
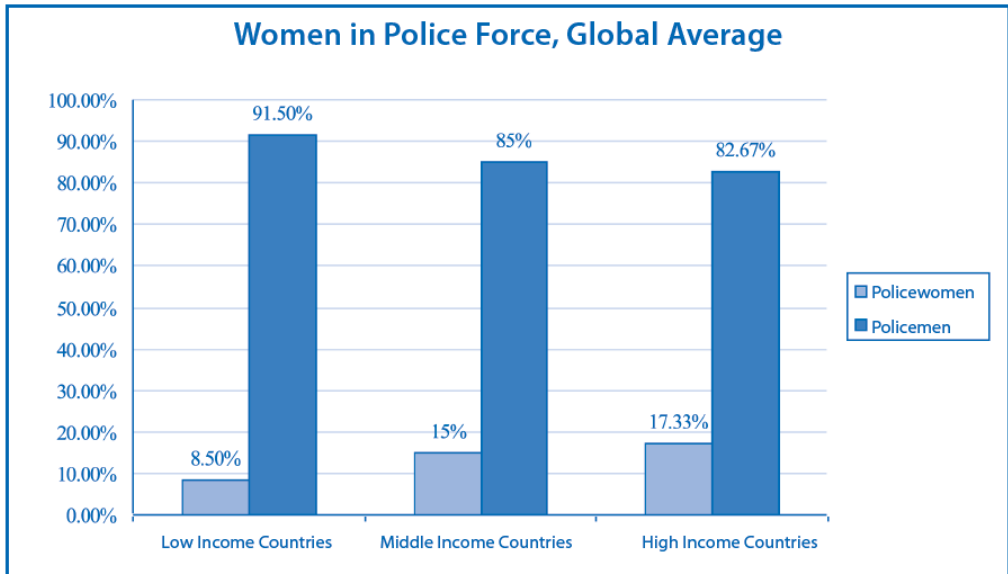
Figure 1: Women in police force, global average

Source: Institute for Security Studies in collaboration with the Eastern African Police Chiefs Cooperation Organisation (cited in Baffa 2011)

The Integration of Females in Police Organisations in the Southern African Context

The Pretoria-based Institute for Security Studies (ISS) says Southern Africa is making marked progress in terms of the number of women in security services. The ISS in its weekly report pointed out that it is "difficult to access information on the human resource component of the security sector in Southern Africa" (Hendricks 2012). However, it provided estimates across the different regional security sectors. For policing, Seychelles was leading the way with a 38% representation of women, followed by South Africa with 32.5%, Namibia with 31%, Zimbabwe with 25% and Botswana with 24%. The Democratic Republic of Congo, Mauritius and Mozambique were below 10%. There is no available information on Angola and Swaziland. In 2012 South Africa appointed its first female national police chief, Mangwashi Victoria Phiyega. Women are primarily located at the lower levels, but some progress is recorded at decision-making levels. For example, in defence, South Africa leads the way with a 27% representation of women, closely followed by Namibia with 26% and the Seychelles and Zimbabwe at 20%. The Democratic Republic of Congo has approximately 7% and Malawi and Mozambique are at 5%. Botswana, in 2008, opened its defence gates to women, but has made year-on-year substantive progress. The number of women in the Angolan, Lesotho, Swaziland, Tanzanian and Zambian defence forces is not available (Hendricks 2012). South Africa also experienced a restructuring in ministerial portfolios

with Lindiwe Sisulu being moved from Defence to Public Service and Administration and Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakulu shifted from Corrections to Defence. South Africa has one woman as major general and 31 women as brigadier generals. Namibia has two women brigadier generals and the Deputy Minister of Defence, Lempy Lucas, is also a woman. Only the representation figures of women in the correctional services of six Southern African countries, namely Seychelles (52%), South Africa (28%), Lesotho (26%), Madagascar (16%), Malawi (15%), and Mauritius (8%), are known (Hendricks 2012).

Hendricks (2012), writing for the ISS, states that "data for women in peacekeeping is easier to access, as UNDPKO [United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations] has started to disaggregate its statistics for its respective peace missions by gender." Moreover, the "compilation of this data indicates that South Africa deploys the majority of women in terms of numbers, but as a percentage of overall deployments, women peacekeepers averaged around 14%–15% for UN missions in 2011. Namibia at 54% is doing very well in terms of the percentage of women deployed, but has a relatively low number of peacekeepers deployed. Zimbabwe, too, is doing well averaging at 31%" (Hendricks 2012). In 2008 the Southern Africa Development Community's heads of state and government adopted the SADC Gender and Development Protocol. This Protocol consists of 28 Articles, with specified indicators, designed to promote gender equality by 2015.

Conclusion

As 21st-century policing moves away from brute force and towards community engagement, female participation becomes an important component and should continue to increase. While female officers do have job challenges, they play a vital role in establishing and maintaining key relationships between the police department and the community it serves. It is becoming increasingly crucial to better understand how gendered identities are formed and how they can be better mobilised as a force for gender equality. With trends in police work today moving more toward service-oriented, community-centred approaches, women law enforcement officers may find greater opportunities in both employment and training. Although women face challenges when hiring practices include physical benchmarks based on male aptitude, civil rights and affirmative action laws have paved the way for women to assume law enforcement jobs traditionally held by men.

The *South African Police Service Strategic Plan 2010 to 2014* (SAPS 2010) states that transformation of the SAPS must be progressed as a matter of urgency including issues such as representivity, racism, discrimination and effective discipline management. The improvement of the employment equity of the SAPS, in accordance with government objectives, also remains a critical focus area. In this respect, existing affirmative action programmes will be continued and where required, additional programmes will be instituted. A concerted effort will be made to promote gender equity within the SAPS by developing and appointing women in decision-making posts.

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