

MASCULINITY, POLICE CULTURE AND WOMEN REPRESENTATION IN THE POLICE FORCE IN KADUNA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper presents the result of an empirical study on effect of masculinity on women representation and career development in the Nigeria Police Force using the Kaduna State Police Headquarter as the study centre. The study established the masculine nature of the Police Force, its effect on women representation and on women pursuing a career in the Nigeria Police Force. A survey research method was used, involving both structured and unstructured questionnaire, complimented with In-depth Interview (IDI) and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and the data generated were analysed using the SPSS. The study shows that the police job is masculine in nature, which has made it too rigorous for women, resulting in more men than women scaling for Police job. After enlistment, the masculinity has also predisposed women to discriminatory experience based on sex segregation of roles thereby very seriously hindering them from pursuing a career in the Police Force. It was recommended that, Police Force needs to use more advance technology in carrying out duties so as to reduce the effect of masculinity on women in take and on them pursuing career in the Police Force.

Keywords: Career; Masculinity; Policing; Representation

Introduction

Globally, the definition and the perception of policing being masculine in nature led to the enlistment of more male than female officers thereby resulting to underrepresentation of women in the Police Force. This masculinity has limited the performance of the few police women enlisted to administrative functions which are more feminine in nature. The limitation has however affected not only the contribution of the policewomen to other aspects of policing but also hindered their career prospects. However, the definition which is engendered by the patriarchal nature of most of the societies also resulted to the development of a male friendly rules and regulations guiding the enlistment of both male and female officers into the Police Force. For example, in the Nigeria Police Force, married women are not allowed to be enlisted which results in reducing the number of women applicant and also leads to their underrepresentation in policing. Consequently, few women were found in the Kaduna State Police Command

representing 1,860 out of the total population of the 12,890 police officers in the command as at 2009 (Information Unit, 2009). Therefore, this research looked at the masculine nature of the police culture and how the culture impacts on the career development of women in the Kaduna State Police Command. This paper is sectioned to capture the need for the study, the reviewed literatures, theoretical framework, methods of data generation and analysis, discussion of the findings and then, summary, conclusion and recommendations.

Need For the Study

Women are inadequately represented in the Police Force because of the definition that policing is too tedious and rigorous for the physical makeup of a woman resulting to a sex segregation of the police roles and therefore affecting the career prospect for the women in the Nigeria Police Force. The Police culture also encourages male domination and the sub-ordination of the policewomen. As a result, this paper looked at the effects of masculinity on women's performance; development as well as career prospects in terms of attending training, professional courses and occupying managerial positions in the Nigeria Police Force.

Literature review

The perception of the police force been masculine in nature as well as the enlistment requirements set a disadvantage to women who are willing to develop career in the policing. At the screening stage, strength test is introduced called agility test which involves a test of physical strength. This test often reduces the enlistment of women into the Police Force. For example, Burton(1987) argues that the agility test, which involves both physical ability and strength test, has a significant influence on the intake of females into the Victoria Police. She suggests that this type of disparity could be the result of lack of part time work, the sex segregation of the workforce and possibly sex discrimination. Similarly, Wimshurst (1995) argues that women entering the Police in Australia and other European countries have usually met with hostility, discrimination and harassment. Also, in Prenzler's (1996) view, the militaristic approach to Policing, as demonstrated in the Queensland Police Force in the early 1990's, leads to a more masculine police culture, which is hostile to women. Tamuno (1970) also argues that the militaristic and masculine nature of the police culture leads to the underrepresentation of women in the Nigeria Police Force. He further argues that women were not involved in the Nigeria Police Force before the 1940s until 1960 when a Bill was passed to the House of Representatives requesting for the enlistment of 170 women into the Nigeria Police Force.

Equally, women are generally underrepresented in Australia, as is the case with the Nigeria Police Force. For example, a survey conducted in Australia in 1995 found that, of the total 42,517 sworn police employed within the Force, only 13.5 percentages were women. In June 2001, this figure had risen to just 18.9 percentages out of a total of 44,922. The number of women represented at higher ranks, that is, officer's rank, is only 2.4 percentages. In Nigeria, Alemika and Agugua(2001) conducted a research and reported that women constituted 4.77 percentages of the police in the country in May 1993. They further reported that women also constituted about 8.3 percentages of senior

officers, and 4.09 percentages of junior police officers. These figures clearly demonstrate the underrepresentation of women in the Nigeria Police Force. While the matter of equal numbers is not the only means of creating equity within the police, it is one major factor which contributes to the discrimination and inequitable practices in the workforce. However, with this poor representation of women, their performance will hardly be noticed. According to Leane and Durand (2004, 2):

Whilst women are still a minority in the Victoria Police, each individual is very visible, their performance is extremely public and their acceptance by men is often conditional. Greater numbers of the women will help overcome this. As well, it will provide support networks for women and help to establish role models (p.2).

This low representation of women within the Police Force started from their recruitment. Among the criteria used is the agility and strength test a physical test, which requires applicants, amongst other things, to run the two laps of an athletic track. This test included scaling a vertical wall of 1.80 metres in height and carrying a weighted dummy (75kg) for a considerable distance. The Victoria Police introduced the test in 1989. As a result of the test, it was found that the proportion of all woman applicants able to successfully pass the physical testing phase to gain employment dropped from 57percentages to 33percentages. The proportion of males who passed the same test remained constant at 88percentages. Notably, 44percentages of female respondents surveyed indicated that they were subjected to some kind of gender discrimination during the interview phases. It was also found that the majority of males achieving the rank of sergeant were married, while majority of females attaining the same rank were unmarried. In Nigeria, the test involved the physical fitness for the applicants, which must be certified by a Government Medical Hospital as mentally and physically fit for police service, and height must not be less than 1.67 metres. For a woman, she must be certified by a medical officer as not being pregnant, and must not be married.

These physical test requirements have considerably undermined the chances for the success of female applicants to join the Nigeria Police Force. As a result, there has been considerable criticism of the use of the agility test to screen prospective recruits for entering. For example, in Australia, Wimshurts (1995) is critical of the perception that police work involves some types of physicality. She suggested that the reliance on the need to prove physical prowess was purely a male issue, whereas, women should be more concerned with proving themselves academically. In 1996, Prenzler also questioned the relationship between the agility test and the actual policing requirements. He opined that the agility test does not take into account the fact that officers usually work in teams and have access to communications and equipment, which may not necessarily require such rigorous agility testing. Lonsway's (2002) research in the United State indicated that physical strength and agility are less important there in the United States for effective policing because there is a greater need for general fitness with emphasis on negotiation techniques and physical restraint techniques. At the same time, he indicated that policemen are more likely to be subjected to insults and attempts to assault more than

their female counterparts and women are less likely to be subjected to community complaints.

The agility test as described could clearly be considered as an example of indirect discrimination. The law with regard to indirect discrimination has developed as a result of action taken in the USA in the leading case of *Griggs versus Duke Power Company*. In that case, it was held that employment criteria that disproportionately excluded minorities were illegal regardless of the intention of the employer, unless the employer could prove that the criteria were job related. Australian Legislation requires that the criteria be reasonable, in that it must have an objective and rational basis. The Equal Opportunity Act requires four elements to be met in order to prove indirect discrimination. There must be a requirement, condition or practice; it must be one with which the complainant cannot comply; compliance of the group the complainant belongs to must be proportionately lower than those outside the group and; finally, the requirement must be unreasonable. In order for the requirement to be considered reasonable, all the circumstances of the particular case must be taken into account. There is some disagreement in the authorities as to how the comparative proportion should be determined. It is acknowledged, however, that this is a matter of fact for the court to determine. In many events, if the narrow view were taken, that is, relying only on those women who have applied against those men who have applied, the agility test would be found proportionately discriminatory against women.

This Law did not particularly address the issue of the agility test. A claim, however, was made that initiatives introduced since 1988 "have been successful in removing both formal and informal gender discriminating barriers in the recruitment process". This was an issue that was picked up by the Federation of Community Legal Center of Victoria in *Brute Force II*, which called on the Victoria Police to drop the test as part of the recruitment process.

A report was also released in 1993 by the Police Issues Group of the Federation of Community Legal Centers, Victoria, calling for Affirmative Action in the Victoria Police to overcome the apparent imbalance of the representation of women in policing. As a result, in June 1999, the Victoria Police made two slight changes to the agility test. These changes involved increasing the time to complete the agility test from six minutes to six minutes thirty seconds and the lowering of a vertical wall from 1.8 metres to 1.6 metres. Since then, further changes have been made to the agility test to try to eliminate bias against female applicants. These changes include the elimination of the vertical wall and the dummy drag test. Every organisation is said to have its culture. Organisational culture is defined by Vecchio et al as (1992; 575)

A philosophy that underlines an organisation's policy, the rules or the games for getting along, and the feeling or climate conveyed by the physical layout of the organisation (p.575).

Nankervis, et.al. (1992) in Australia argued that an organisational culture stems from the organisation history, management, size, structure and the nature of its product or service. Like any organisation, the Police have its own unique organisational culture, which is

most stressful to women, as well as most masculinized in nature (Beck and Wilson 1998 Dantzker 1997; Adams 2001; Boni *et al* 2001; Neiland 2002).

From the above illustration, police culture is one of the factors affecting the career development, retention and promotion of women within the Australian Police Force. The “cop culture” encourages male domination and the sub-ordination of the policewomen. Also, the militaristic approach to policing leads to a more masculine police culture hostile to women. The police culture values masculine traits such as:

physical strength, aggressive physical action, competitiveness, preoccupation with the imagery of conflict, exaggerated heterosexual orientation through the retelling of feats of sexual conquest and the operation of patriarchal, misogynistic attitudes (Austin, 1996).

Reiner (1992) states various elements that make up the “cop culture” in Australia that is also universal in nature. These elements include suspicion, the feeling of isolation and solidarity. A feeling of isolation from the community leads some police officers to believe that the only people they can trust and rely upon are other police. A consequence of the feeling of this isolation is strengthening the police culture and corruption (Fitzgerald 1989, Warren and James 1996, Wood, 1997). Other characteristics of police culture include: a drinking habit, a code of silence and corruption (Austin 1996, Fitzgerald 1989; Warren and James 1996; Wood 1997). For example, within the police industry, those who are able to consume large amounts of alcohol and boast about their feats of drinking are considered to be good blokes (Austin 1996, Martin 1996).

The police culture described as being hostile towards female officers has also resisted attempts to integrate more women into policing (Etter, 1996; Price 1996). According to Fleming and Lafferty (2002), the male-dominated cop culture was notorious for its insularity and the exclusion of women and minority groups. This hostility is also evidenced by the prevalence of sexual harassment within the workplace. There is a semblance of evidence to suggest that sexual harassment is common in every police force (Drew 1999). For example, the 1990 U.S survey found that sexual harassment was common in the U.S Police and other parts of the Western World.

However, policing in any part of the world has been described as being created by men for men (Austin 1996; Prenzler and Goward 2002). According to Etter (1996), the Police Culture is one of the greatest barriers for female Police Officers in achieving job satisfaction and advancement. On these bases, different attempts have been made to change policing through reforming the police culture, but it has deeply resisted changing (Cauchi 1997; Dantzker 1997; Harrison 1998; Niland 2002).

The code of silence is also another trait of the police culture. This code requires an assumption that whatever is done by a Police Officer, is legitimately done in the course of his or her duty. Under this code, it is unacceptable to report a fellow police officer for misconduct or corruption. This aspect of the police culture contributes to the under reporting of sex discrimination and sexual harassment (While 1997).

Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by Feminism and Symbolic Interactionism. The feminist perspective is a wide range of ideas developed from the women's view to investigate their experience in the society. The perspective seeks to view the world from women's distinctive viewpoint in the social world, aiming at providing a better world for them. Feminism consists of works of scholars such as Bernard, (1976), Beauvoir, (1957), Collins, (1990) and Smith, (1977) within and outside sociology as a discipline. However, the central assumption of feminist theory is the belief that women are been dominated and oppressed violently, most especially in the patriarchal society. However, there are variations within the feminist theory to what constitute the condition, positions and experiences of women in the society. Some base their explanation on biological factors and some on cultural factors; while others include liberal and radical feminism, depending on one's orientation. For example, the explanatory theorists base their arguments on gender differences, which resulted from biological and institutional roles, socialisation and social interaction. The explanatory theorists linked the biological functions of males and females to different patterns of hormonal development over a life circle. They argued that these differences feed into different play patterns in childhood. That is, women learn from childhood the pattern of subordination and subservient roles which predisposed them to care for infants, so also with women in policing. Cultural feminist theorists like Beauvoir (1957) offered existential and phenomenological analyses of the experience of women. She argued that the career discrimination of policewomen developed out of a culture created by men and assuming the male as subject. The police culture at best pushes women's experience and it is most frightening, which limits their career options, professional training and regular promotion that will enhance the development of women in policing.

Feminist's perspective explored different conditions and experiences of women which were empirical, yet the theory is not without its shortcomings. For example, the psychoanalytical feminist theory has been criticising for not utilising the intermediate social arrangements that link emotion to oppression and fail to provide possible lines of variation in emotions, social arrangement or oppression.

Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic Interactionism is a distinctive American branch of sociology which came into existence primarily through the work of two theorists: George Herbert Mead (1863-1931) and Herbert Blumer (1900-1987). Mead was an early 20th century philosopher who theorised extensively about the symbolic nature of self and society, which he called 'Social Behaviourism'. While in 1969, Blumer coined the term 'Symbolic Interactionism' to refer to Mead's work. Like Marx Weber (1958), Social Interactionists are concerned with explaining social actions in terms of the meaning that individuals give to them. They focus on small-scale interactions, rather than large-scale social change. Interactionism differs from most feminist theories because it rejects the notion of a social system. As a result, it does not regard human action as a response or reaction to the system. Unlike some versions of feminism that sees actions as being determined by the social system, they explained how society works in the existence of a particular system and explained the behaviour of males and females in terms of that

system, though, they share some features in common with the interactionists. Interactionist is concerned with interactions, that is, actions between individuals and seeks to understand the process from the assumption that action is meaningful to those people involved. It therefore follows that an understanding of action requires an interpretation of the meanings that the actors give to their actions or activities. To the interactionists, meanings are not fixed entities; they are created, developed, modified and changed within the actual process of interaction. The way in which actors define situations have important consequences on their action. Interactionists are also concerned with the process by which definitions are constructed. For example, how has the police culture come to define a policewoman? How does the policewoman herself see this process? And, what is her interpretation? The answers to these questions involve an investigation of the construction of meaning in the process of interaction. It requires an analysis of the way actors interpret the language, gesture, appearance and manner of others and their interpretation of the context in which the interaction takes place. That is, the understanding of the situation of a policewoman requires the analysis of the way she interprets the language, gesture and appearance of the police culture and manners of other policemen and their interpretation of the context in which the interactions take place. According to the interactionists, these definitions are not based on preconceptions which policemen and women bring to interaction situations; rather, a process of negotiations occurs from which the definition emerges. Mead viewed the experience and condition of policewomen as a social construct or conduct, which are contained in the police rules. To Mead, unlike the explanatory theorists, policewomen's thought, experience and conduct are essentially social (Mead 1934) and owe their nature to the fact that human beings interact in terms of symbols, the most important of which are coined in language. He also argued that through the process of role taking, individuals develop a concept of "Self". He further distinguished two aspects of the self. The 'Me', which is the definition of yourself in a specific social role, that is, the definition of the policewoman regarding her capacity in the force and the "I" which is built up from the policewoman's reactions of other policemen to her, and the way she interprets those reactions.

However, despite the extensive analysis provided by this perspective, it was criticised on some of the grounds: Clearly, early scholars of this perspective failed to show the "origin" meaning. For example, Skidmore (1975) criticised interactionists on the basis of origin. He argued that interactionists failed to explain why people consistently choose to act in a given way in certain situations, instead of all the other ways they might possibly have acted. Interactionists have also failed to explain adequately how standardised normative behaviour comes about and why members of the society are motivated to act in terms of social norms (Ritzer, 2003). Nevertheless, the perspective has made us to understand that actions and reactions are based on the meanings individuals attach to their actions in the process of an interaction and these meanings have significant influence on interpretation and perception. Therefore, it's on this basis that this research adheres to Symbolic Interactionist as a frame of reference.

Methods

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used. While the quantitative (questionnaire) method was used in order to cover many respondents at a minimal cost, to

From the above table, majority of the female officers are between the age category of 25-34 accounting for 95 Policewomen, representing 66.9percentages of the total policewomen. 16.9percentages are between the ages of 35-49, while 14.8percentages and 1.4percentages are between the ages of 18-24 and 50 years and above respectively. From this table, it is obvious that most of the women are youthful because 81.7percentages are below the age of 35years. Symbolically, this implies that the young women who are between the ages of 18-34 perceived the police force as a profession as well as a career of choice.

Item 2 of table 1 above reveals that majority of the police women are married with the highest percentage of 64.1; while only 28.2percentages are single. 3, representing 2.1percentages, are divorced while only 5.6percentages are widows. The data above are contrary to the widely belief that single women after enlistment into the force find it difficult to get married because most of them are labeled as prostitute. While from all indications most of these women got married after enlistment because police rules and regulations do not give consideration to married women. During a focus group discussion with the female officers, one of the respondents who was a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) provided a further insight:

Most of our officers are married; they got married after serving for a few years. We encourage women to marry their colleagues because women married to colleagues are preferred to those who married outside. Infact, as a senior officer, I personally encourage my fellow women to marry their colleagues because of certain benefits that are attached to that. For instance, civilian husbands are not allowed to stay with their wives in the police barracks and provision is made for officers' wives, which are not meant for civilian husbands.

Item 3 of table 1 above also shows the masculinity in the nature of the police culture, with 83.1percentages of the policewomen admitting its masculinity as against 16.9percentages of the policewomen who do not see that. This table further reaffirms the argument of Tamuno(1970) in Nigeria that the police culture is more masculine and militaristic in nature, leading to the enlistment of more men and resulting to the underrepresentation of women in the Nigeria Police Force(NPF). Accordingly, the above table clearly shows that, the demand of the police force is too masculine for the physical make-up of a woman, and this predisposes her to her discriminatory experience based on the sex segregation of roles in the Police Force. To further compliment this argument, the Commissioner of Police (CP) posited that:

Police job is too rigorous for a woman, it is masculine in nature and this is why I need more men than women in this command. Infact, I need only men for "Operation Yaki" patrol.

The above response resulted from the perception of the CP. He perceived the police force as men's environment where women are not needed for rigorous assignment. This result is plausible with the argument of the explanatory theorists of feminism. According to this theory, women's experiences occur from the gender differences, which resulted from

biological, institutional roles, socialisation and social interaction. Explanatory theorists linked the biological functions of males and females to different patterns of hormonal development over a life circle. They argued that these differences feed into different play patterns in childhood. That is, women learn from childhood the pattern of subordination and subservient roles, which predispose them to care for infants, so also with women in policing.

Table 2: The Extent at which masculinity hinders women pursuing a career in the Nigeria Police Force

Opinion	No	%
Very seriously	76	53.6.%
Seriously	57	40.1%
Not seriously	8	5.6%
Not very Seriously	1	0.7%
Total	142	100%

Source: Field work, 2010

From the above table, the masculine nature of the police culture very seriously hinders women from pursuing a career in the Nigeria Police Force (NPF). Majority of the policewomen representing 93.7percentages argued that police culture affects women's development in the Nigeria Police Force, while only 6.3percentages are of the view that it does not seriously affect them from pursuing a career in the NPF. However, it is obvious that the masculinity in the nature of the police culture seriously affects the development of women in the Nigeria Police Force. Though, their response may be influenced by the patriarchal nature of Nigerian societies where women see themselves as the weaker sex as well as inferior to men. This finding is tenable with the argument of Beck and Wilson (1998) in Australia. They argued that police culture is the most stressful to women, as well as most masculine in nature which as a result affected the career prospects of women. Furthermore, Etter (1996) also in Australia argued that the Police Culture is one of the greatest barriers for female Police Officers in achieving job satisfaction and advancement. Similarly, during the focus group discussion with the female officers (senior), an officer opined that:

...most of us here find it difficult to compete with our male colleagues because of the masculine nature of the job. It requires an extra effort from a woman before her effort can be recognized. This alone affects the extent to which a female officer grows into senior ranks compared to her male counterpart.

From the above quotation, female officers themselves have come to define police culture as masculine in nature and this definition affects both their performance and development in the police force generally and particularly in the NPF. For example, the Symbolic Interactionists argued that the perception of police culture as being masculine in nature by the female officers is what further enhances discrimination in the NPF. To Mead (1934), this interpretation affects the performance of women and their career prospects in

the NPF. He further argued that the experience and condition of female officers in the NPF is a social construct, which resulted from their own definition of the job. Another policeman of SP rank was of the opinion that:

The demand of the police job is too much for a woman to excel like the male officer. The masculinity in the nature of this job will continue to affect the credibility or performance of any female officer no matter how strong she is, most especially if she is married. That is why the police rules and regulations did not in any way consider married women.

To further confirm this, Mead argued that through the process of role taking, the female officers develop a concept of 'Self', which is the femininity in their nature. By placing themselves in the position of the male officers, they were able to look back upon themselves. He claimed that the idea of the self can only develop if the female officers can get outside of themselves in such a way as to become an object to themselves. He further argued that, to do this, female officers must observe themselves from the standpoint of others (men). Hence, the origin and development of a concept of the self lie in the ability to take the role of others. Mead further distinguished two aspects of the self, the 'Me' and 'I'. The 'Me' is the definition of the female officer about herself (ability) in the role of policing. For example, the policewoman sees herself physically unfit for policing, simply because it is so defined by her and this can exercise a considerable influence over her behaviour. The 'I' is the opinion of the policewoman as a whole.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the data generated above, it is obvious that the Police Force is masculine in nature and the masculinity affects most of the women very seriously in pursuing a career in the police force which have made the women themselves to see policing as not been too good for a woman makeup. The Police culture is one of the greatest barriers for female Police Officers in achieving job satisfaction and advancement as shown by table (1 & 2) above. As a result, the policewomen themselves suggested that, to reduce the effects of masculinity on their development, women should be charged more with the administrative functions of the police force. Other recommendations include:

1. The Police Force needs to use more of advance technology like the introduction of the torturing machine and planting of CCT Camera in all division in carrying out the police duties so as to reduce the effect of masculinity on women in take and on women pursuing career in the Police Force.
2. Emphasis should be on experience, educational qualification and training attended for development and promotion requirement instead of agility or masculinity.
3. To further reduce the effect of masculinity on the development of women, lighter roles like investigation and traffic control should be given to women.

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