



THE POLICEWOMEN IN THE LAW ENFORCEMENT ORGANIZATION: THEIR PARTICIPATION AND HITCHES

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ABSTRACT: *Women are mostly relegated to perform clerical roles or jobs as dispatchers until the women's liberation movement of the 1970s when popular television shows suddenly dramatized the new breed of women cops and detectives. Civil rights and affirmative action laws paved the way for women to assume law enforcement jobs traditionally held by men. Today, women walk the bat, but not without challenges. This study was conducted to determine the involvement of women on law enforcement focusing primarily on their profile and problems they encountered in the enforcement of the law. This study utilized the descriptive normative research design. This design described the profile of the respondents as well as the involvement of policewomen in law enforcement and in the determination of the different problems they have encountered in the discharge of the functions in law enforcement. This study made use of the questionnaire as the main data gathering tool which consisted of three parts. Part I generated data on the profile of the respondents, Part II on the activities where policewomen are involved as law enforcers and the last part on the problems encountered by the policewomen in law enforcement. Findings of the study showed that respondents are relatively young, college graduates and have been in the service for quite a long period of time and performing functions in relation to police patrol, apprehend and investigate women offenders, do office work and other activities performed by policeman. It was also found out that the police women have encountered problems such as the lack of cooperation among the clients and far-flung barangays of the municipality which could hardly be reached at time during emergency calls. Based from these findings, this study concludes that policewomen do perform functions similar to what the policemen do. The proportion of policewomen in the station compared to the number of policemen is relatively in proportion in number. With these developments in the conduct of the study, it is recommended that regular consultation and meeting with the community residents should be conducted to establish a strong partnership with the local residents and maintain the virtue of cooperation while informing them of their roles as partners in the enforcement of the law. It is further recommended that additional policewomen be absorbed to strengthen the manpower of the PNP station in order to properly address the problems of women clients in the municipality.*

KEYWORDS: *policewomen, law enforcement, clerical works, police patrolling, hitches, women liberation*

INTRODUCTION

Women are mostly relegated to perform clerical roles or jobs as dispatchers until the women's liberation movement of the 1970s when popular television shows suddenly



dramatized the new breed of women cops and detectives. Civil rights and affirmative action laws paved the way for women to assume law enforcement jobs traditionally held by men. Today, women walk the bat, but not without challenges. Originally called “matrons” when they were first hired by the police department before the turn of the 20th century, female officers really did not achieve full recognition for a very long time. In the mid- 1970s despite the popularity of television shows like Cagney and Lacy and Charlie’s Angels, women only made up 2 percent of the total police work force.

Law enforcement as a rule has to respond to various traumatic scenes, be it fatal or grievous accidents, violent domestic situations, murders, suicides or the effects of drug addiction and alcohol abuse – the worst that humanity has to offer. Being able to have positive outlets in life are vital, not only to the job but also to live a healthy life.

According to Its methegreg or (2008), there is seemingly a shortage of women involved in law enforcement. According to the National Center for Women in Policing, there were only 13.3% of women involved in law enforcement in 1997 in the United States. And this number has not raised much since that time. There is a huge shortage of women that are involved in law enforcement an there are reasons behind this state. Renzullo (2009) said that women should evaluate their lives before going into police work. As much she enjoys it, she notes that this is not a simple career choice. These weaknesses in the political situation are exacerbated by a lack of citizen participation and a lack of women’s representation in all levels of government.

When Filipino women started to join the male-dominated Philippine National Police (PNP), they were only given assignments that were administrative in nature and jobs that could be classified and described as "desk duties" (Yap 2013). Within the following thirty years -after the establishment of the PNP in the early period of the 1990s, (Manila Bulletin 2013). Female Filipino police officers have been able to participate in other police activities and functions, including risky PNP operations. They have also become commanders in the field of police work. Among the Filipino policewomen who excelled in the PNP were Lina Sarmiento and Lorlie Arroyo.



According to Berg and Budnick (1986): Women in policing have increased steadily in the past 15 to 20 years; however, the struggle by female police officers to be accepted in law enforcement parallels and, at the same time, represents an exacerbation of the difficulties experienced by women as they have made their way into the labor force in general.

In 2012, Sarmiento and Arroyo were the only two "female generals" in the Philippine National Police. They were both Chief Superintendents, with Sarmiento being the head of the Police Security and Protection Group (PSPG), while Arroyo was the head of the Crime Laboratory of the Philippine National Police. Arroyo's rank was equivalent to the rank of a brigadier general in the military. In June 2012, Sarmiento was promoted to become the "first two-star female general" of the Philippine National Police and the "first female general to be named in the Directorial Staff of the PNP" since the inception of the Philippine National Police.

As of June 2012, there were 11,000 Filipino policewomen within the Philippine National Police, an organization that at the time had a total of 143,000 police officers. Although it is not uncommon for males and females to work together in law enforcement, there is a dearth of women in law enforcement. While the employment of women in the police force is gradually increasing, "women are still underutilized by law enforcement agencies" (Natarajan, 1996). Is the scarcity of women in the police profession a function of years of bias within this male dominated profession? Or does this under-representation simply reveal a conscious decision to avoid the profession altogether? Ironically, while advancements have been made to eradicate barriers to employment, the literature reveals that a woman's ability to excel in law enforcement is undermined by the lack of a critical mass of female employees. Relatedly, another problem is directly connected to gender bias women confront within a male dominated profession.

Despite laws forbidding discrimination, women in the workforce continue to be discriminated against and under-represented (Blum, Fields, & Goodman, 1994). Several researchers have concluded that, "[w]omen have gradually acculturated into the police



subculture while still experiencing varying degrees of sexual discrimination, and harassment (Heidensohn, 1992; Gossett & Williams, 1998; Martin, 1980; Martin, 1990; Morash and Green, 1986; Remington, 1983). Many departments, often under court order, have eliminated discriminatory personnel policies, yet, “women working in law enforcement continue to face myriad barriers to full occupation integration” (Martin, 1990). Police departments have come under increasing pressure from community groups, professional organizations, and their constituents to hire more female and minority officers (Raganella & White, 2004). As law enforcement is a male-dominated profession, gender stereotypes and inferior attitudes about women by men hamstring the profession's ability to recruit and retain talented women. “As a whole, female officers have made very slow progress toward full integration in policing due to barriers such as the attitudes of male officers...” (Gossett & Williams, 1998). Martin (1980) conducted a seminal study of women in policing and found that occupational culture had a decidedly masculine tone, with women who were able to break the occupational threshold. Restated, while women in law enforcement must meet the same physical, academic and standards as men, stereotyped expectations of behaviour still exist.

In 1985, Penny Harrington was appointed the first female police chief in the nation serving in Portland, Oregon. Today, women hold an estimated 12 percent of all law enforcement jobs. Even when *Hill Street Blues* began portraying female cops holding their own with male counterparts in the 1980s, female officers were often perceived as too emotional, too passive, or too physically weak for the job. With trends in police work today moving more toward service oriented, community-centered approaches, women law enforcement officers may find greater opportunities in both hiring and promotion.

In many smaller police departments, women still hold less than ten percent of the law enforcement positions. The National Center for Policing reports that nearly 90 percent of law enforcement agencies require a physical agility test for job applicants. Women face challenges when hiring practices include physical benchmarks based on male aptitude, a practice that has seen some changes in recent years. The survey reveals that departments that do not use the test have 45 percent more women on the force than those with the



agility exams. Though critics see this practice as a lowering of standards, advocates point out that the original standards are simply based on a certain percentile of male physical ability. Many departments now set standards for their female officers based on the same percentile of female physical ability.

Though they not have the sheer physical strength of male officers, studies reveal that female officers are “substantially less likely” to be involved in citizen complaints about the use of excessive force than males. 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. Having a sense of humor, one woman officer says, is critical. However, none need to put up with abusive, condescending remarks from colleagues. Most police departments have become sensitive to verbal or sexual harassment issues and have created formal channels for addressing them. In a field predominated by men, women in law enforcement still tend to stand out. It is a field defined by dangers and takes a toll on its ranks regardless of gender. And though the percentage of women in law enforcement is small, there are strong examples of women in the ranks in every aspect of law enforcement – from municipal to country, state and corrections.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Generally, the study aimed to determine the involvement of policewomen in law enforcement and look into the different problems they have encountered in the discharge of the functions in law enforcement. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of policewomen as to:
 - 1.1. Age
 - 1.2. Educational attainment
 - 1.3. Trainings attended related to law enforcement
 - 1.4. Number of years in service
 - 1.5. Rank
2. What are the activities engaged in by policewomen in law enforcement?



3. What problems do these policewomen encounter in the exercise of their functions as law enforcers?

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized the descriptive normative research design. This design described the profile of the respondents as well as the involvement of policewomen in law enforcement and in the determination of the different problems they have encountered in the discharge of the functions in law enforcement. The study utilized the policewomen of Piat Police Station as the primary source of data.

DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENTS

This study made use of the questionnaire as the main data gathering tool which consisted of three parts. Part I generated data on the profile of the respondents, Part II on the activities where policewomen are involved as law enforcers and the last part on the problems encountered by the policewomen in law enforcement.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data were tabulated and analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages and mean. On the involvement and problems encountered by the respondents on law enforcement, the result of the interview was qualitatively discussed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table1. Frequency and percentage distribution of the policewomen according to age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
30-35	4	44.44
36-40	3	33.34
41-45	1	11.11
46-50	1	11.11
Total	9	100.00
Mean age = 30.6 SD = 4.6		



Table 1 showed the frequency and percentage distribution of respondents according to age. As reflected in the table, 4 or 44.44 percent of the total respondents are within the age bracket 30 to 35. The mean age of 30.6 indicates that the respondents are relatively young, idealistic, full of enthusiasm and active.

Table 2. Frequency and percentage distribution of the policewomen according to years in service

No. of years in service	Frequency	Percentage
5-10	3	33.34
11-15	5	55.55
16-20	1	11.11
Total	9	100.00
Mean = 8.75 SD = 3.2		

Table 2 reflected the frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents as to number of years in service. Most of them 5 or 55.55 percent have been in the service from 11 to 15 years and

The mean of 8.75 years indicates that the respondents have been in the service for quite a long period of time.

Table 3. Frequency and Percentage distribution of respondents according to rank

Rank	Frequency	Percentage
PO1	1	11.11
SPO1	1	11.11
SPO2	3	33.34
SPO3	3	33.33
SPO4	1	11.11
Total	9	100.00

The results revealed that the highest frequency of 3 or 33.34 percent belonged to the rank of SPO2 and SPO3. The data imply that the most of the respondents are still very new and young in the service as far as their ranks are concerned.



INVOLVEMENT OF POLICEWOMEN IN LAW ENFORCEMENT AND PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

In the quest for gender equality and awareness, it can be assumed that what man can do so does the women. In the Philippine National Police, women are taken in as law enforcers.

In the conduct of the interview with the respondents, the following involvements of the policewomen were particularly identified:

1. Conduct police patrol
2. Apprehend and investigate women offenders
3. Perform office work like preparation of reports
4. Help in the enforcement of traffic rules

On the problems encountered by the policewomen, the most common is lack of cooperation among the clients and barangays of the municipality are far to reach especially during emergency calls.

CONCLUSION

From the results of the conducted study, it is concluded that policewomen do perform functions similar to what the policeman does. The proportion of policewomen in the station compared to the number of policeman is relatively in proportion in number

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings of the study, the researcher strongly recommends that regular consultation and meeting with the community residents should be conducted to establish a strong partnership with the local residents and maintain the virtue of cooperation while informing them of their roles as partners in the enforcement of the law. It is further recommended that additional policewomen be absorbed into the organization to strengthen the manpower of the PNP station in order to properly address the problems of women clients in the municipality.



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