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Diversity Practices in the Canadian Police Services Sector: A Case Study

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Abstract: In 1986, only 3.9% of police officers in Canada were women; in 2009, 19.1% of the 67,085 police officers employed by Canada's various federal, provincial, and local police service organizations were women. In response to the changing workforce, there have been attempts to create a more diverse body of employees within police service organizations and to create more inclusive work environments. This paper presents a comprehensive examination of gender diversity within policing organizations in Canada through the application of a diversity lens, the Diversity Assessment Tool (DAT). By framing our analysis using the DAT, we could engage in a close and systemic examination and analysis of their policies and procedures to identify systemic barriers that prevent the recruitment and retention of women in sworn and civilian positions at all levels across the Canadian police services sector. This analysis identified the following barriers: stereotypes about men and women; the hyper- and hegemonically-masculine gendering of jobs; the practice of conscious and unconscious gender bias and discrimination; lack of networking and mentoring opportunities; and, finally, a pervasive work / life imbalance. In addition to identifying these barriers, leading practices to successfully overcome these barriers were also identified.

Keywords: Women, Police Services Sector, Canada, Diversity Lens, Systemic Barriers, Successful interventions, Leading Practices

Introduction

Embracing cultural diversity requires embracing a variety of different and unique identities that are based on both visible and invisible markers of difference such as gender, visible minority status, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or Aboriginal status. Organizations that aim to create and sustain a diverse and inclusive work environment must not only recognize differences but also develop an awareness of and sensitivity to these differences. The academic literature notes that some progress in this area has occurred as individuals from underrepresented groups are less likely to face overt discrimination and harassment. However, despite our best efforts, individuals from diverse groups still face systemic barriers to full workforce participation. While inclusion is important for social cohesion, there are financial and competitive advantages that result from successfully leveraging diversity. These advantages are referred to as the business case for diversity and have been extensively documented in both academic and non-academic literature and include:

Overcoming the skills shortage and war for talent: Demographic trends within the Canadian workforce point to a labour shortage as a result of an ageing population and declining birth rate. In order to recruit the best possible workforce, police services must understand and adapt to these changes (Ross and Schneider 1992; Jayne and Dipboye 2004).

Responding to increasingly diverse markets: As the demographics of the population change, so too do their needs (Cox and Blake 1991; Robinson and Dechant 1997; Schmidt 2004; Lee and Nathan 2010), especially when it comes to the provision of police services.

Increasing innovation and creativity: Research (Iles 1995; Gardenswartz and Rowe 1998) has demonstrated that multiple perspectives provide better and often more creative solutions. The emphasis on community policing – which depends on the collaboration of the police service agency and the community it serves – can proactively find solutions to the underlying conditions that cause crime so that arrests become only one of a number of responses to crime that the police service can draw from (Community Oriented Policing Services 2009).

Increasing employee satisfaction: Effectively managing diversity within an organization can result in increased employee satisfaction, which is significantly related to intentions to leave as well as actual rates of attrition. Higher satisfaction is associated with higher rates of retention, lower stress, increased levels of employee loyalty, lower absenteeism rates, and better performance (Kandola 1995; Gensing-Pophal 2001). The effects of discrimination and harassment can also directly affect the health and wellness of a workforce, especially in a high stress occupation such as policing (Health costs 2002; Harter et al. 2002).

Mitigating legal and reputational costs: Successfully managing diversity effectively lowers organizational risk in terms of legal costs and reputational damage (Miller and Triana 2009). For example, the Toronto Police Service has received extensive negative media attention with regards to stopping and documenting or “carding” a disproportionate number of black and brown youth, which some have labelled as racial profiling (Rankin and Winsa 2012). Similarly, former female officers have recently launched a class-action suit against the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) in British Columbia alleging incidences of wide-spread sexual harassment, sexual assault, bullying, and discrimination (CBC 2011a, 2011b, 2012; Keller 2012).

This paper is a preliminary diversity assessment of 16 police services organizations in Canada. Informed by academic and industry literature, the authors identify barriers facing female police officers and use publically available data to identify leading practices that aim to increase the number of women in the police services sector. We utilize the adapted Diversity Assessment Tool (DAT) as a framework for understand and assess existing practices aimed at promoting the participation and advancement of women in policing.

Diversity Assessment Tool (DAT)

The DAT was developed out of a study that examined the barriers women face in the information and communication technology (ICT) sector (Cukier 2009).¹ When compared to other tools, the authors found that the DAT is more comprehensive, flexible, and adaptable than many of the existing tools (Cukier and Smarz 2012). The Diversity Institute has adapted and modified the original tool in order for it to be applicable to a number of different sectors including financial services (Cukier, Smarz, and Yap 2012), police services, healthcare, and universities. The DAT can be used to assess the diversity initiatives in place within an organization, benchmark its progress against other organizations, evaluate the effectiveness of current diversity initiatives, recommend future action, and to inform the development of future practices. It examines six key areas:

Leadership and Governance: Successful diversity initiatives must have the support of the organization’s leaders – its executive or senior managers and its board members – who have the power to influence change.

Strong and Transparent Human Resource Practices: An organization’s human resource practices – including those related to recruitment, selection, management, development, promotion, and engagement – have a significant impact on its ability to attract, retain, and promote women.

Quality of Life and Organizational Culture: Organizations must create an inclusive work environment in which all employees are welcomed and supported. Work/life policies are designed to assist employees with the integration of paid work with other important life roles and family responsibilities.

Measuring and Tracking Diversity: Developing and implementing techniques to measure progress, track change, and review policy ensures that diversity initiatives are implemented and refined.

¹ Initially called the Diversity *Audit* Tool.

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Integrating/Mainstreaming Diversity across the Value Chain: A diversity lens must be applied across all of the organization's activities including product and/or service development, marketing and customer service, communications and media buys, philanthropic decisions, government relations as well as procurement and inbound logistics.

Developing the Pipeline: These are leading practices related to the development and implementation of a long-term integrated strategy to ensure that a future workforce is identified and nurtured by supporting: outreach programs at schools; scholarships and funding opportunities; re-entry and transitional programs; and partnerships with professional associations.

Women in the Canadian Police Services Sector: An Overview

The Canadian public police system is a distinctive and complex system; it is an amalgamation of the system favoured in the United States and the United Kingdom, and is influenced by the French policing system. King (1997) argues that our system of public policing can be broken down at three levels:

- Federal: Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP);
- Provincial: Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), the Quebec Police Force and the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary; and
- Municipal: For example, the Toronto Police Service.

However, only three provinces have their own provincial police services so the RCMP is also contracted to perform policing services at the provincial level. Also, both the OPP and the RCMP are also contracted out to service the needs of individual municipalities within the provinces.

Canadian police services began actively recruiting women into its employ in 1900, however, these women were employed in positions that were "stereotypically feminine" and acted in a caregiving capacity and protected the moral and social order of the day (Rabe-Hemp 2009). Despite serious efforts to diversify the police services workforce over the last thirty years, white men remain overrepresented (Hassell and Brandl 2009; Stroshine and Bandl 2011). Attempts at diversification have been met with resistance, especially when it comes to increasing the number of female officers. As demonstrated by the following graph (Figure 1), the number of women participating in the police services across Canada has increased dramatically since 1986, reaching an all-time high in 2009 when women represented 19.1% of the total number of all Canadian sworn officers.

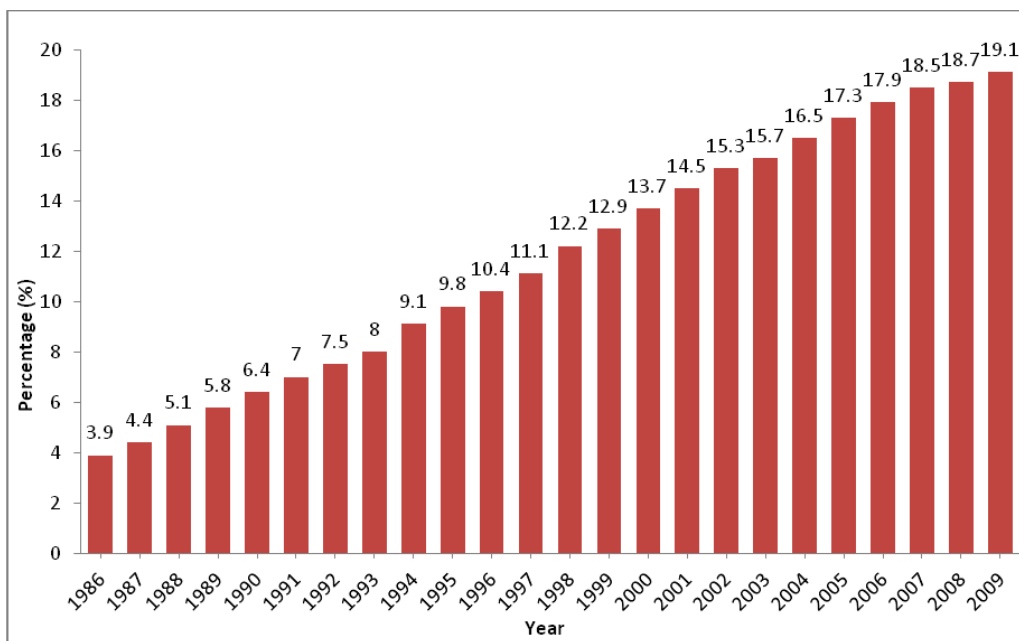


Figure 1: Percentage of female police officers in Canada, 1986-2009
(Statistics Canada, 2010a)

In 1986, there were 51,425 police officers (of both sexes) employed in federal, provincial, or local police forces across Canada. Twenty-three years later, Canadian police services employ 67,085 police officers, representing a 30.5% increase in the overall number of employed police officers. On average, the year-to-year increase in the total number of police officers in Canada (had there been a steady rate of growth) is 1.16%.² When these numbers are broken down by gender, between 1986 and 2009 there is a 9.81% increase in male officers (0.41% average yearly growth). This relatively low rate of annual growth is the result of a significant drop in the number of male police officers between 1990 and 1998. However, there has been an average growth of 1.2% since 1999.

The total number of female police officers in Canada has increased from 1,994 in 1986 to 12,905 in 2009. This represents an exponential 542.18% increase in the number of female police officers during this period. The 8.42% average year-to-year increase was 205.36 times the average yearly growth rate for male police officers and 7.26 times the average rate of growth for the total number of police officers in Canada (Table 1). While the number of female police officers increased, it is unclear if there are policies in place for retaining and promoting this workforce have been successful as there is no data on turnover rates, average years spent on the force, highest rank received, or how many women remained employed.

² For this value, the Compound Annual Growth rate (CAGR) was used as it is more accurate and less volatile than the Average Annual Growth Rate (AAGR), which is easily influenced by significant changes from year to year.

	Total Rate of Change, 1986-2009	Average Yearly Growth Rate, 1986-2009
Male	9.81%	0.41%
Female	542.18%	8.42%
Both Sexes	30.45%	1.16%

Table 1: Total rate of change and average yearly growth for police officers in Canada, 1986-2009
(Statistics Canada, 2010a)

Based on data gathered from the 2006 Census and using the National Occupational Classification for Statistics (NOC-S), only 16.21% – or 325 – of the 2,005 commissioned police officers in Canada were female (Statistics Canada 2006b). Commissioned police officers – ranks above the designation of Staff Sergeant – represent the senior management of the police service. They can be federally, provincially, or municipally employed and are tasked to “plan, organize, direct, control and evaluate police force administration and police activities such as maintaining law and order and detecting and preventing crime” (Statistics Canada 2006b, 57).

Non-commissioned police officers are any rank below Staff Sergeant and are tasked to “protect the public, detect and prevent crime and perform other activities directed at maintaining law and order” (Statistics Canada 2006b, 157). Of the 67,310 non-commissioned officers, in the Census sample, 13,725 – or 20.39% of them – were women (Statistics Canada 2006a). This is slightly higher than the national average reported in the graph above, which indicates that only 17.9% of all Canadian police officers are female.

Women in the Canadian Police Services Sector: Overt and Systemic Barriers

Gender Stereotypes

Women were and continue to be excluded from policing-as-crime-fighting because they are thought to be too weak, too over-emotional and too irrational – in addition to being too delicate, too gentle, and too empathetic. Typical police officers traits, which include physical prowess, aggression, as well as a knowledge of and competence in technology and strategy (Rabe-Hemp 2009), have resulted in assumptions about the type of work that policing involves.

Despite evidence indicating its exact opposite, the pervasive myth within police culture is that “80% of police work involves crime fighting, whereas 20% of the work involves social-work type jobs” (Garcia 2003, 340). Social-work type jobs – usually relegated to female officers – are stereotypically feminine as they require some kind of comforting or care giving and involve dealing with victims and children, crime prevention, education, as well as a number of supportive roles (Rabe-Hemp 2009).

Policing as a Gendered Occupation and Institution

Curth and Evans (2011) argue that “policing hinges on essentialized notions of women’s and men’s natures” (499) and that this is a disservice to officers of both genders. Policing is seen as a man’s job and that women are neither able to do this job as well as a man nor should they even attempt to try (Somvadee and Morash 2008). Police services, in other words, is both a gendered occupation and social institution. It is these gendered practices, ideologies, and power

distributions – rather than female officers' inability to physically or psychologically cope with the job – are the true barriers.

The gendered organizational culture of policing is so powerful that the officers must appropriate behaviours, values, and a culture based on their gender. Sklansky (2006) argues that all male officers must “make peace with the ‘white, masculine, heterosexual ethos’” (1211), which promotes an aggressive and hypermasculine ideal that few men can embody. This ideal also ghettoizes female officers into specific roles. Female officers who challenge this status quo face isolation, harassment, and physical endangerment.

The gendering of policing significantly affects female officers' careers as well as how they are perceived by the public and by other officers (Sousa and Gauthier 2008). Österlind and Haake (2010) note that segregating duties by sex “prevent[s] female patrol officers from being regarded as ‘real’ police officers” (6). Similarly, by limiting the police work of female officers to paperwork and care giving, female officers feel like they have “to work harder than others in order to be perceived as equals within the organization” (Sousa and Gauthier 2008).

Furthermore, keeping the duties of police officers so rigidly demarcated allows male officers to “preserv[e] the masculine character of the crime-fighting policemen” (Prokos and Padavic 2002, 445) despite a move to a community-based model of policing, which prioritizes collaboration and community partnerships (Garcia 2003, 340).

The Practice of Conscious and Unconscious Gender Bias and Discrimination

Covert and overt discrimination begins during selection and recruitment processes. Physical testing, written exams, face-to-face interviews, the boot camp training model, and background checks have been found to disadvantage women (U.S. Department of Justice 2001, 4). Lonsway (2003) argues that the stereotype of policing as consisting mostly of physically demanding tasks has resulted in the implementation of a physical agility testing as a selection criteria has eliminated otherwise qualified female applicants from the candidate pools.

Unconscious gender bias and the process by which the organizational culture is communicated to police officers begin at the police academy. Prokos and Padavic (2002) argue that cadets are exposed to two curriculums. The first is overt and teaches recruits the “procedures, policies, and practices of being an officer” (440). The second is hidden covert and communicates to recruits the importance of masculinity to the police officer's job. Specifically, it teaches male students that excluding, disrespecting, and objectifying women is not only normal but also expected, as women are different from men (White, 2006).

Such attitudes reinforce the belief that women are neither fit nor able to do the job of policing, which directly affects the experiences of female officers. Archbold and Schulz (2008) report that female officers feel frustrated because they are not respected or accepted by their male colleagues. Other studies indicated that the ‘deprofessionalizing’ of female officers often occurred through the use of derogatory language (Gosset and Williams 1998) and other tactics of gender discrimination and sexual harassment which is “the greatest source of work-related stress for female officers (Spasic 2011, 31) and results in high rates of turnover (Dormer 1995; Brown 1998; Kurtz 2012).

Lack of Networking and Mentorship Opportunities

The lack of formal networking and mentorship opportunities and the scarcity of role models are also significant barriers for women. Mentors can provide support and direction for professional, social and career development (Metz 2009), allowing them to advance to leadership positions faster, overcome obstacles, and increase their overall job satisfaction (Reinhold 2005; Rabe-Hemp and Buchner 2011).

Essential to police culture, the lack of female role models also puts female officers at a disadvantage, as they lack “the guidance of seasoned veterans to teach rookies the ropes” (Rabe-

Hemp 2008, 254), unlike their male peers. Since considerations for development and promotions are usually fostered and developed through such networks, female officers are excluded from such opportunities and consequently, fail to ascend to senior positions (Gossett and Williams 1998; Archbold and Schulz 2008; Sousa and Gauthier 2008; Fekjær and Halrynjo 2012).

Work/Life Imbalance

Research indicates police services organizations lag behind their public and private sector counterparts in terms of implementing family-friendly policies, which include on-site childcare, flexible working arrangements, and maternity and/or paternity leaves (Reinhold 2005). This can significantly impact on their ability to retain female officers as work-family conflicts negatively affect job satisfaction and result in increased rates of stress (Williams 2008; Gächter et al. 2009; Kurtz 2012). Schulze (2010) argues that police services organizations are not accommodating to the familial responsibilities that female officers face and that “women’s interests and needs are subsumed by seemingly gender-neutral policies that in practice do not address many employee’s most significant life events” (177) such as the bearing and raising of children.

As police work is comprised exclusively of shift work, female officers are especially cognizant of how a particular shift can help balance work and life responsibilities. Many, therefore, did not want to jeopardize their current shift assignment as they had already “synthesized their family schedules with their current work schedules” (Archbold and Hassell 2009, 63) and so do not participate in the promotional process.

Women in the Canadian Police Services Sector: DAT Analysis

Leadership and Governance

Virtually every police service examined had expressed its commitment to diversity by forming a diversity council including: the Greater Victoria Police Department (Greater Victoria Police Diversity Advisory Committee, 2010), Vancouver Police Department (2010), Calgary Police (2010b), Edmonton Police Service (2010), Halifax Regional Police (n.d.), Peel Regional Police (2010), Halton Regional Police (2010a), Toronto Police Service (2010), and York Regional Police (2010a).³

Furthermore, there were only four police departments that appointed a senior police officer with enough influence and authority to affect sweeping and widespread changes. Of the four – Vancouver Police Department (2010), Halifax Regional Police (n.d.), the OPP (“OPP Bound” 2010), and Halton Regional Police (2010b) – only the Halifax Regional Police department comes close to doing so. For example, Halifax’s police department created the role of Equity Diversity Officer in April 2004. The incumbent in this position reports directly to the Chief of Police. Furthermore, a Deputy Chief is responsible for implementing the initiatives that the Equity Division Officer deems appropriate (Halifax Regional Police, n.d.).

Every police service reviewed had, to a certain extent, clearly articulated diversity goals that had been communicated both internally and externally to the organization. However, the level of commitment varied between police services – some gave specific examples while others simply stated that they were committed to recruiting and developing candidates from diverse groups (to make the service more representative of the community). Much of the literature was, in fact, concerned with justifying the business case for diversity; explicating future goals in achieving diversity while offering no policy or practice in order to do so (Desmoulin 2007; Luesby and Luesby 2003; Police Sector Council 2005, 2006, 2007; Ottawa Police Service and Carleton University n.d.).

³ Since the focus was on improving gender diversity only, police services that did not address the issue of increasing the representation of women within the force were not included.

Strong and Transparent Human Resource Practices

In terms of human resources policies to increase the attraction and continued representation of women within the policing sector, the majority of departments and services advertised that they specifically targeted women. The Vancouver Police Department (2010), Calgary Police Service (2012a), RCMP (2010), Halifax Regional Police (n.d.), Hamilton Police Service (2010), Durham Regional Police (2010), Toronto Police Service (2010), OPP (“OPP Bound” 2010), York Regional Police (2010b), and Niagara Regional Police Service (2010) all explicitly stated that they actively recruit women as well as advertised that they are equal opportunity employers.

Despite the stated commitment to increasing the representation of women in the policing sector, only two services – Toronto Police Service (Caballero and Yerema 2010) and the Ontario Provincial Police (Jones 2004) admitted to having a representative selection committee. Furthermore, other than specifically targeting women and mandatory diversity training for some agencies (Calgary Police Service 2012b; Edmonton Police Service 2010; Saskatoon Police Service 2010; Toronto Police Service 2010; and Halifax Regional Police n.d.), there was very little support from the human resources department to improve the rates of development/promotion and retention of women in the Canadian policing sector. There is also little evidence that many police services (aside from the Winnipeg Police Service (2010a; 2010b), the Ontario Provincial Police (Jones 2004) and the Regina Police Service (2010)) have actively attempted to create internal or associate with external mentorship or formal networking programs, which have been identified as the means by which female recruits are developed, promoted, and retained by the services. For example, Wendy Southall (2010), Chief of the Niagara Regional Police Service and one of the few female Chiefs of Police in Canada, states that seeking out mentors was central to her successful rise throughout the senior ranks. Additionally, Kalev et al. (2006) assert that women often benefit the most from networking and mentoring programs as they “address the social isolation among women”, especially in jobs where women’s representation only comprises a small percentage of the whole.

Perhaps the best example of a practice that not only stood out from the rest but also intersected numerous factors identified by the DAT is the OPP’s female-focussed recruitment initiative, OPP-Bound, which was first implemented in 2003 and is currently in its eighth year (“OPP Bound” 2010). The initial recruitment drive resulted in 2,764 women applying to the program in a five-month period. Of these, only 100 were selected to participate in the program which enabled women to learn and “experienc[e] both the theory and practical components of being a provincial police officer” (Jones 2004). Though the selection process was done by a lottery, the program focused on women who were unsure about pursuing policing as a career. The candidates selected participated in a mini cadet training program (including firearms, physical, marching drill training as well as crime scene protocol, traffic stops, and self-defence) and mentoring sessions with a select group of female officers. Now offered on an annual basis and expanded to include other diverse recruits, the project was a success – 78 of the participants enrolled, however, there is no indication as to how many of these recruits remained with the force.

Quality of Life and Organizational Culture

Since a promotion could not only potentially change an officer’s schedule but also change it in unpredictable ways, many female officers abstain from the promotional process altogether. Possible solutions to this barrier could include indicating the potential shift assignment, providing more flexible scheduling, as well as offering affordable on-site child care facilities. However, none of these have been addressed by initiatives to increase organizational culture and/or quality of life issues.

Other than the parental leave and Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) offered by the Toronto Police Services (Mediacorp Editors 2010), none of the departments and services offered

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any programs or policies to improve the Quality of Life and the Organizational Culture of its employees. Furthermore, examples abound in scholarly literature that point out how inflexible, stressful, and problematic the shift work is for police officers, especially female officers who also want to start a family (Dick and Cassell 2002). Therefore, the DAT's application has identified barriers that are supported by the scholarly research in the area. However, as no initiatives have been implemented to overcome these barriers the labour force is made up of fewer women police officers.

Measuring and Tracking Diversity

While only the Halifax Police Service (n.d.) explicitly stated that they measure and track the number of female applicants, our assumption is that, within its personnel records, all police services have some measure of the total number of women currently employed by their service. However, it is difficult to determine to what extent police services actually use this information to measure the effectiveness of diversity initiatives. Similarly, it would be interesting to analyze the rates at which both male and female police officers engage in overtime and what effect that has on their pay levels.

The police services and departments that were examined also emphasize the importance of recruiting events and community outreach – specifically and actively targeting women. While these recruitment strategies have clearly worked – as evidenced by the increase in the number of female officers since 1986 – whether or not these recruits remain with the police service is impossible to discern. Expanding upon the difficulty to measure turnover rates, it would be useful if the DAT included a measure of the level of attrition and departure of diverse groups. If there has been success in recruitment but not in development/promotion and retention, having a measure contained within the DAT would not only help to identify areas that need intervention but also to benchmark against other police services to determine if their practices can be transferred and adapted in order to solve the underlying issues.

Integrating or Mainstreaming Diversity across the Value Chain

In terms of marketing, customer service, and communications, there is a heavy emphasis on communicating diversity in order to demonstrate these police services' ability to effectively engage in community policing. By increasing the visibility of women in terms of its marketing strategies – like the Calgary Police Department (2010), the Edmonton Police Service (2010), and the Halifax Regional Police service (n.d.) – these services are communicating that women fulfill an integral – but contradictory – role in terms of community policing. While recruiting posters featuring women indicate that the police service is open to including women, using women in their marketing campaigns for domestic violence or sexual assault is both beneficial and detrimental. On the one hand, advertising that there is specially trained female officers to talk with, may encourage some victims to come forward and develops and designs a service specifically to meet the needs of these victims. On the other hand, women are once again stereotyped and relegated to the status of nurturer and caregiver to victims.

Developing the Pipeline

In terms of developing the pipeline, the Toronto Police Service (Caballero and Yerema 2010), the Durham Regional Police (2010), the Halifax Regional Police (Perivale and Taylor 2005) and OPP Bound (Jones 2004) have actively targeted women by going out into the community and engaging in recruitment strategies to increase the participation of women. These strategies ranged from targeted general information sessions, visits to high schools, as well as actively recruiting diverse hires from post-secondary institutions. By communicating its commitment to diversity – ideally by sending out female police officers to actively encourage women to join the police

service –it not only informs these women about the opportunities associated with joining the police service, but also creates female role models and provides mentorship and other networking opportunities. In other words, by actively recruiting more women, understanding the need for these new recruits to have those opportunities, and – ultimately – developing initiatives to bring female officers together in order to nurture such opportunities, such barriers can be eradicated.

Conclusion

Although the implementation of policies and practices to increase diversity appeared to have resulted in the “removal of overt discrimination and bias” (Melgoza and Cox 2009, 652) from the workplace, such acts “continued to exist but were masked by a strong rhetoric of gender equality, which made the articulating experiences of gender discrimination difficult” (Kelan 2009, 198) to those who experienced it first-hand. As one female employee puts it, women “often feel individually responsible for developing mechanisms to overcome gender discrimination and seem to lack the resources to talk about this as a systemic and category-based experience” (205). As a result, they withdraw “into a position that dismisses the relevance of gender in their working lives” (206). In the cases where discrimination and bias were identified and articulated, they were often deemed as so integral to the proper functioning of that particular organizational role that they could not – or should not – be questioned or challenged. In sum, covert gender bias and discrimination remain unacknowledged, unaddressed, and unresolved.

To address the issue of conscious and unconscious gender bias, the organization can also proactively communicate the idea that the procedures and processes through which an organizational decision is made were equitable, just, and fair (Kottke and Agars 2005). Since one of the ways in which male employees and managers respond to women’s encroachment on male power positions is by “conduct[ing] less business in the formal setting where women are present and conduct[ing] more business in informal venues (e.g., the executive washroom, the golf course)” (197), it is imperative that organizational decision making becomes as transparent as possible and remains within the realm of the formal and the visible.

Similarly, increasing the number of formal mentoring and networking opportunities for female employees may also benefit. However, these programs do not challenge the structural or systemic mechanisms at work that discriminate against women; they simply provide a model for female employees to successfully navigate a discriminatory social structure, divorcing the acts of discrimination and gender bias from the social structures that create and reinforce those inequalities. As a result, the focus shifts from changing the social structures that create inequalities to simply changing the woman.

Curth and Evans (2011) argue “gender-sensitive reform is a complex process of social change requiring a holistic understanding of the gendered power relations in the operating context in the interests of promoting institutional change” (496). Our analysis of the barriers facing female officers – stereotypes, the gendering of jobs, conscious and unconscious gender bias and discrimination, lack of networking and mentorship opportunities, work/life imbalance – indicates that female police officers “often fail to acquire adequate integration into the police culture” (Carlan et al. 2011, 5). The lack of integration results in “discrimination, harassment, and greater levels of stress” and, as a result, female officers feel more “isolation, added performance pressures, and limited opportunities for promotion and advancement” (Stroshine and Bandl 2011, 345). These, in turn, decrease rates of employee satisfaction and increase rates of attrition. Therefore, if police services organizations wish to increase the number of women among their ranks by increasing not only the recruitment but also the retention of female officers, they must engage in developing and implementing diversity policies that aim to address these barriers specifically and the lack of integration generally. The identification of leading practices within the Canadian police services sector using the DAT is an important first step in the process. However, a more comprehensive investigation in this area is required.

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