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CARE AND CONTROL

**Exploring the gendering of emotion management
tasks among uniformed police**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Philosophy in Sociology

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Abstract

This study of uniformed police constables highlights the emotion management tasks undertaken as part of the caring and controlling interventions of 'front line' police. In particular, it considers the ways in which the integration of women into patrol work has coincided with a more newly developed emphasis on the caring and responsive veneer of the police organisation. This latter endeavour has been most significant with respect to changing police work styles and practices in responding to incidents of domestic violence and it is in these areas that the convergence of these two changes is most apparent. The result has been the re-emergence of a systematically gendered specialisation of policing tasks. Under this informal system of task segregation, female constables have come to assume responsibility for modern 'care' provision whilst male constables maintain their historic responsibility for 'control'. This pattern of differential deployment significantly contravenes an espoused commitment to equality of opportunity and treatment at the same time as its persistence works to compromise much championed commitments to re-orientating police work styles and police responses to the public. The findings of this study suggest that the police organisation may be able to improve both the quality of work life of its incumbents and the way in which it delivers critical services to the public by more seriously embracing policies of equal employment opportunity.

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Contents

<i>Abstract</i>	ii
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	iii
<i>Contents</i>	iv

CHAPTER ONE

SETTING THE SCENE

1

The Case of Domestic Violence, 9

CHAPTER TWO

POLICING EMOTION

15

Emotion Management Theory: Managing Emotions on the Job, 16

 Hochschild's Conception of Emotion Management

 Other Views of Emotional Labour

Gendering Emotional Labour, 22

 Separating Emotion By Gender

Gendering Policing, 26

 The Entry of Women Into Policing

 The Modern Context

The Question of 'Care', 33

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

34

Research Setting and Methods, 36

 Access

 Setting

Observational Work	
Qualitative Interviews	
Fieldwork: Procedures, Issues and Results, 44	
Traditional Female Role Assignment	
Is Gender Only A Factor For Women?	

CHAPTER FOUR

POLICING IN ACTION

58

The Formal System and Pattern of Work, 58

 Deployment of Front Line Constables

 The Pattern of Work

The Informal System, 65

 Defining 'Good' Work

 Defining 'Bad' Jobs

Valuing Police Tasks, 82

CHAPTER FIVE

PERFORMING EMOTION

84

Working Criminals: Playing the Game, 85

 Reinventing Emotional Labour

 Elements of the Game

 Redefining Emotion

Work With Victims: The Compensatory Gloss, 95

Routine Crisis: "Just Another Domestic", 99

CHAPTER SIX

CARING AND CONTROLLING

105

Gendered Policing?, 106

 Explaining Gendered Policing

 Identifying Competence As Masculine

 In Defence Of Equal Opportunity

Experiencing Contradiction, 116

 Re-orientating Police Response to the Victims of Crime?

CHAPTER SEVEN	
POLICING THE FUTURE	124
Revisiting the Argument, 124	
Practicing Policing Policy, 127	
APPENDICES	132
<i>A. Information Sheet: Managing Emotions in Policing,</i>	132
<i>B. Information Sheet: Managing Emotions in Policing,</i>	136
BIBLIOGRAPHY	139