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Women Policing: A Contemporary Study of Women’s Experiences in the Royal Thai Police

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Women’s Studies

At Massey University, Palmerston North,

New Zealand

Sasiphattra Siriwato

2014
In line with international trends, in Thailand there are significantly fewer women than men who work at the senior level in public service and law enforcement occupations, especially in the police and armed forces. Utilizing the Royal Thai Police (RTP) as a case study, this research aims to identify the opportunities and barriers for promotion that impact women in the RTP and to analyze why few women work at the senior level for both police and administration or office-based work.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather information on women’s experiences. Thirty-seven intended participants were interviewed. Thirty-four participants are female police officers who work either in the Technical Support Unit or in the Field Operation Unit and another three participants are significant public authority figures who work with the RTP.

Although many participants reported that they feel they have been ‘accepted’ in the RTP as police officers, there is evidence that they have not been fully accepted in the workplace. ‘Acceptance in the workplace’ has varied meanings according to which section of the organization those female police officers work within. This research shows that organizational and cultural barriers still exist that limit opportunities for promotion. Theoretical frameworks provided by Butler and Foucault help to provide tools for understanding why this might be the case in this and other case studies. One difficulty that emerged from the research is that having insider status as a researcher in relation to gendered cultural norms has impacted on the level of separation from critical
analysis of the issues being studied, because the researcher is the product of these same
gendered cultural norms.
Acknowledgements

This study would not have been completed without the guidance, friendship, support and help of several people. First, a sincere thank you must go to the Royal Thai Police (RTP) that allowed me to conduct research in the four bureaus: the Police General Hospital, the Education Bureau, the Royal Police Cadet Academy and the Provincial Police Region Division 1 – 9. I also would like to thank the female police officers, Supensri Puengkongsung, Thanawadee Tajean and a female senior officer who works in the Office of Women’s Affairs and Family Development (OWF) who willingly participated and shared their useful views and experiences in this research. Without their participation, my research could not have been accomplished. The outcomes of this study will benefit not only me but also the RTP should improve female police officers’ status and provide equal opportunities for both male and female police officers to gain promotion based on recommendations.

I also express my gratitude to Dr. Jenny Coleman and Dr. Bethan Greener, my supervisors, for their expert advice, excellent guidance, encouragement and support me in attending both national and international conferences and for the duration of my doctoral study in New Zealand. Thanks for your constructive and valuable comments and suggestions in my thesis. I appreciate the considerable time and effort that both of my supervisors have invested in this work. I would also like to extend my thanks to all staff members of the School of People, Environment and Planning for their kindness, friendliness and support for all the equipment I used during my doctoral study. Thanks to Mary Roberts for managing Graduate Research Fund (GRF) documents and your
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<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AAPs</td>
<td>Affirmative Action Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APSW</td>
<td>Association for the Promotion of the Status of Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BPPB</td>
<td>Border Patrol Police Bureau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEDAW</td>
<td>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSC</td>
<td>Civil Service Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DoD</td>
<td>Department of Defense in the United States of America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPKO</td>
<td>United Nation Department of Peacekeeping Operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DVAW</td>
<td>Domestic violence against women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDB</td>
<td>Education Bureau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EEO</td>
<td>Equal Employment Opportunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FPU</td>
<td>Female Formed Police Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IR</td>
<td>International Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDGs</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<td>--------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>MUHEC</td>
<td>Massey University Human Ethics Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATO</td>
<td>North Atlantic Treaty Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCWA</td>
<td>National Commission on Women’s Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPA</td>
<td>National Police Agency in Japan</td>
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<tr>
<td>OCSC</td>
<td>Office of the Civil Service Commission</td>
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<td>OWF</td>
<td>Office of Women’s Affairs and Family Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>PGH</td>
<td>Police General Hospital</td>
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<tr>
<td>PPR</td>
<td>Provincial Police Region Division 1 – 9</td>
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<td>RPCA</td>
<td>Royal Police Cadet Academy</td>
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<td>RTP</td>
<td>Royal Thai Police</td>
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<td>SWAT</td>
<td>Special Weapons and Tactics team</td>
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<td>United Nations</td>
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