

Research Article

Rethinking Recruitment in Policing in Australia: Can the Continued Use of Masculinised Recruitment Tests and Pass Standards that Limit the Number of Women be Justified?

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ABSTRACT

Over the past couple of decades, Australian police organisations have sought to increase the numbers of women in sworn policing roles by strictly adhering to equal treatment of men and women in the recruitment process. Unfortunately this blind adherence to equal treatment in the recruitment processes may inadvertently disadvantage and limit women. In particular, the emphasis on masculine attributes in recruitment, as opposed to the ‘soft’ attributes of communication and conflict resolution skills, and the setting of the minimum pass standards according to average male performance, disproportionately disadvantages women and serves to unnecessarily limit the number of women in policing. This paper reviews studies undertaken by physiotherapists and a range of occupational experts to discuss the relevance of physical fitness and agility tests and the pass standards that are applied to these in policing. It is suggested that masculinised recruitment tests that pose an unnecessary barrier to women cannot be justified unless directly linked to the job that is to be undertaken. Utilising a policy development and review model, an analysis of the problem posed by physical testing that is unadjusted for gender, is applied. As a result, it is recommended that police organisations objectively review recruitment processes and requirements to identify and eliminate unnecessary barriers to women’s entry to policing. It is also recommended that where fitness and agility tests are deemed essential to the job, the pass level is adjusted for gender.

Keywords: Gender, police recruitment, police women, recruitment testing, human resources

INTRODUCTION

Policing is a masculine profession that emphasises the masculine attributes of strength, agility, aggression and brotherhood (Mossman, Mayhew, Rowe & Jordan, 2008) These attributes are only half the equation of police work however with the feminine qualities of understanding, sensitivity and softness

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being equally important to the effectiveness of the role (Rabe-Hemp, 2008). Hegemonic masculinity may not be serving police forces well in today's progressive society and police forces around the world are responding to pressure that they represent the needs of the community better (Miles-Johnson, 2013; Raganella & White, 2004). This has led to a move to increase the active involvement of women in modern policing and is an aim, which is to a large extent, being actualised in many police services. In Australia for example Prenzler & Sinclair (2013) report that the number of women in policing in 2011 was approximately 24.4% of all sworn officers nationally which is a significant increase from previous years with some states reporting numbers around 18% in 2007. The statistics presented by Prenzler & Sinclair (2013) do however indicate a slowing of this growth over the past three years.

Despite this, it is undeniable that women are making inroads into the previously male dominated profession of policing, including specialist areas, (Boni, 2005) but areas of resistance still remain, particularly in regard to a reluctance to review and remove the barriers that may discriminate against women in the recruitment processes of police services. There is not necessarily a deliberate effort to exclude women, quite the contrary; many involved in recruitment would claim great commitment to the equal representation of women in policing (Beattie & Johnson, 2012). It is more likely to be a product of the misguided attempts to ensure 'equality' in the standards applied to recruitment assessment testing to men and women and is a result of a misunderstanding of how such testing should be applied in a non-discriminatory way, instead assuming that sameness is the same as equality (International Labour Organization, 2010).

When operating from the belief that gender equality in employment equates to treating both gender exactly the same, this belief can directly influence the selection processes used for recruitment (International Labour Organization, 2010). In line with this view, for example, an argument can be posited that if women want to do the job of policing they must be able to reach the same level of physical performance as men. This view is based on formal equality which treats men and women exactly the same and may inadvertently result in discrimination. Substantive equality is what addresses discrimination and refers to treating men and women in a manner that takes their sex based physical differences into account in order to provide them with the same opportunities to enter and maintain their place in the workforce (Australian

Defence Force Academy, 2014; Australian Workplace Gender Equality Agency, 2014). Real gender equality in the workplace is about equality of opportunity, remuneration, visibility, representation, empowerment and participation (International Labour Organization, 2010; Directorate General of Human Rights, 2004) and the removal of barriers that would hinder this (Broderick, Goldie & Rosenman, 2010). In addition, unconscious bias in recruitment may lead the organisation to continually but unconsciously recruit in its own image, maintaining the status quo rather than advancing the equal representation of gender as it consciously seeks to do (Beattie & Johnson, 2012).

This paper discusses the recruitment tests used to select people into the job of policing and the ways in which these tests inadvertently present unnecessary barriers that disadvantage women. For the purpose of this paper sex refers to the physical and biological differences between men and women and gender refers to culturally accepted masculine and feminine qualities and roles. The author acknowledges that not all women want to enter the job of policing and this paper does not address the reasons why women may not choose not to enter this occupation. This paper is unapologetically concerned only with reviewing the recruitment processes in policing that may restrict those women who do want to enter policing as an employment choice; and posits alternative approaches that may be applied by police agencies to address unintended discrimination at the entry point.

WHY ARE RECRUITMENT TESTS NECESSARY?

Recruitment testing is necessary if an organisation is to be able to select the right person for the job. It is indisputable that if an individual is to do their job well, they must be capable of performing all of its occupational requirements. In policing this is especially important in order to ensure not only the safety of the officer involved, but also those around them, including colleagues and the general community (Andrews & Risher, 2006; Anderson, Placas, & Segger, 2000). The recruitment process for policing must therefore be able to identify the applicants who are physically and mentally able to do the job and to filter out those who are not able to satisfactorily do the job.

As a means of assessing these skills and aptitudes, psychological and physical tests are carried out at the point of recruitment. Physical tests include assessing performance capability in respect to discreet activities and tests of stamina and agility as well as hand grip strength and aerobic performance. In

addition, shooting and defensive tactics tests are used in the assessment of recruits. When these tests are looked at closely, it can be seen that the majority of tests undertaken in police recruitment and training have an emphasis on male qualities of strength and physical performance (Mossman et al, 2008) and are therefore geared towards the least common aspects of the policing role such as chasing an offender; while the areas of communications, conflict resolution, and community engagement, which are skills required in the major part of the role (Barker et al, 2008), are given the least attention in police recruitment and training.

This situation appears paradoxical, especially when the substantial debate about the relevancy of physical fitness and agility testing to the modern policing role is taken into account (Mossman et al, 2008; Lonsway, 2003; Prokos & Padavic, 2002; Birzer & Craig, 1996) and more importantly the fact that in most police departments, the physical fitness level assessed at recruitment is rarely maintained throughout employment (Gaines & Worrall 2012; Andrews & Risher, 2006; Lonsway, 2003). Lonsway (2003) states that due to the sedentary nature of police work, any standard of physical fitness and agility assessed at recruitment would rapidly decline once the recruits were employed if there was no concerted effort by the organisation to maintain physical fitness.

It is clear that policing has changed dramatically over the last few decades and the modern police job is largely sedentary with police less physically active and instead predominantly located in offices and cars (Lonsway 2003, Prokos & Padavic, 2002). The physical fitness and agility tests performed at recruitment are therefore focused on the rare critical incidents that require police to run, jump and physically engage with an offender rather than the majority of their work which involves report writing, conflict resolution and communicating verbally with members of the public (Mossman, Mayhew, Rowe & Jordan, 2008). In addition to this, Lonsway (2003) points out that these recruitment tests may have little relevancy anyway as they fail to predict the future performance of recruits and fail to be a guarantee of their own and other's safety once a recruit is employed as a police officer. Such recruitment tests, if not directly related to the job to be undertaken, can pose unnecessary barriers, particularly to women.

WHAT ARE RECRUITMENT BARRIERS?

Recruitment barriers are direct and indirect organisational impediments that might restrict the entry of certain people, in this case women, into policing. These can be intentional or unintentional. An unintentional barrier to women's entry into policing is the police organisation's reliance on familiar recruitment assessment tests which emphasise male characteristics such as physical strength, agility and physique and the handling of weapons (Silvestri, 2003; Prokos & Padavic, 2002). This emphasis unnecessarily obstructs many women from gaining employment in policing (Butler, Winfree & Newbold, 2003) whilst overlooking the full range of skills required for modern policing such as conflict resolution, and communication skills (Barker et al, 2008). Using data from over 4,000 law enforcement agencies, Schuck (2014) found that higher representation of women in law enforcement was associated with having a focus on community policing, having higher education requirements, offering more incentives and benefits and having no physical fitness recruitment tests. Despite this finding, the main emphasis for recruitment in most jurisdictions is physical fitness.

In Australia, physiotherapy researchers Orr et al (2013) undertook a series of studies with a small group of police recruits and concluded that the hand grip strength test, which is assessed using a measuring tool known as a Dynamometer, may be associated with better performance in defensive tactics and marksmanship however they found that the relationship was not strong and therefore, as stated by Orr et al, could not be used to predict performance. This is supported by the findings of an earlier study by Copay & Charles (2001) which found that grip strength has only a slight influence on marksmanship with semi-automatic handguns.

Additionally, in their research with police recruits, Anderson and Plecas (2000) were unable to identify any combination of gross motor tasks that could predict shooting performance. Such pilot studies, while valuable for providing indicative data, need to be considered with caution to avoid police organisations accepting them as statistically validated research which is then used to support arbitrarily set recruitment criteria and standards. Additionally, tests such as the handgrip strength test, which measures the amount of static force the hand can squeeze when using a dynamometer, may be indicative of overall health but is not predictive of future performance such as shooting a gun or handling a baton and yet the test is used as a barrier test in recruitment (Orr et al, 2013; Poitras, 2011) so its use as a recruitment test could be considered to be arbitrary.

WHAT TESTS ARE USED AND HOW RELEVANT ARE THEY?

The need for physical testing as the most dominant means for assessing competence to perform the policing role is largely unsubstantiated. The tests used frequently have standards applied to them that have not been related to the minimum performance requirements of the job but which instead use the average male performance and aptitude levels of the particular activity being assessed as the minimum standard to be achieved (Dodge, Valcore & Klinger, 2010; Lonsway, 2003) while ignoring the fact that women will struggle to meet these minimum standards regardless of how much training they do in preparation (Massey-Westropp, Taylor, Bohannon & Hill, 2011). Furthermore, it is clear that the normative standards for each gender, with age taken into account, if set at the average for the population; is indicative of overall health and fitness at a particular point in time but cannot be predictive of future physical performance in a job. This is also the case with current physical recruitment tests.

Physical tests common to police recruitment include shooting, running, lifting weights, push ups, sit ups, hand grip strength and trigger pull test. A study of tasks in policing undertaken by Anderson and Plecas (2000) concluded that shooting performance could not be predicted by gross motor performance skills tests. It further concluded that hand grip strength tests and 30-trigger pull tests in the selection of recruits were not supported and that the results gained in these tests did not support the notion that a minimal hand grip strength or minimal hand size was related to the accuracy of shooting a weapon.

In relation to gender, this study found that women were disadvantaged by these tests which eliminated approximately fifty percent of the female recruits who participated in them and which, in the view of the researchers, was statistically equivalent to flipping a coin. Interestingly, Anderson & Plecas (2000) were unable to find an identifiable set of physical attributes that would predict shooting performance, regardless of gender and the predictive value of many of the other physical fitness and agility tests are likewise unsupported by research (Orr et al, 2013; Andrews & Risher, 2006).

The skills and attributes required for the job of policing are much broader than just physical skills and performance (Miller, 2012). Currently, the skills that women arguably have a stronger aptitude for, and which have more relevance to the overall job of policing, are skills that are often seen as being “soft skills” because they are not generally linked to masculinity (Lonsway,

2003). These are characteristics such as communication skills, resilience, honesty, teamwork and conflict resolution (Lievens & Sackett, 2011; Barker et al, 2008).

It has been reported that one of the most common complaints the general public levels at police is their lack of communication skills which lead them to be experienced by ordinary people as rude and arrogant (Barker et al, 2008). Yet, the very nature of police work requires the police to communicate with a diverse range of people in a variety of different circumstances as the main activity of their job. Having good communication skills increases the trust the public has in the officers concerned and increases the likelihood that people will be willing to cooperate with police (Barker et al, 2008). It could therefore be questioned whether the emphasis on physical strength and performance is in fact focusing on the most important aspect of the job of the modern police officer and whether this emphasis unnecessarily poses barriers to women.

SEX BASED DIFFERENCES IN PHYSICAL ABILITY

It can be shown that due to sex based differences in physique, including size, strength and physical capacity, men will in most cases out-perform women in tasks that require high levels of upper body strength, or physical capacity, including muscular endurance (Barnhouse, 2008; Birzer & Craig, 1996). Physical testing that focus on these areas will disadvantage the average woman who will be required to exert proportionally greater power, stamina, and endurance in order to match the performance of men (Barnhouse, 2008).

If this requirement is not scientifically linked to the output necessary for job performance, then it presents an unnecessary disadvantage to women (Barnhouse, 2008; Andrews & Risher, 2006). Sex based anatomical differences include the amount and positioning of body fat and muscle. In general, women tend to have less muscle throughout their body than men but more body fat which is especially located on the breasts and hips (Janssen, Heymsfield, Wang, & Ross, 2000). Body fat bulks the body mass, adding to body weight without contributing to its power or energy producing potential. This ultimately reduces an individual's speed and stamina in running tasks and lowers their capacity in weight bearing tasks (Cureton, Hensley & Tiburzi, 1979).

Activities requiring a high aerobic capacity are positively correlated with lower body fat, so women are also more likely to have slower running times than men (Sharp, 1994). There is a good reason why men and women do not compete

against each other in sports and athletics and that is because they have different average minimum and maximum physical fitness levels and aerobic capacity (Barnhouse, 2008). The average maximum capacity for gender cannot be improved by training because it is the maximum level that can be reached in a particular physical task according to the biology of their sex.

Moreover, the amount and size of muscle contributes to overall physical body mass and is directly related to performance by providing the force and energy required to complete physical activity. This means that individuals who have more muscle mass tend to have greater physical strength and energy. On average, women possess less muscle throughout their body and also have a lower concentration of muscle distributed in their upper body. As a result, they often have around half the upper body strength of men who are of a relative age and size (Miller et al., 1993). Recruitment tests that focus on upper body strength without taking gender into account frequently disadvantage women. For example, hand grip strength is generally used by police as a determinant for performance in the recruitment process. According to Anderson & Plecas (2000) women have an average grip strength that is around 60 percent of the average grip strength of men. They also have, on average, a smaller hand, a shorter trigger finger and a narrower hand breadth than men (Anderson & Plecas, 2000). These physical differences directly impact on assessment results.

In the study of police recruits undertaken by Anderson and Plecas (2000) it was found that the female recruits were generally smaller in stature than their male counterparts and had lower measures of strength and lower shooting scores. In addition to the physical characteristics, a further explanation put forward by the researchers to account for the lower shooting scores and strength measures was the firearms training schedule that preceded the testing. They observed that differential levels of fatigue resulted from the women having to work at their maximum capacity during training while the males worked at their minimum capacity over the four days, consequently reducing the fine motor skills of the women. They also observed that there was no apparent reason for what they described as this “unrealistic and extremely demanding” practice (Anderson & Plecas, 2000, p. 534). Sex based differences in performance and physical capacity have led some military and law enforcement agencies to put in place differential testing based on gender but Australian police departments have been slow to pick this up.

THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PICTURE

Although slow, Australia is making some progress in this area in some jurisdictions with men and women being assessed using different sex based minimum standards in physical performance for recruitment in the South Australia Police (SAPOL, 2015), Western Australian Police Service (WA Police, 2015) and the Australian Defence Force (ADFA, 2015). While Victoria Police have made some changes to its agility testing it has this issue currently under review and is considering whether further changes need to be made or whether these recruitment requirements need to be abandoned completely (Leane & Durand, 2014). The Australian Federal Police (AFP) has removed agility testing completely from its entry processes and even though they have retained other physical fitness tests, the AFP recruitment statistics now show a significant increase in women entering the service (Leane & Durand, 2014). Tasmania Police adjusts test pass levels for age but not for gender.

Despite significant resistance amongst some Australian police departments to consider differential sex based standards in recruitment tests, sex based differences in physical performance and aptitude are already being taken into account internationally in various law enforcement and military areas around the world such as the British Army (2015), Illinois State Police (2015), the New York State Police (2015), Israel Police (2015), the Hong Kong Police Force (2015), and the United States Army Marine Corp (2015). Illinois State Police (2015) adjusts their recruitment tests for both gender and age. These organisations accept that the use of different standards for men and women does not constitute a double standard, but a sensible acknowledgement of physical differences. Physical fitness standards for some assessment tests can be different for men and women without being inequitable, if set at the average level for sex, as the differential standards applied merely take into account these physical differences. This view is supported by the United States General Accounting Office (GAO, 1998, p 48) which found that:

Some of the key perceptions about the services' fitness programs are related to a fairly widespread lack of understanding about the real purpose of the fitness standards. However, it is not possible to definitively assess the accuracy of most of the perceptions of service-members about the fairness and equity of the service physical fitness programs because the services generally did not use a scientific approach in setting the standards or adjusting them for gender differences and the services do not maintain

sufficient statistics to judge the effectiveness and fairness of their programs.

The GAO (1998) made recommendations to the Department of Defence that physical fitness and body fat assessments be adjusted for gender differences and for the standards applied to be scientifically based. In fact there is an argument that not to have different gender threshold standards could itself constitute discrimination (Andrews & Risher, 2006) as once the maximum level for gender is reached no amount of further training will allow the person to go beyond that level (Barnhouse, 2008; Copay & Charles, 2008). A comparison of the application of gender adjustment in recruitment tests across jurisdictions can be seen in table 1.

Table 1 shows that while there is greater consistency across the military regarding the types of physical testing used for recruitment purposes (gender adjusted), when it comes to police jurisdictions, there is less consistency, even though the job of policing remains largely the same. Few jurisdictions, for example, include weight lifting and pull-ups in their recruitment and it appears that few jurisdictions include hand grip strength testing. South Australia Police do the agility testing and weight lifting as part of a simulated situation in which a variety of physical performance attributes are assessed.

The agility test commences in the police car and includes carrying a 25kg simulated body 20 metres, leaping over fences, running across a car park, leaping over a ditch and climbing through a window. It also includes removing the spare wheel from the boot of the car and carrying it to the front of the car (SAPOL, 2015). This style of testing is innovative as it is directly related to the job requirements and the level at which it is set is clearly linked to the job performance required.

GENDER BASED PERCEPTIONS OF PERFORMANCE

Just as not taking sex based differences into account in recruitment tests is potentially discriminatory, perceptions of job suitability based on gender can also be problematic and can lead to discrimination once a woman is in the job. Perceptions that women are physically incapable of undertaking work that is normally carried out by men, such as policing, is not supported by the available evidence (Haba, Sarver III, Dobbs & Sarver, 2009; Silvestri, 2003; Brown, 1997; Christie, 1996).

Table 1: Adjustment for sex in recruitment tests across jurisdictions.

Test	British Army	US Army Marine Corps	Australian Defence Force	Australian Federal Police	S. Australian Police	W. Australian Police	Israel Police	New York State Police Department	Illinois State Police	Hong Kong Police Force
Agility Testing	NA	A	-	R	NA	A	-	-	R	-
Hand Grip Strength Test	-	-	-	-	-	NA	-	-	-	-
Aerobic Capacity Test	-	-	-	-	A	-	A	-	-	-
Weight Lifting	A	A	-	-	NA	NA	-	-	A	-
Timed Distance Running	A	A	A	-	-	-	-	A	A	A
Push-ups	A	-	A	NA	-	A	A	A	A	A
Sit-ups	NA	-	NA	NA	-	NA	A	A	-	-
Pull-ups	-	A	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	A
Shuttle run Beep Test	A	A	NA	NA	-	A	-	-	-	A

Sit & Reach Test	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	A	-
Crunches/Squats	-	NA	NA	NA	-	-	-	-	-	A
Vertical Jump	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	A

Key: R = Removed; A= Adjusted for sex. NA = Not adjusted – = this test is not used or it is unknown if it is adapted for gender or not.

This is also true in regard to the military. David Burelli (2013) argues that gender based perceptions that women are unable to physically perform at the same level as men, should be dispelled and a level playing field in military service be applied to increase the number of women in combat roles.

This was argued in the report *Women in combat: Issues for Congress*, in which Burelli (2013) challenges the tendency for military leaders to relegate women to administrative roles and away from combat roles, despite the women concerned being considered to be combat ready. This is a different issue to that which is being argued in this paper. Women should not be prevented from undertaking the full range of duties for a job (Lonsway et al, 2003; Silvestri, 2003) and outcomes on arbitrarily applied recruitment assessment tests should not be confused with potential job performance.

Likewise, physical fitness, aerobic and agility testing at the point of recruitment can only be taken to be valid if it is clearly shown that there is a relationship between the standard set for these tests and on the performance required for the job (Birzer and Craig, 1996). Women who pass the recruitment assessments based specifically on job performance and the intrinsic requirements of the job (as opposed to general physical fitness) are just as capable to perform their duties as their male counterparts, even if the non-essential physical fitness components have been pitched at a different level. Israeli Police, for example moved the focus of their recruitment from physical prowess to a merit based selection process based on qualifications in the 1970s. Following this move, there was a dramatic increase in the numbers of women in policing and in

particular, the numbers of women represented in specialist roles such as detective and intelligence areas (Shadmi, 1993).

ANALYSING THE PROBLEM

The discussion so far has served to provide an overview of the problem presented by hegemonic masculinity within policing and how it can serve to disadvantage women from entering the profession by the gate-keeping effect of exclusionary recruitment processes. Utilising a Policy Development Review Model (Wilson & Beaton, 2003) is used as an objective method of analysing the issue of recruitment barriers for women presented in this paper and a summary analysis of the various aspects relevant to the problem of recruitment barriers for women entering policing are provided in table 2. It takes into account the originating dynamic of the organisation within which the policy sits. In policing, the originating dynamic is the hegemonic masculinity (Silvestri 2003, Lonsway, 2003) which typified its inception and still infiltrates much of the profession today.

The Policy Development Review Model includes the purpose and objectives of the originating dynamic and in table 2 it can be seen that in modern policing departments there is a need to review the ongoing necessity of using masculinised assessments at recruitment, especially as the role of policing evolves to meet the contemporary needs of the community (Lievens & Sackett, 2011; Barker et al, 2008). It can be seen in table 2 that the design and features of the recruitment requirements are predominantly male centric requiring women to out-perform men on a comparative basis in many aspects of these assessments (Barnhouse, 2008; Andrews & Risher, 2006).

This model also highlights the comparative discrepancy between the assessment of physical performance and the assessment of other important skill sets for modern policing such as communication and conflict resolution (Mossman, Mayhew, Rowe & Jordan, 2008; Barker et al, 2008). Implementation is the final analytical frame of reference included in the model, and takes into account the efforts made by policing organisations to ensure equality in the organisation and policies aimed at increasing the representation of women (Prenzler & Sinclair, 2013). Inadvertently however the implementation of some of the recruitment policies may in fact discriminate against women and serve to present an unnecessary barrier to women's employment in policing.

Leadership and management is therefore vital to ensuring the right message about gender specific recruitment assessments gets out to the organisation (Silvestri, 2003). When considering the outcomes and effects, this analysis points to the need for a commitment to the ongoing review of recruitment processes. This is seen to be a sensible step forward to removing unnecessary barriers that may continue to limit the numbers of women in policing.

CONCLUSION

Policing is a traditionally masculinised profession (Miles-Johnson, 2013) that emphasises and promotes the typical male attributes of aggression, physical strength, and agility (Rabe-Hemp, 2008; Mossman et al, 2008) but it need not remain so. The job of policing has become more and more complex and sedentary over time with a greater focus on community policing and interaction with the public. In addition, with computerization, CCTV, police helicopters, GPS tracking and Tasers,TM it can be argued that the job of policing is less likely to require police to physically chase offenders over long distances, scale fences and engage in physical restraint as a regular part of their job (Lievens & Sackett, 2011; Barker et al, 2008). As Lonsway (2003) points out, if police officers need to do this it is a rare occurrence. The major component of the contemporary police role requires the skills of communication, conflict resolution, community engagement and referral (Mossman, Mayhew, Rowe & Jordan, 2008; Barker et al, 2008).

Unfortunately police recruitment processes in many police services have failed to adapt to this changing focus in policing and have retained masculinised recruitment tests that invariably present barriers to the employment of women, even though this may not be the implicit intention. It is evident that in order to give women an equal playing field at the recruitment point, sex based differences should be taken into account in the assessment of physical performance but it is often not taken into account (Brady & Straight, 2014; Barnhouse, 2008).

Resistance from the existing older membership, who were primarily trained to accept hegemonic masculinity as the essential foundation for policing, can influence decisions around what recruitment assessments are required. Their position in choosing predominantly masculine based physical performance tests is generally supported with the argument that women must meet the same

standard as men in all physical tests if they are to be considered equal to their male colleagues (Rabe-Hemp, 2008, Herrington, 2002). This position requires all test pass levels to be set at exactly the same level, ignoring the fact that setting the standards at the same level for both women and men requires women to perform at a proportionally higher level than their male counterparts (Barnhouse 2008).

Table 2: Summary Analysis: Recruitment Barriers for Women Entering Policing

Item	Identified Issue	Current Situation and/or Adaptation Required
History and originating dynamic	Policing was previously a white male dominated occupation in Australia and despite efforts to increase diversity elements of the masculine hegemony remain (Miles-Johnson, 2013; Silvestri 2003, Lonsway, 2003).	Policing is now more representative of the general population with a growing number of women in the ranks but more needs to be done to remove any unnecessary barriers to the recruitment of more women in sworn policing roles.
Purpose and Objectives	An emphasis on masculine traits and skills served the purpose of ensuring police officers could do the job of chasing down criminals and physically restraining them when required at a time when this was a large part of the job of policing (Lievens & Sackett, 2011; Barker et al, 2008).	The job has changed over the years and a wide range of skills is now needed to do the job. The emphasis on masculine traits and in particular on physical fitness, does not match the job requirement (Mossman, Mayhew, Rowe & Jordan, 2008; Barker et al, 2008) and should be reviewed.
Design and Features	Many of the physical requirements at recruitment are not linked to the job requirements. Many of the standards set for these tests are based on the minimum or average outputs for men, which are the average to maximum outputs for women, thereby requiring women to perform at a comparatively higher level in order to pass (Barnhouse, 2008; Andrews & Risher, 2006).	Physical fitness requirements for recruitment should be reviewed to ensure they are linked to the job to be undertaken. Consideration should be given to removing tests that are not linked to the job requirements (Schuck, 2014). Standards set should be linked to the output necessary to achieve the job required otherwise they should be adjusted for gender (i.e. the minimum to average level for sex) (Barnhouse, 2008).

Implementation	<p>Efforts to ensure equality at the recruitment stage can inadvertently discriminate against women. Treating men and women exactly the same for physical tests does not take into account sex based differences in maximum performance and output thresholds (Barker et al, 2008). That no amount of training can improve. Emphasising physical skills alone or putting more emphasis on these attributes than communication and conflict resolution skills can disadvantage women and are not aligned to the modern policing role (Mossman, Mayhew, Rowe & Jordan, 2008; Barker et al, 2008).</p>	<p>If a particular test does not have to be pitched at a particular level for the job then it should be adjusted for the sex of the applicant (GAO, 1998). This will ensure that men and women are being assessed on a comparatively equal basis. There should also be equal weight given to other skill sets such as communication and conflict resolution skills (Andrews & Risher, 2006).</p>
Leadership & Management	<p>It is evident that police departments in Australia are sincerely making efforts to increase the numbers of women in policing but more can be done (Prenzler & Sinclair, 2013).</p>	<p>A willingness to review standard practices in recruitment to remove unintentional barriers to women Such action will pave the way to increase the numbers of women who enter the profession of policing.</p>
Outcomes and Effects	<p>Unless something changes in regard to removing the recruitment barriers in policing, the numbers of women will continue to remain considerably lower than those of male police.</p>	<p>Unnecessary tests should be removed and where possible, other physical tests should be adjusted for gender (GAO, 1998). Such adaptation will increase the numbers of women who enter the profession of policing.</p>

If women’s representation in policing is to equal the representation of men, there needs to be a review of police recruitment and the acceptable minimum standards that are applied within each organisation. In particular the following recommendations should be considered by Australian police departments:

1. Physical fitness, performance and agility tests and the pass level for these tests, need to be shown to be relevant to the job that is to be performed (Barnhouse, 2008);
2. Those tests not directly relevant to the job of policing should be discarded (Schuck, 2014);
3. Physical fitness and agility tests need to be adjusted for gender differences (Andrews & Risher, 2006); and

4. Physical fitness and agility tests need to have minimum standards that are scientifically determined to be the average for each sex (GAO, 1998).

When setting recruitment assessment tests, it should also be taken into account that physical fitness and agility tests are only indicative, and not predictive, of performance in one very limited aspect of the policing role and consideration should be given to weighting the recruitment assessments based on how frequently the attributes assessed are likely to be used. Alternatively, scenario based fitness and agility tests such as those performed by South Australia Police (SAPOL, 2015) could be considered.

While it is apparent that police departments around the world are genuinely trying to increase the representation of women in policing roles it is not sufficient to just want it to happen. Deliberate steps need to be taken to identify where barriers exist at the entry point and where possible, eliminate these barriers. The regular review of recruitment processes and requirements is a natural part of good governance in any organisation and reviewing recruitment processes and requirements with a deliberate focus on identifying barriers for women is a sensible step to take when doing this.

This paper has raised the question as to whether masculinised recruitment tests that may disadvantage women from entering policing can be justified and the answer is that unless these tests can be objectively and scientifically shown to be linked to the requirements of the job, they cannot be justified and should be discarded. Likewise, if the pass standard applied to the test is not linked to the performance output required to do the job, the pass standard applied should be adjusted for gender so that women are not required to out-perform men in order to gain entry into policing.

This is not an argument for the preferential treatment of women in order to increase their representation in policing, but rather is an argument for ensuring that the recruitment testing for both men and women is fair and justified. Women make an important contribution to policing and as they demonstrate their capability in all aspects of the role they are gaining greater acceptance by their male colleagues and the wider community. It is by identifying and removing unnecessary barriers at the entry point that real and sustainable inroads can be achieved in regard to increasing the representation of women in the policing profession.

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