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MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

**DO THE DUTCH KNOW MUCH? A COMPARATIVE
ANALYSIS OF GENDER AND USE OF FORCE IN
LAW ENFORCEMENT IN THE NETHERLANDS
AND THE UNITED STATES**

by

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September 2023

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AND USE OF FORCE IN LAW ENFORCEMENT IN THE NETHERLANDS AND
THE UNITED STATES**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
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ABSTRACT

This comparative research examines how the law enforcement communities in the U.S. and the Netherlands (NL) strive toward gender equity and how gender equity influences the use of force in policing. The thesis further examines how the number of women officers in each country has changed over time and studies whether there is a relationship between the increasing proportion of women officers and trends in police use of force. Through a review of scholarly sources, government data, and historical accounts, the study finds women remain underrepresented in policing in the U.S., at 13% of officers. However, evidence shows that gender-balanced forces improve community relations, minimize excessive force, and build trust. In the NL, proactive recruiting and extensive training help achieve more than 30% women officers, contributing to dramatically lower rates of police violence compared to the U.S. However, incidents of police using excessive force still occur in the NL, indicating recruiting more women alone is likely insufficient. The research suggests adapting elements of the Dutch model, such as de-escalation training, education incentives, and coordinated standards, could incrementally improve diversity, accountability, and safety in the U.S. Yet, holistic culture change is required to truly transform policing. The study concludes progress will demand nuance, collaboration, and patience, but offers insights into policies that could gradually professionalize U.S. law enforcement.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Assembly Bill
ASP	Armament Systems and Procedures
ABLE	Active Bystandership for Law Enforcement
CHP	California Highway Patrol
CPD	Chicago Police Department
DOJ	Department of Justice
ECD	electronic control device
EPIC	Ethical Policing Is Courage
IACP	International Association of Chiefs of Police
LAPD	Los Angeles Police Department
MPD	Metropolitan Police Department
OC	oleoresin capsicum
OPC	Office of Police Complaints
USSC	United States Supreme Court

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This comparative research examines approaches to gender diversity and the use of force in policing in the United States and the Netherlands. It specifically analyzes the historical evolution of women officers in each country and the potential correlation to use of force trends. The study was conducted through an extensive review of scholarly sources, government data, and historical accounts.

The research discovers women remain substantially underrepresented in American law enforcement, constituting only 13 percent of officers.¹ Discriminatory hiring practices, lack of advancement opportunities, sexual harassment, and the hypermasculine culture of police departments impede progress toward gender equity. However, statistical and scholarly evidence consistently demonstrates women officers are significantly less likely to use excessive force or generate misconduct complaints. Gender-balanced police forces empirically improve community relations, minimize unnecessary force, and increase public trust.

In contrast, the Netherlands achieves more than 30 percent female officers through proactive recruiting and quotas, along with extensive education standards within its unified national police system.² Consequently, the Netherlands exhibits dramatically lower rates of police violence compared to the United States. The Dutch emphasis on de-escalation training fosters restraint in the use of force. But excessive force issues still occasionally emerge, showing recruiting more women alone is likely insufficient to fully transform policing.

Analysis of high-profile police violence incidents in both countries reveals they are overwhelmingly perpetrated by male officers. However, the role of gender remains underexamined in the discourse on policing reform. Research is limited on how identity development and socialization influence force decisions. More funding is needed for

¹ Rianna Starheim et al., *Women in Policing: Breaking Barriers and Blazing a Path* (Washington, DC: Department of Justice, 2019), <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/252963.pdf>.

² “Female Police Officers (As % of Total),” HelgiLibrary, June 1, 2016, <https://www.helgilibrary.com/indicators/female-police-officers-as-of-total>.

rigorous psychological and social science research on the intersections of gender, identity, and policing behaviors.

The study suggests elements of the Dutch model could incrementally improve diversity, accountability, and safety if adopted in the United States. Recommendations include implementing national use-of-force data collection for transparency, increasing training focused on de-escalation over physical prowess, utilizing financial incentives to encourage education, and establishing centralized coordination of standards across decentralized agencies.

However, applying Dutch best practices in the United States faces cultural challenges related to attitudes on federal oversight and individualism versus collective well-being. While the Dutch emphasis on social harmony facilitates unified reforms, deeply rooted American ideals of liberty and local control breed resistance to national mandates. Creative localized adaptation and incentives may help overcome this resistance.

Ultimately, the research affirms gender inequality persists in American law enforcement and must be addressed through multifaceted policy changes to recruit, retain, and promote more women officers. But transforming policing requires going beyond diversity alone to holistically reform training, culture, accountability, and community relations as well. The Dutch model provides an example of how extensive education, restrained force, and inclusive coordination can strengthen public safety and trust. Although obstacles exist, courageous, nuanced reforms centered on gender equity, de-escalation, and unification are imperative for just, effective policing.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The issue of police violence continues to challenge law enforcement, proving hard to justify or mitigate. Names like George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and others remain on the tips of the tongues of activists who decry excessive police force against citizens. Just as police brutality remains constant, so do the demographics of those who have committed such violence. Officers Derek Chauvin, J. Alexander Kueng, and Thomas Lane participated in Floyd's death, and Officers Jonathan Mattingly, Brett Hankison, and Myles Cosgrove played roles in Taylor's death.¹ Saying that men in law enforcement often perpetrate violence against suspects reflects a tragic reality.

The United States has a sad history of excessive force used on marginalized communities. To be sure, many other countries grapple with instances of police brutality, but they do not experience it with the same frequency as the United States. The Netherlands, for example, as of 2020, had a police force of approximately 62,988 members.² Additionally, women police officers represent just over 30 percent of the Dutch law enforcement workforce in 2015.³ At the same time, as of 2019, evidence shows the United States kills 33.5 citizens per 10 million residents compared to the Netherlands' 2.3 citizens.⁴ This statistic strongly suggests that the Netherlands safely enforces laws without abusing the powers afforded to law enforcement officers—and perhaps the higher presence of women on the force has something to do with this result?

¹ Chelsea Hanlock, "Settling for Silence: How Police Exploit Protective Orders," *California Law Review* 109, no. 4 (2021): 1507–79.

² "Netherlands: Employees in the Security Sector by Branch 2020," Statista, accessed November 8, 2022, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/948565/employees-in-the-security-sector-in-the-netherlands-by-branch/>.

³ "Female Police Officers (As % of Total)," HelgiLibrary, June 1, 2016, <https://www.helgilibrary.com/indicators/female-police-officers-as-of-total>.

⁴ "Rate of Civilians Killed by the Police Annually in Selected Countries, as of 2019," Statista, January 4, 2023, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1124039/police-killings-rate-selected-countries/>.

A. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

How is the Netherlands' history of excessive uses of force (or lack thereof) related to the large percentage of women on their police force, and is that worthy of review by agencies in the United States? Does the recruitment and retention model for women in law enforcement used by the Netherlands provide a road map that increases gender diversity in law enforcement and lower incidents of excessive force for the United States?

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review examines various research areas in equality, culture in society and law enforcement, and identity construction. The first section assesses why women generally do not find parity in the workplace. The second section explores the development of a police officer's identity, looking at warrior/guardian mentalities and how culture constructs a spectrum of identities in law enforcement. The third section presents an analysis of the use of force, highlighting specific, high-profile cases that emphasize that excessive force is often carried out by men in law enforcement.

1. Equality in the Workforce

Women have been striving for equality for generations. As 50 percent of the population, women still have a long way to go to reach parity in the workforce and even more so in law enforcement. The 2019 National Institute of Justice special report "Women in Policing: Breaking Barriers and Blazing a Path" states, "Women constitute less than 13 percent of total officers and a much smaller proportion of leadership positions."⁵ Women may have had the least opportunity to achieve equality in law enforcement positions, and some obvious and not-so-obvious reasons may explain this situation.

The challenges and issues of women in the workplace are not specific to law enforcement; the literature richly documents this struggle in the armed forces. As Brian Mitchell states,

⁵ Rianna Starheim et al., *Women in Policing: Breaking Barriers and Blazing a Path* (Washington, DC: Department of Justice, 2019), <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/252963.pdf>.

The problem, of course, with weighing the pluses and minuses of using women in the military is that there are too many minuses. A partial list would include higher rates of attrition, greater need for medical care, higher rates of non-availability, lower rates of deployability, lesser physical ability, aggravated problems of single-parenthood, dual-service marriages, fraternization, sexual harassment, sexual promiscuity, and homosexuality, all of which adversely affect unit cohesion, morale, and the fighting spirit of the armed forces.⁶

Additionally, research suggests there are differences between men and women regarding attitudes about the use of military force and associating women with combat roles. However, these differences likely stem from complex societal and cultural factors rather than inherent gender traits.⁷ Literature and some general opinion often falsely negate the capabilities of women.

Employers still perceive women as unable to develop traits considered “strong” or “aggressive”—those characterizing “successful” men in the military or law enforcement. Is being more masculine and less feminine a way of circumventing predictable “weak” stereotypes? With these ideals still part of the vernacular, the reason women fall short of equal footing in the workplace is understandable. However, women are considered superior in some perceived traits. A 2008 poll by the Pew Research Center ranked leadership traits in which 80 percent of respondents believed compassion was more present in women compared with 5 percent who said it was more present in men.⁸ For creativity, women received 62 percent of the vote versus 11 percent for men. For honesty, women received 50 percent compared to 20 percent for men. In the eight ranked categories, women surpassed men in five, were even with men in two (ambitious and hardworking), and were only considered less than men in the decisive category.⁹ However, the survey goes on to say, “The feminist rallying cry that women have to work twice as hard to get half as far as

⁶ Brian Mitchell, *Women in the Military: Flirting with Disaster* (Washington, DC: Regnery Pub, 1998).

⁷ Ruth Howes and Michael R. Stevenson, *Women and the Use of Military Force* (Boulder, CO: L. Rienner Publishers, 1993).

⁸ Paul Taylor et al., “A Paradox in Public Attitudes: Men or Women: Who’s the Better Leader?,” Pew Research Center, 2008, <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2008/08/25/men-or-women-whos-the-better-leader/>.

⁹ Taylor et al.

men in their careers finds some statistical support from this survey, at least with regard to leadership evaluations.”¹⁰ This is supported by the survey results, which showed that respondents think women are more emotional and manipulative than men.¹¹ The data provides some quantitative evidence to back up the claim that women need to work harder just to be seen as equal to men in terms of leadership potential and career advancement. The emotional and manipulative stereotypes about women reinforce this gap.

How women develop personality traits, even in the early stages of their lives, inflects how they succeed in the workplace. And this dynamic is gendered from the start. For example, Alicia E. Kaufmann argues that women develop their professional direction from their fathers more than their mothers, requiring women to identify more with the masculine model.¹² Kauffman concludes, “Female managers strive to reach positions of power and authority by identifying with men. By doing this, they attempt to show their fathers that they have learned their lessons.”¹³ Traditional family gender roles shape women to succeed by adhering to masculine norms, rather than being able to embrace more feminine qualities. This makes it harder for women to advance in the workplace based on their own merits rather than mimicking male traits.

In a study of female boxers, Christine Mennesson finds, “Most of the boxers indicated that they had identified with masculine role models during childhood.”¹⁴ Women develop their identities based on a combination of familial and external relationships and adopt masculine traits to become “tough.” Additionally, in her dissertation “Gender Identity Development of Women in the U.S. Army,” Marshelle Machtan says, “Women who enter occupations that are male dominant, such as the military, often undergo identity

¹⁰ Taylor et al., 8.

¹¹ Taylor et al., 8.

¹² Alicia Kaufmann, *Changing Female Identities: Decisions and Dilemmas in the Workplace* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2011), <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230348585>.

¹³ Kaufmann.

¹⁴ Christine Mennesson, “‘Hard’ Women and ‘Soft’ Women: The Social Construction of Identities among Female Boxers,” *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 35, no. 1 (2000): 21–33, <https://doi.org/10.1177/101269000035001002>.

adjustments to gain acceptance and success in their new environments.”¹⁵ In other words, being tough is essential to becoming part of the “boy’s club.” Debra Parkinson, Alyssa Duncan, and Frank Archer used surveys, interviews, and focus groups to determine that women experience challenges in Australia’s fire and emergency services careers. They find that women have issues “related to sexism, career penalties not faced by men for family responsibilities, and assumptions of women helping other women’s careers.”¹⁶ While women face ongoing barriers to achieving leadership roles due to gender bias and discrimination, cultivating strong management that actively challenges male privilege, skewed merit conceptions, and promotes gender equity through education and structural change is key to dismantling obstacles and creating a fairer, more inclusive workplace.¹⁷

And it is no surprise that sexism is still alive and well in many career choices, even in the 21st century. Sometimes, this dynamic is presented as zero-sum—or them vs. us. In this connection, for instance, Martin van Creveld writes:

By definition, the more women enter any professional field, institution, or branch of service, the fewer men will remain in it. The fewer men remain, the more its prestige and the economic rewards it can command will be compromised. The more prestige and economic rewards it can command are compromised, the fewer men it will attract.¹⁸

For van Creveld, then, the manly profession of soldiering is about to be feminized beyond all recognition, though, tellingly he has no evidence to clarify how this development might affect readiness, or effectiveness, or anything else that actually matters in or to the national defense. At best (or least worst), he is fussing about the aesthetics of a national defense force. On the other hand, his work could be read as a plea for a gendered set-aside—even

¹⁵ Marshelle Machtan, “Gender Identity Development of Women in the U.S. Army” (PhD diss., Walden University, 2019), ProQuest.

¹⁶ Debra Parkinson, Alyssa Duncan, and Frank Archer, “Barriers and Enablers to Women in Fire and Emergency Leadership Roles,” *Gender in Management: An International Journal* 34, no. 2 (2019): 78–93, <https://doi.org/10.1108/GM-07-2017-0090>.

¹⁷ Parkinson, Duncan, and Archer.

¹⁸ Martin van Creveld, “Military Women Are Not the Cure, They Are the Disease,” Martin van Creveld (blog), November 24, 2016, <http://www.martin-van-creveld.com/military-women-not-cure-disease/>.

though men may or may not do the job best, they should be allowed to retain their monopoly on it, because where else would they go?

Richard Eichenberg studies the reactions of men and women to various wars. As the wars become less theoretical, he argues, women become less accepting of using force, even in collaboration with allied forces. According to Eichenberg, “To the extent that troop commitments pose greater risks of casualties, this pattern would seem to confirm earlier research findings that a significant reason for gender differences on issues of military force is the greater sensitivity of women to the human costs of conflict.”¹⁹ In general, he avers, women dislike the idea of fighting as a solution to the conflict, perhaps one of the many reasons for reluctant acceptance in the workplace, especially in jobs that stereotypically require “toughness.”²⁰ This research indicates that as the tangible costs of risks of war become more evident, women tend to be more averse to the use of force. This suggests that women have a greater reluctance towards violence and consideration of human impact, which, in turn, explains gender differences in conflict resolution.

Sexism is another reason why equality in the workplace remains elusive; people perceive occupations as “gendered,” meaning characteristically more masculine or feminine. Dana Britton argues that the “gendering” of organizations and occupations is a barrier to finding equality in the workplace.²¹ She posits that some professions—law, for instance—are gendered based on the idea that practitioners must be aggressive and assertive, as opposed to soft and emotional.²² This presumption makes litigation a masculine, and therefore gendered, occupation.

2. Use of Force

In law enforcement circles, there is no one specific definition for the “use of force.” However, in the 2001 report titled *Police Use of Force in America*, the International

¹⁹ Richard C. Eichenberg, “Gender Differences in Public Attitudes toward the Use of Force by the United States, 1990–2003,” *International Security* 28, no. 1 (2003): 110–41.

²⁰ Eichenberg.

²¹ Dana Britton, “The Epistemology of the Gendered Organization,” *Gender & Society* 14, no. 3 (June 2000): 418–34, <https://doi.org/10.1177/089124300014003004>.

²² Britton.

Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) defined force “as that amount of effort required by police to compel compliance from an unwilling subject.”²³ The IACP takes the definition a step further in explaining “excessive” force stating it is “the application of an amount and/or frequency of force greater than that required to compel compliance from a willing or unwilling subject.”²⁴ The IACP used these definitions while compiling information for its 2001 report, which examined data collected regarding instances of physical, chemical, impact, electronic, and firearms use of force.

In 2017, the IACP convened multiple leaders in law enforcement to collaborate on the *National Consensus Policy on Use of Force*.²⁵ This policy provides a framework for law enforcement agencies to develop, adjust, and enhance their current use of force policies. The use of force is further defined by the idea of “objective reasonableness” as determined from the case of *Graham v. Connor* (1989). In *Graham v. Connor*, the United States Supreme Court (USSC) outlined “objective reasonableness” as a standard that should be used under the Fourth Amendment when it comes to excessive force by law enforcement.²⁶ The Court further stipulated “that reasonableness must be judged from the perspective of a reasonable officer on the scene, not based on hindsight, and should take into account the fact that police officers are often forced to make split-second decisions about the degree of force to use in a particular situation.”²⁷

The perception of police use of force among Americans can vary greatly, often reflecting the diversity of the population. Citizens of the United States have varying experiences, beliefs, backgrounds, and knowledge which can develop their acuity. However,

²³ *Police Use of Force in America 2001*, (Alexandria, VA: International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2001), accessed July 13, 2023, <https://www.theiacp.org/sites/default/files/2018-08/2001useofforce.pdf>.

²⁴ International Association of Chiefs of Police.

²⁵ *National Consensus Policy on Use of Force*, (Alexandria, VA: International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2017), https://www.theiacp.org/sites/default/files/all/n-o/National_Consensus_Policy_On_Use_Of_Force.pdf.

²⁶ Darrell L. Ross, “An Assessment of *Graham v. Connor*, Ten Years Later,” *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management* 25, no. 2 (2002): 294–318, <https://doi.org/10.1108/13639510210429383>.

²⁷ Ross.

there is a prevailing assumption that such force is predominately exerted by policemen, highlighting the disproportionate influence of gender within discourse on law enforcement.

The use of force framework provides guidance to law enforcement officers on what type of force is an appropriate response to an action of a subject that is being stopped or taken into custody. The Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) in Washington, DC, has a robust policy regarding members' use of force. In General Order 901.07 (Use of Force), there is a framework that details the four categories of "perceived threat" and the force response that is appropriate for the perceived threat.²⁸ The four categories are passive resister, active resister, threatening assailant, and active assailant. With each category, the level of perceived threat increases. The perceived threat is a generalization as not every police officer will perceive the threat the same, which is why "objective reasonableness" is so important.

For each level of perceived threat, there is a force response that corresponds—control holds, compliance techniques, defensive tactics, and deadly force. Control holds are the lowest level of force and include firm grips or empty hand controls. Compliance techniques include tactics that produce general pain or discomfort and also include the use of oleoresin capsicum (OC) spray, takedowns, or wrist locks. Defensive tactics are "all force options other than deadly force" and include Armament Systems and Procedures (ASP) baton strikes and electronic control devices (ECDs).²⁹ And deadly force "shall only be used if the member reasonably believes that deadly force is immediately necessary to protect the member or another person from the threat of serious bodily injury or death."³⁰ All law enforcement agencies have some use-of-force policy that provides guidelines to the members regarding the use of force in a law enforcement capacity.

The Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) in Los Angeles, California has a similar use of force policy to MPD. Its five-page policy is written out in Department Manual Volume

²⁸ "Use of Force General Order – MPD," Metropolitan Police Department, accessed April 21, 2023, <https://columbo.mpdconline.com/directive/directiveById/generalOrder/3190000>.

²⁹ Metropolitan Police Department.

³⁰ Metropolitan Police Department.

I, section 556.10: “Policy on the Use of Force.”³¹ The policy describes the importance of de-escalation, utilizes the term “objectively reasonable,” and states that deadly force may be necessary “in defense of human life.”³² The policy also speaks to the use of verbal warnings, proportionality, use of force (non-deadly and deadly), warning shots, and shooting at or from a moving vehicle. It also very specifically defines objectively reasonable using the legal standard as written in *Graham v. Connor*. Their policy is filled with definitions and terms but does not provide direction as to what use of force is appropriate for a specific level of resistance by a subject.

The Policing Project is an organization of attorneys, community activists, and advocates based at the New York University School of Law that helps pass legislation involving police accountability. The Policing Project reviewed LAPD’s Use of Force policy and found several positive points within the document. However, they had some concerns as well. One point was that the policy of LAPD discusses how a use of force is evaluated after it occurs instead of providing guidance about whether force (specifically deadly force) should be used in the first place. Another concern was that the policy interchanges “objective reasonableness” with “Los Angeles Police Officer with similar training and experience”.³³

The Chicago Police Department (CPD) in Chicago, Illinois has an extensive use-of-force policy that details procedures, definitions, times when the use of force is authorized (including the “objectively reasonable” definition), prohibitions on firearms use, and de-escalation tactics. The policy also includes valuable information regarding the “Principles of Force Mitigation” even before describing when specific force can be used on resistive subjects.³⁴ This policy was written in 2017 after an in-depth report was released by the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) Civil Rights Division and United States Attorney’s Office

³¹ “LAPD Use of Force Policy,” Los Angeles Police Department, accessed April 22, 2023, <https://lapdonlinestrgeacc.blob.core.usgovcloudapi.net/lapdonlinemedia/2021/05/Special-Order-No-23-556.10-Revised.pdf>.

³² Los Angeles Police Department.

³³ “Policing Project Comment in Response to the LAPD’s Revised Use of Force Policy,” The Policing Project, accessed April 22, 2023, <https://www.policingproject.org/lapd-uof-comment>.

³⁴ “Chicago Use of Force Policy,” Chicago Police Department, accessed April 22, 2023, https://home.chicagopolice.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/G03-02_Use-of-Force_TBD.pdf.

Northern District of Illinois in January 2017.³⁵ The report acknowledged that officer safety was vital, that officers had the right to defend themselves, and that the city of Chicago had taken steps to improve the guidelines by which officers are allowed to use force. The report still found CPD did not protect citizens from excessive force issues. The DOJ and “...we found reasonable cause to believe the CPD has engaged in a pattern of practice of unreasonable force in violation of the Fourth Amendment and that the deficiencies in CPD’s training, supervision, accountability, and other systems have contributed to that pattern or practice.”³⁶

Many police departments have instituted a requirement of officers described as the “Duty to Intercede.” MPD adopted a program called Active Bystandership for Law Enforcement (ABLE). This program was developed by The Center for Innovations in Community Safety in partnership with Sheppard Mullin, an international law firm.³⁷ This program was created “to prepare officers to successfully intervene to prevent harm and to create a law enforcement culture that supports peer intervention”.³⁸ ABLE is the next step in peer intervention training that expounded on the Ethical Policing Is Courage (EPIC) program developed by the New Orleans Police Department and other partners in 2014.³⁹ In January 2022, California Assembly Bill (AB) 26 went into effect. The bill defines “an officer’s duty to intercede when they observe a potential use of excessive force by another officer” and is utilized by the LAPD as their directive regarding an officer’s duty to intercede.⁴⁰ The “Duty To Intervene and Report” is explicitly written in the use of force policy of CPD. Using words like “obligated,” “notifying,” “retaliation prohibited,” and “accuracy and candor” indicate that CPD has elevated their obligations to ensure that officers intercede when excessive force is observed.

³⁵ “Investigation of CPD by DOJ,” Department of Justice, accessed April 22, 2023, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/file/925846/download>.

³⁶ Department of Justice.

³⁷ “Active Bystandership for Law Enforcement (ABLE) Project,” Georgetown Law, accessed April 22, 2023, <https://www.law.georgetown.edu/cics/able/>.

³⁸ Georgetown Law.

³⁹ Georgetown Law.

⁴⁰ “LAPD Use of Force Revision,” Los Angeles Police Department, accessed April 22, 2023, <https://lapdonlinestrgeacc.blob.core.usgovcloudapi.net/lapdonlinemedia/2021/12/Policy-Use-of-Force-Revised.pdf>.

C. REVIEW OF HIGH-PROFILE CASES IN THE UNITED STATES

High-profile incidents involving police use of force have emerged as significant focal points in the ongoing discourse about law enforcement practices in the United States and around the world. These incidents, often involving fatal outcomes or serious harm, gain considerable public attention due to their severity, the individuals involved, and the broader societal and political context in which they occur. Media coverage, including video footage and social media sharing, often amplifies the impact of these incidents, bringing them to the forefront of public consciousness and sparking wide-ranging discussions and reactions. Notably, they have highlighted systemic issues within law enforcement. While racial disparities often are at the forefront, the topic of gender rarely plays into the discourse.

1. Rodney King

Police brutality is not new to the American vernacular though it has increased in frequency, at least in the perception of frequency through the use of social media. One of the earliest memories of police brutality occurred on March 3, 1991, when officers from the LAPD beat Rodney King after he had been found driving at high speeds on the highway. The initial pursuit was started when California Highway Patrol (CHP) units observed King operating a white Hyundai at speeds they claimed were near or in excess of 100 miles per hour.⁴¹ The pursuit lasted approximately ten minutes and when King finally stopped, LAPD and CHP conducted a “felony stop” procedure, directing the two passengers and King to exit the vehicle.⁴² The two passengers exited without incident, though they both made claims the following day that they had been kicked in the head. King exited the vehicle and was given loud verbal commands to get on the ground. King did not immediately follow orders and some of the twenty-three officers on the scene claimed they felt threatened by his 6’5,” 225-pound stature.⁴³ And several officers began hitting King with their batons after the taser that was deployed did not seem to take effect.

⁴¹ “Report of the Independent Commission on the Los Angeles Police Department,” Independent Commission on the Los Angeles Police Department, 1991, https://michellawyers.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Report-of-the-Independent-Commission-on-the-LAPD-re-Rodney-King_Reduced.pdf.

⁴² Independent Commission on the Los Angeles Police Department.

⁴³ Independent Commission on the Los Angeles Police Department.

George Holliday was an uninvolved citizen who happened to see the assault occurring and had intentions of sharing the footage with LAPD.⁴⁴ Holliday claims that he made attempts to contact the LAPD to find out the condition of the person involved in the traffic stop, however, the officer answering the call seemed dismissive and did not seem to have any intention to review the incident further. Due to the lack of interest from the LAPD officer, Holliday provided the video to a Los Angeles new channel, KTLA, which then released it to the rest of the world.⁴⁵

Four of the twenty-three officers that were on the scene of the Rodney King beating were indicted for various crimes at the state level. They had federal civil charges brought against them after they were acquitted of the original criminal charges.⁴⁶ The state acquittals led to some of the most devastating civil unrest in American history.

2. Michael Brown

On August 9, 2014, Ferguson Police Department Police Officer Darren Wilson shot and killed Michael Brown. Mr. Brown was 18 years old. Officer Wilson observed Mr. Brown and another individual walking in the street moments after Officer Wilson heard a radio transmission regarding a “stealing in progress” call at the Ferguson Market and Liquor.⁴⁷ The radio transmission indicated that an individual whose description matched that of Mr. Brown, had stolen multiple packs of cigarettes from the store at approximately 11:52 a.m. and then left the store.⁴⁸ Based on Officer Wilson’s account of the incident, he observed that Mr. Brown had cigarettes in his hand, verbally told both Mr. Brown and the other individual to go to the sidewalk, then parked his police cruiser in a manner that stopped Mr. Brown and the other

⁴⁴ Independent Commission on the Los Angeles Police Department.

⁴⁵ Independent Commission on the Los Angeles Police Department.

⁴⁶ Robert Reinhold, “U.S. Jury Indicts 4 Police Officers In King Beating,” *New York Times*, August 6, 1992, <https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/books/98/02/08/home/rodney-indict.html>.

⁴⁷ “Department of Justice Report Regarding the Criminal Investigation into the Shooting Death of Michael Brown by Ferguson, Missouri Police Officer Darren Wilson” (official memorandum, Washington, DC: Department of Justice, March 4, 2015), https://permanent.fdlp.gov/gpo55759/doj_report_on_shooting_of_michael_brown.pdf.

⁴⁸ Department of Justice.

individual from walking further.⁴⁹ As Officer Wilson attempted to open the cruiser door to exit, “the door came into contact with Brown’s body and either rebounded closed or Brown pushed it closed.”⁵⁰ Mr. Brown then reached into Officer Wilson’s cruiser and a struggle ensued over Officer Wilson’s weapon.⁵¹ Officer Wilson shot his weapon twice, striking Mr. Brown in his right hand.⁵² Mr. Brown begins to flee on foot with Officer Wilson also on foot in pursuit until Mr. Brown turns around and walks back towards Officer Wilson.⁵³ Officer Wilson shoots toward Mr. Brown approximately ten more times and Mr. Brown falls to the ground after receiving a gunshot wound to the head.⁵⁴ Officer Wilson never touches Mr. Brown after the final gunshots.⁵⁵

It was in May 2015 that the parents of Mr. Brown would file a lawsuit against the city claiming “a culture of pervasive hostility toward African-Americans led to the death of the 18-year-old.”⁵⁶ A settlement was reached in June 2015 after a grand jury failed to indict Officer Wilson and the Justice Department declined to prosecute him, stating, “evidence and credible witnesses supported Wilson’s version of the event.”⁵⁷

3. George Floyd

On May 25, 2020, officers from the Minneapolis Police Department responded to a call at a Minneapolis convenience store where the manager stated that Mr. George Floyd had utilized a counterfeit \$20 bill to pay for cigarettes.⁵⁸ Mr. Floyd was placed under arrest and was cooperative with the responding officers until they attempted to place him in a transport

⁴⁹ Department of Justice.

⁵⁰ Department of Justice, 6.

⁵¹ Department of Justice, 6.

⁵² Department of Justice.

⁵³ Department of Justice.

⁵⁴ Department of Justice.

⁵⁵ Department of Justice.

⁵⁶ Robert Patrick, “Settlement near in Civil Suit over Death of Michael Brown,” *TCA Regional News*, June 20, 2017, ProQuest.

⁵⁷ Patrick.

⁵⁸ “George Floyd Is Killed by a Police Officer, Igniting Historic Protests,” History, May 24, 2021, <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/george-floyd-killed-by-police-officer>.

vehicle; Mr. Floyd resisted getting into the vehicle, claiming he was claustrophobic.⁵⁹ The officers pulled Mr. Floyd from the vehicle and pinned him on the ground. Officer Derek Chauvin pinned Mr. Floyd by placing his knee on Mr. Floyd's neck for nine minutes and twenty-nine seconds, ignoring pleas from Mr. Floyd who was begging for his mother and stated multiple times "I can't breathe."⁶⁰

In May of 2021, four officers from the Minneapolis Police Department were indicted on federal civil rights charges. Derek Chauvin, Tou Thao, J. Alexander Kueng and Thomas Lane were the four former Minneapolis Police Department officers named in the indictment which alleges "while acting under color of law, willfully deprived Mr. Floyd of his constitutional rights, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 242."⁶¹ The second count of the indictment alleges that Thao and Kueng "willfully failed to intervene" and neglected to stop Chauvin from using unreasonable force on Mr. Floyd.⁶² A third indictment claims that all four officers knew Mr. Floyd was in medical distress and failed to provide aid, depriving Mr. Floyd of his constitutional right "to be free from a police officer's deliberate indifference to his serious medical needs."⁶³

4. Duante Wright

On April 11, 2021, Officer Kim Potter of the Brooklyn Center Police Department was involved in a traffic stop, where she shot and killed Daunte Wright, a twenty-year-old black male after he attempted to flee from the initial traffic stop.⁶⁴ Officer Potter and her trainee

⁵⁹ History.

⁶⁰ History.

⁶¹ "Four Former Minneapolis Police Officers Indicted on Federal Civil Rights Charges for Death of George Floyd; Derek Chauvin Also Charged in Separate Indictment for Violating Civil Rights of a Juvenile," Department of Justice, Office of Public Affairs, May 7, 2021, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/four-former-minneapolis-police-officers-indicted-federal-civil-rights-charges-death-george>.

⁶² Department of Justice, Office of Public Affairs.

⁶³ Department of Justice, Office of Public Affairs.

⁶⁴ Sravasti Dasgupta, "Kim Potter Trial: Who Is the Former Minnesota Officer and Why Did She Shoot Daunte Wright?," *The Independent*, December 23, 2021, <https://advance-lexis-com.libproxy.nps.edu/document?crd=75fa968f-b1ca-4452-8a9b-9bf7988d2e45&pddocfullpath=%2Fshared%2Fdocument%2Fnews%2Furn%3AcontentItem%3A64C8-NCB1-DY4H-K3B4-00000-00&pdsourcetype=&pdcontentcomponentid=382507&pdmfid=1516831&pdisurlapi=true>.

initiated a traffic stop on Mr. Wright's vehicle after they observed minor traffic offenses including expired registration and an air freshener hanging from the vehicle's rearview mirror.⁶⁵ During the traffic stop, it was determined that Mr. Wright was wanted on a warrant for an unrelated weapons offense.⁶⁶ Officers attempted to place Mr. Wright in handcuffs, however, he resisted and got back into his vehicle at which time, Officer Potter yelled "I'm going to tase you. Taser. Taser. Taser" at which point she discharged a single shot into Mr. Wright's side from her firearm, not her taser.⁶⁷

At the time of the shooting, Officer Potter was forty-eight years old and a twenty-six-year veteran of the Brooklyn Center Police Department with extensive firearms, taser, and de-escalation training.⁶⁸ She was charged with first and second-degree manslaughter and found guilty, though the jury did struggle to come to a unanimous verdict.⁶⁹ Presumably, the challenge for the members of the jury surrounded the fact that Officer Potter mistakenly shot Mr. Wright, intending to use her taser to stop him from fleeing the traffic stop. Officer Potter resigned from the police department and was sentenced to two years in prison.

Indeed, an analysis of these high-profile police use of force incidents reveals that the Duante Wright case stands out as the only one among the mentioned instances that involved a policewoman. Kim Potter, the officer who shot Wright, claimed she mistook her gun for a taser. This case serves to highlight the broader issue of police training and the protocols followed during high-stress encounters, issues that transcend gender.

However, it is important to note that the role of gender in policing extends beyond these specific incidents. Research suggests that women officers are generally less likely to use force and more likely to employ de-escalation techniques, while also being underrepresented in many police departments. The Wright case, therefore, while an exception among the high-

⁶⁵ Dasgupta.

⁶⁶ Vanessa Romo, Becky Sullivan, and Joe Hernandez, "Kim Potter Is Found Guilty of Manslaughter in the Death of Daunte Wright," NPR National, December 23, 2021, <https://www.npr.org/2021/12/23/1066012247/kim-potter-trial-daunte-wright>.

⁶⁷ Romo, Sullivan, and Hernandez.

⁶⁸ Romo, Sullivan, and Hernandez.

⁶⁹ Dasgupta, "Kim Potter Trial: Who Is the Former Minnesota Officer and Why Did She Shoot Daunte Wright?"

profile cases mentioned, could stimulate further examination of gender dynamics in law enforcement, the impact of officer gender on use-of-force incidents, and the potential benefits of increasing gender diversity in law enforcement. In the broader societal context, the gender of the involved officer in high-profile incidents might also influence public perception. Historically, policing has been male-dominated, and the common perception tends to associate the use of force with policemen.

D. RESEARCH DESIGN

This thesis uses several different research methods through a review of books, peer-reviewed journals, magazine articles, and statistical databases. First, I conducted a historical study to show the evolution of women in the workforce. This analysis shows how women cultivate identities to make themselves more acceptable in the force, specifically in law enforcement, and challenge stereotypes that assert women's place is in the home. It also demonstrates how women balance the ideals of being feminine with being "tough." Although law enforcement is not military combat, scholars consider it a paramilitary organization that, like military careers, perceives women as less capable for several reasons. According to Lisa Grossman, they view women as less competent than men physically because men are stronger, faster, and have more endurance.⁷⁰

Additionally, according to Susan Ehrlich Martin and Nancy Jurik, "When women enter occupations numerically dominated by men, they encounter much resistance from clients, coworkers, and supervisors. The women who remain in these occupations often are restricted to assignments and tasks designated for women."⁷¹ In these ways, biased thinking may prevent women from reaching equality in various career fields, especially law enforcement.

The study reviews the evolution of women in the workforce for an in-depth analysis of women in law enforcement. First, it identifies the obstacles in policing culture and identity that dissuade women from joining and show how men dominate law enforcement demographics

⁷⁰ Lisa Grossman, "The Right to Fight: Women at War," *New Scientist*, 2013.

⁷¹ Susan Ehrlich Martin and Nancy Jurik, *Doing Justice, Doing Gender: Women in Legal and Criminal Justice Occupations* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Incorporated, 2006), <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/ebook-nps/detail.action?docID=996376>.

throughout the ranks. Additionally, this thesis analyzes women in law enforcement and how they engage in use-of-force. Women comprise approximately 13 percent of law enforcement in the United States; however, they represent a significantly lower percentage among officers in excessive use-of-force incidents. Kimberly Lonsway, Michelle Wood, and Katherine Spillar claim, “The data indicate that female officers in large agencies are named in only 5 percent of citizen complaints for excessive force and only 2 percent of the sustained allegations of excessive force.”⁷² In this way, more women in law enforcement would minimize the use of force, specifically excessive force, a challenge many law enforcement agencies in the United States have not met.

Finally, I analyze statistical reports and primary sources from various law enforcement agencies and government sources in the United States and The Netherlands. The information compares the law enforcement agencies of the United States and The Netherlands, training of law enforcement and use-of-force analysis. The analysis and comparison provides further guidance and recommendations to foster and pursue more rigorous policies for recruiting and retaining women in law enforcement in the United States.

⁷² Kimberly Lonsway, Michelle Wood, and Katherine Spillar, “Officer Gender and Excessive Force,” *Law & Order* 50, no. 12 (December 2002): 60–66.

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II. GENDER AND THE USE OF FORCE

In the United States, incidents of police shootings are reported on a nearly daily basis in the news media. The Washington Post reported on August 17, 2023, about a Metropolitan Police Department officer shooting and critically wounding an adult man.⁷³ On August 16, 2023, a man with a knife was shot and killed in Mendota, California by a Mendota police officer.⁷⁴ The Louisville Courier Journal reported that a man was shot and killed by a SWAT officer in Jeffersonville, Indiana after a call to police to check on the man's mental health.⁷⁵ On August 14, 2023, Philadelphia police shot and killed a man sitting in his vehicle.⁷⁶ The list continues on a near-daily basis with 1,047 people shot and killed by police between August 2022 and 2023.⁷⁷

In 2015, from January 1–24, police in the United States shot and killed 59 people. In a 24-year span in England and Wales, police shot and killed 54 denizens of the United Kingdom in the course of their duties.⁷⁸ In March 2014, police in the United States shot and killed 97 people; in contrast, in Australia, law enforcement shot and killed 94 people in the 19 years from 1992 to 2011.⁷⁹ The statistics are jarring on their face. Still, the issue

⁷³ Emily Davies, "D.C. Police Officer Shoots, Critically Wounds Armed Man in Northwest," Washington Post, August 17, 2023, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2023/08/17/dc-police-shoot-man-northwest/>.

⁷⁴ Kellie Helton and Nic Garcia, "Man Shot and Killed by Mendota Police after Attacking Woman with Knife, Deputies Say," ABC30 Fresno, August 16, 2023, <https://abc30.com/mendota-police-shooting-investigation-marie-and-7th-suspect-shot/13660656/>.

⁷⁵ Keisha Rowe, "1 Dead after Officers Shoot Man during Standoff in Jeffersonville," The Courier-Journal, accessed August 19, 2023, <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/news/crime/2023/08/16/jeffersonville-police-shoot-kill-man-during-apartment-standoff/70601168007/>.

⁷⁶ Ellie Rushing, "Philly Police Changed Their Account of a Fatal Shooting by an Officer: What We Know about What Happened," <https://www.inquirer.com>, August 15, 2023, <https://www.inquirer.com/crime/kensington-philadelphia-police-fatal-shooting-eddie-irizarry-20230815.html>.

⁷⁷ "Police Shootings Database 2015–2023: Search by Race, Age, Department," Washington Post, accessed August 19, 2023, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/investigations/police-shootings-database/>.

⁷⁸ Jamiles Lartey, "By the Numbers: U.S. Police Kill More in Days than Other Countries Do in Years," *The Guardian*, June 9, 2015, sec. U.S. news, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/jun/09/the-counted-police-killings-us-vs-other-countries>.

⁷⁹ Lartey.

is not simply that police officers in the United States are more often involved in police brutality incidents than their counterparts in other countries. The issue is also about how law enforcement in the United States is a male-dominated profession and those men are the ones perpetrating the violence in policing.

When it comes to the uses of force, lawsuits, and citizen complaints, men in policing are more likely to use force, more likely to be the target of citizen complaints, and more likely to be financially responsible and at greater costs.⁸⁰ Women in larger police departments in the United States represent a mere five percent of excessive force complaints and only two percent of those are sustained complaints.⁸¹ In a ten-year period of analysis of the Los Angeles Police Department, from 1990 to 1999, some \$63.4 million was awarded to claimants against men in the LAPD who used excessive force.⁸² In stark contrast, women police officers were the subjects of only \$2.8 million in payouts.⁸³ Based on these rough statistics, men are 22-odd times more likely than women to engage in the kind of use of force that begets a lawsuit—in other words, a situation wherein citizens are significantly wounded or killed.

Police shootings of citizens in the United States occur at an alarming rate compared to other developed nations. It is an endemic issue that is not just a matter of overzealous policing. There is a clear gender component. The vast disparity in gender in law enforcement highlights how male-dominated police forces perpetuate a culture of violence. And while women have entered law enforcement in increasing numbers, they still face barriers including discrimination, sexual harassment, and marginalization in a masculine police culture.

⁸⁰ Mindy E. Bergman, Jessica M. Walker, and Vanessa A. Jean, “A Simple Solution to Policing Problems: Women!,” *Industrial and Organizational Psychology* 9, no. 3 (September 2016): 590–97, <https://doi.org/10.1017/iop.2016.59>.

⁸¹ Kim Lonsway, *Men, Women, and Police Excessive Force: A Tale of Two Genders* (Beverly Hills, CA: National Center for Women & Policing, 2002), https://web.archive.org/web/20180326211923/http://womenandpolicing.com/PDF/2002_Excessive_Force.pdf.

⁸² Lonsway.

⁸³ Lonsway.

A. WOMEN IN LAW ENFORCEMENT

To be sure, law enforcement is not the only profession that has an underrepresentation of women. Less than seven percent of the construction industry is women; just over three percent of the 318,000 firefighters in the United States are women; excluding flight attendants, women comprise just more than seven percent of the aviation industry.⁸⁴ The underrepresentation of women in law enforcement has particular ramifications for security in and of the United States. This section explores both the historical situation of women in law enforcement and the contemporary debate.

1. History

From a historical perspective, policing has been part of American culture since its inception. When the first colonialists arrived in what would later become the colonies, constables were the first law enforcement officers.⁸⁵ Their jobs were very local and more about keeping an eye out for fires that could destroy the whole village.⁸⁶ These protective patrols evolved into the night watch.⁸⁷ After slavery was introduced into America, and then came the slave patrols. For anyone who has a small understanding of slavery and what slave patrols were tasked with doing, it is not difficult to see how modern policing has evolved (or not evolved enough) from the early days of law enforcement.⁸⁸ The slave patrols used excessive force to squash uprisings and the use of excessive force in law enforcement still has not been gutted. Law enforcement in the United States started out as a group of men who used force to control a population and that is still evident in law enforcement today.

⁸⁴ Serah Louis, “25 Jobs with Virtually Zero Women Workers,” Moneywise, January 8, 2021, <https://moneywise.com/employment/jobs-with-fewest-women-workers>.

⁸⁵ Thomas Aiello, ed., *The Routledge History of Police Brutality in America* (Milton Park, UK: Routledge, 2023).

⁸⁶ Aiello.

⁸⁷ Aiello.

⁸⁸ National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, “The Origins of Modern Day Policing,” National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, accessed April 20, 2023, <https://naacp.org/find-resources/history-explained/origins-modern-day-policing>.

As the nineteenth century approached, modern-day policing in America was separated into two distinct camps, the North and the South.⁸⁹ The North's policing developed as cities began to develop. However, in the South, policing continued to be mostly about controlling slaves. Southern policing advanced more quickly as the police in the South began to carry weapons and wear uniforms.⁹⁰ Law enforcement units in the South grew from a few to a few hundred in membership.⁹¹ The tactics of southern police were not rooted in community policing and were more violent and less about personal rights as they continued to enforce Black Codes and prevent former slaves from having access to jobs and other general freedoms.⁹² It is no surprise that the issue of excessive force in American law enforcement continues to plague society.

Women have had roles in policing as far back as the mid-1800s in the United States, but early on, they were relegated to jobs such as “matrons,” looking after juvenile delinquents, handling secretarial duties for high-ranking male managers, or maintaining the women’s jails.⁹³ While recruiting women into police roles that aligned with traditional feminine qualities like caretaking initially increased female representation, it also confined women to narrow positions with little opportunity for leadership advancement. The Indianapolis Police Department made history in 1968 when they became the first department in the United States to assign women officers to conduct active patrol duties on the street after Winston Churchill became the police chief.⁹⁴ Liz Coffal and Betty Blakenship’s journey together started when they were in the Indianapolis Police Department Academy, learning the same things their male counterparts would be taught.⁹⁵

⁸⁹ Aiello, *The Routledge History of Police Brutality in America*.

⁹⁰ Aiello.

⁹¹ Aiello.

⁹² National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, “The Origins of Modern Day Policing.”

⁹³ Robert L. Snow, *Policewomen Who Made History: Breaking Through the Ranks* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Unlimited Model, 2010), <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/ebook-nps/detail.action?docID=662228>.

⁹⁴ Snow.

⁹⁵ Snow.

However, they wanted to also do the job that their male counterparts did and worked with one of the instructors at the academy, Churchill, prior to his becoming chief.⁹⁶ Churchill may have been as wise as his British namesake, in that he felt that women and men both brought benefits to policing, sometimes with different capabilities. Churchill stated “Women can often be more perceptive than men. Women can often pick up details that men miss. If a man, for example, says that a car is red, and a woman says it’s burgundy, you can believe it is burgundy. Women are also often more intuitive than men, and women can many times get witnesses to open up when men can’t.”⁹⁷ As police chief, Churchill spearheaded several innovative reforms in the Indianapolis Police Department beyond permitting women to serve as patrol officers, including enacting take-home cars and college incentive programs as well as establishing citizen ride-alongs.⁹⁸ However, the rest of the country watched and waited to see (and many likely hoped for) the failure of allowing women to serve in patrol.

Coffal and Blakenship’s struggled to gain acceptance within the male-dominated career field and were also concerned that their male counterparts would not provide backup or any other support.⁹⁹ Their concerns were understandable as they were all too aware that most people thought that policing was too dangerous for women and that women were too emotional to deal with the violence that often occurs in law enforcement. Coffal and Blakenship’s experiences highlight how the pervasive attitudes that policing was too dangerous and emotional for women created very real barriers for early female officers, causing isolation and impediments to performing their duties effectively without male support. Those pervasive attitudes are still prevalent in today’s law enforcement landscape.

Since 1968, there have been a few advancements for women in law enforcement including The Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972 legislated requirements for equality in the workforce

⁹⁶ Snow.

⁹⁷ Snow.

⁹⁸ Snow.

⁹⁹ Snow.

regardless of race, religion, or sex.¹⁰⁰ However, legislation does not necessarily change opinion, and women continue to struggle for equality. Women form 50 percent of the American population; however, they constitute only 13 percent of police officers—and they dwindle to single digits with regard to law enforcement management.¹⁰¹ The gap, or loss, is more than statistical. In a 1995 study published in the *American Journal of Police*, women were “consistently found to be more ‘professional’ than their male counterparts.”¹⁰² This observation holds especially in highly charged situations. Cuadrado says that “when violence is present, female officers have been shown to abate possible confrontations. Police departments may benefit if the public, in particular, were made more aware of these facts.”¹⁰³ Thus, for more than a quarter century, U.S. police departments have had good evidence that women do law enforcement differently—effectively but perhaps less violently than men.

2. Current Status

Statistically speaking, there are dramatic differences in law enforcement agencies within the United States when it comes to demographics. Agencies with higher percentages of women officers tend to be in larger, more urban cities. States that are more rural are still struggling to increase women in their police ranks. In 2014, West Virginia State Police troopers had 656 members, of which only 17 (2.59 percent) were women.¹⁰⁴ As of 2021, just seven percent of state troopers nationally were women.¹⁰⁵ These numbers are a stark contrast to the LAPD. In November 2021, the LAPD stated they had 170 women hired out

¹⁰⁰ “Civil Rights Act (1964),” National Archives, October 5, 2021, <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/civil-rights-act>.

¹⁰¹ Rianna Starheim et al., *Women in Policing: Breaking Barriers and Blazing a Path*. (Washington, DC: Office of Justice Programs, Department of Justice, 2019), <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/252963.pdf>.

¹⁰² Mary Cuadrado, “Female Police Officers: Gender Bias and Professionalism,” *American Journal of Police* 14, no. 2 (1995): 149–65, <https://doi.org/10.1108/07358549510102802>.

¹⁰³ Cuadrado.

¹⁰⁴ Amelia A. Pridemore, “Percentage of W.Va. Female Police Officers in Single Digits,” *Register-Herald*, January 24, 2009, https://www.register-herald.com/news/local_news/percentage-of-w-va-female-police-officers-in-single-digits/article_69cbfc14-01e5-51a2-956d-b94f92ca4ece.html.

¹⁰⁵ Lindsey van Ness, “Percentage of Women in State Policing Has Stalled Since 2000,” *Stateline* (blog), October 20, 2021, <https://pew.org/3G0XS4m>.

of their academy, nearly 27 percent of their academy class.¹⁰⁶ The Metropolitan Police Department in Washington, DC, is at 23 percent women in current sworn positions and recently had a recruit class that was 52 percent female.¹⁰⁷ The numbers appear promising, but they still do not reflect equity within the profession.

In March 2021, a coalition of police leaders, researchers, and professional organizations came together to create the 30x30 Initiative.¹⁰⁸ Founders Maureen McGough and Ivonne Roman brought these leaders together “to advance the representation and experiences of women in all ranks of policing across the United States and Canada.”¹⁰⁹ The law enforcement agencies that have signed the pledge for the 30x30 Initiative are looking at a variety of policies, programs, and procedural enhancements to increase women in their departments.¹¹⁰ The 30x30 Initiative highlights the growing recognition among police leadership that increasing women in law enforcement through targeted policies and programs is necessary to address gender equity issues, transform police culture, and improve community relations.

B. BARRIERS TO WOMEN IN LAW ENFORCEMENT

A significant amount of research supports the proposition that more women in law enforcement is a positive step for the profession, those who work within the profession, and the community in which they serve. In a study of the Chicago Police Department, it was found that “Female officers also use less force than males, a result that holds within all racial groups. These results suggest that diversity reforms can improve police treatment

¹⁰⁶ “Nearly 27% of New LAPD Officers Are Women, New Figures Show. But Progress Could Be Fleeting,” Daily News, accessed April 8, 2023, <https://www.dailynews.com/2022/12/06/nearly-27-of-new-lapd-officers-are-women-new-figures-show-but-progress-could-be-fleeting/>.

¹⁰⁷ Executive Office of the Mayor, “Mayor Bowser Announces Metropolitan Police Department’s 30x30 Initiative to Hire More Women as MPD Officers,” accessed April 8, 2023, <https://mayor.dc.gov/release/mayor-bowser-announces-metropolitan-police-departments-30x30-initiative-hire-more-women-mpd>.

¹⁰⁸ “30x30 Announces New Collaboration with Department of Justice to Advance Women in Policing,” 30x30, accessed August 19, 2023, <https://30x30initiative.org/resources/updates/30x30-announces-new-collaboration-with-department-of-justice-to-advance-women-in-policing/>.

¹⁰⁹ 30x30.

¹¹⁰ “About 30x30: A National Initiative,” 30x30, accessed April 9, 2023, <https://30x30initiative.org/about-30x30/>.

of minority communities.”¹¹¹ James P. McElvain and Augustine J. Kposowa conducted a study of 186 officer-involved shootings and found that “Male officers were more likely to shoot than female officers.”¹¹² In a survey conducted by the Pew Research Center in 2016, an analysis determined:

Gender is one of the best [predictors], this analysis finds. Male officers are more than twice as likely as female officers to have fired their weapon (30% vs. 11%). This relationship remains significant even after accounting for gender differences in job assignment, length of service, race, age, the size of the city and department they work for, and other factors.¹¹³

Diversity on the whole is beneficial because it “serves as a critically important tool to build trust with communities” says a 2016 report from the U.S. Department of Justice Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.¹¹⁴ The National Center for Women and Policing stated in 1997: “The positive impact of women in policing, including the reduction of police brutality, the increased efficacy in police response to domestic violence, and the increased emphasis on conflict resolution over force, mandate that we strive for gender balance in policing.”¹¹⁵ And yet the barriers to women in law enforcement persist with the largest barrier being “the attitudes and behavior” of men who are on the job.¹¹⁶ In other words, while research shows diversifying police forces with more women officers provides clear benefits like improved community relations and policing approaches, deep-rooted attitudes and actions of male-dominated police culture continue to impede progress toward

¹¹¹ Bocar A. Ba et al., “The Role of Officer Race and Gender in Police-Civilian Interactions in Chicago,” *Science* 371, no. 6530 (February 12, 2021): 696–702, <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.abd8694>.

¹¹² James P. McElvain and Augustine J. Kposowa, “Police Officer Characteristics and the Likelihood of Using Deadly Force,” *Criminal Justice and Behavior* 35, no. 4 (April 2008): 505–21, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854807313995>.

¹¹³ Rich Morin and Andrew Mercer, “A Closer Look at Police Officers Who Have Fired Their Weapon on Duty,” Pew Research Center, accessed August 20, 2023, <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2017/02/08/a-closer-look-at-police-officers-who-have-fired-their-weapon-on-duty/>.

¹¹⁴ Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, *Advancing Diversity in Law Enforcement* (Washington, DC: Department of Justice, 2016), <https://www.justice.gov/crt/case-document/file/900761/download>.

¹¹⁵ “Equality Denied: Status of Women in Policing, 1997,” National Center for Women and Policing, March 27, 2018, <https://web.archive.org/web/20180327214016/http://www.womenandpolicing.org/status.html>.

¹¹⁶ National Center for Women and Policing.

gender equity in law enforcement. The study further describes the areas that continue to challenge equality for women in policing, including, but are not limited to:

- Biased entry tests
- Widespread discrimination on the job
- Recruitment policies that favor men
- Escalating cost of police brutality
- Ineffective response to domestic violence
- Costly sexual harassment and sexual discrimination lawsuits.¹¹⁷

So, despite strong evidence that hiring more women improves policing, police departments continue relying on discriminatory practices and male-dominated culture that creates barriers to entry and advancement for women officers. This highlights the critical need for policing reforms targeting gender equity—not just increasing female recruitment, but also dismantling discriminatory systems and cultures of toxic masculinity that impede progress. Achieving a representative police force requires holistic transformation centered on inclusion.

Those challenges evolve further to include negative perceptions from male colleagues, employee practices that are not inclusive of women, and other harassment issues.¹¹⁸ Jennifer Lynn Gossett and Joyce E. Williams found women police officers perceived discrimination from a variety of sources including male officers, supervisors, administrators, and citizens.¹¹⁹ The women police officers did not all feel that they had been discriminated against. Ten of the twenty-seven women interviewed for the report

¹¹⁷ National Center for Women and Policing.

¹¹⁸ Jennifer Lynn Gossett and Joyce E. Williams, “Perceived Discrimination among Women in Law Enforcement,” *Women & Criminal Justice* 10, no. 1 (1998): 53–75, https://doi.org/10.1300/J012v10n01_03.

¹¹⁹ Gossett and Williams.

stated they did not feel discriminated against.¹²⁰ Comments made included that discrimination was an “easy excuse” or that “women who say there is discrimination are crybabies.”¹²¹ These comments provide some insight into how women are not only discriminated by their male colleagues but possibly other women or that some women may not have the same experience as other women in their department.

Another barrier that women often face happens almost immediately at the beginning of their law enforcement careers when they enter the police academy. The Department of Justice released a bulletin in July 2016 that highlighted various aspects of state and local law enforcement training academies.¹²² Eighty-six percent of recruits who started law enforcement academies during 2011–2013 completed their training successfully.¹²³ For those who did not complete their training, men voluntarily quit the process 36 percent of the time as compared to women who voluntarily quit 30 percent.¹²⁴ When it came to not meeting physical standards, men failed these requirements 12 percent of the time, whereas women failed nearly 17 percent of the time.¹²⁵ At the same time, men fail out academically 24 percent to women failing academically 17 percent of the time.¹²⁶ These statistics reveal how police academy training in the United States has traditionally emphasized physical standards that disadvantage women, reflecting systemic biases built into law enforcement. This demonstrates the need to reevaluate training protocols that focus on more than just the physical standards needed to be a good police officer.

As policing evolves from a historically aggressive style of enforcement to a more communications/community-based profession, there is less of a need to prove and test the

¹²⁰ Gossett and Williams.

¹²¹ Gossett and Williams.

¹²² Brian A. Reaves, *State and Local Law Enforcement Training Academies, 2013*, NCJ 249784 (Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2021).

¹²³ Reaves.

¹²⁴ Reaves.

¹²⁵ Reaves.

¹²⁶ Reaves.

physical capabilities of officers.¹²⁷ Physical requirements among police academies are not consistent across states and do not accurately test the physical demands of patrol officers.¹²⁸ The fitness examinations at police academies evaluate recruits on measures of stamina, muscular power, and dexterity.¹²⁹ While requirements vary, one standard test is a timed 1.5 mile run, which may test stamina, but is not necessary in most patrol environments as officers rarely chase a suspect on foot for that long. This inconsistency in testing requirements resulting in women in some academies being more physically qualified than men in other academies.¹³⁰

C. CONCLUSION

Law enforcement was established by men who wanted to ensure other men followed the rules. The overarching ideal has not changed too much in the couple of hundred years policing has existed in the United States. Because it was started by men, the hegemonic masculinity of law enforcement continues on today. Hegemonic masculinity was defined by R.W. Connell as one of many different structured forms of masculinity “that legitimates unequal gender relations between men and women, between masculinity and femininity, and among masculinities.”¹³¹ The masculinity that comes with a strong, muscular, able body is presumed in policing to be more capable of doing the job. “Bodies are the determinant of competence, not only where physical force is actually required, such as in fights and struggles where police have to put ‘hands on’ suspects to make an arrest, but also in a myriad of other situations,” writes Louise Westmarland.¹³² This analysis

¹²⁷ Daryl Hoehne, “Pink and Blue: Barriers Women Face Entering Policing,” *TCNJ Journal of Student Scholarship* 23 (April 2021): 1–9.

¹²⁸ Reaves, *State and Local Law Enforcement Training Academies*, 2013, 2021.

¹²⁹ “How to Train for the Police Academy Physical Test,” Police1, accessed August 20, 2023, <https://www.police1.com/how-to-become-a-police-officer/articles/how-to-train-for-the-police-academy-physical-test-tpPWcMYKLhFcpoaF/>.

¹³⁰ Hoehne, “Pink and Blue: Barriers Women Face Entering Policing.”

¹³¹ James W. Messerschmidt, “The Salience of ‘Hegemonic Masculinity,’” *Men and Masculinities* 22, no. 1 (April 1, 2019): 85–91, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1097184X18805555>.

¹³² Louise Westmarland, “Putting Their Bodies on the Line: Police Culture and Gendered Physicality,” *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice* 11, no. 3 (2017): 301–17, <https://doi.org/10.1093/polic/pax019>.

further proves the police culture continues to be dominated by hegemonic masculinity The article further concludes that “the gendered female body is seen to have competencies around the treatment of women victims of physical and sexual assault as they can supposedly empathize...”¹³³

Policing as a whole is going through a major identity crisis as it struggles to balance on a thin-blue line between law enforcers and policing as a service to the community. In December 2014, President Barack Obama created a task force that would review several violent events between law enforcement and the citizens that police are entrusted to serve.¹³⁴ The task force would identify best practices for law enforcement agencies to implement. These best practices were intended to simultaneously reduce crime and build trust in the community. One of the major themes developed as a result of this task force was that policing culture had to change, to alter the warrior mentality into a guardian one. Changing the culture of policing was one of the primary goals under the first pillar of the recommendations: Building Trust and Legitimacy, and under this pillar, the task force specified that “Law enforcement agencies should strive to create a workforce that encompasses a broad range of diversity including race, gender, language, life experience, and cultural background to improve understanding and effectiveness in dealing with all communities.”¹³⁵

As the conversation around law enforcement tactics tries to define how police enforce laws, many use the comparison of guardians versus warriors. In the law enforcement arena, guardians are thought of as protecting the community whereas warriors are thought of as fighting crime.¹³⁶ Many feel that those characteristics do not need to be mutually exclusive when it comes to policing and should even be considered beneficial to

¹³³ Westmarland.

¹³⁴ The President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing, *Implementation Guide: Moving from Recommendations to Action* (Washington, DC: The President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015).

¹³⁵ The President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing, *Final Report of the President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing* (Washington, DC: President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015).

¹³⁶ “Can Policing Effectively Combine the Warrior and Guardian Mindsets?,” Brookings Technologies, December 6, 2021, <https://brookingstech.com/articles/can-policing-effectively-combine-the-warrior-and-guardian-mindsets/>.

be able to have both. David Blake wrote in his article “Guardian vs. Warrior: The many roles of a police officer” that cops are supposed to be a little bit of both guardian and warrior. He stated, “A cop is a servant who protects the public from evils (guardian) while also having the skill and courage to fight in battles (warrior).”¹³⁷ The conversation continues but still lacks a place for women who can be a valuable part of the law enforcement community because many of them have already developed a guardian/warrior mentality.

¹³⁷ David Blake, “Guardian vs. Warrior: The Many Roles of a Police Officer,” Police1, July 12, 2016, <https://www.police1.com/community-policing/articles/guardian-vs-warrior-the-many-roles-of-a-police-officer-CCFzmlww8ridVyq/>.

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III. THE UNITED STATES

As a nation still in its infancy compared to many older civilizations, the United States only embarked on its development a couple of hundred years ago. Since then, it has been on a unique journey of growth and transformation. From its humble beginnings, the nation rapidly evolved on both political and economic fronts but did not evolve as quickly in such areas as equality and gender roles. The role of women, especially in traditionally male-dominated fields like policing, exemplifies this transformative and slow process. The citizens may seem to call for a more equal and just society, but unfortunately, in policing, inclusivity and justice are still a long way from being achieved. The lack of inclusivity is even more obviously understood when examined through the lens of the traditional and conservative values that are part of the fabric of its society. Men were often seen as the primary breadwinners and providers, while women were expected to fulfill domestic and caregiving responsibilities.¹³⁸ These traditional gender norms were reinforced through societal and cultural influences, including media, education, and religious beliefs.¹³⁹ As traditional gender norms evolve, evaluating gender and the use of force in policing can change how law enforcement is viewed as a whole in today's society.

A. GENDER EVOLUTION IN THE UNITED STATES

The gender evolution in the United States has been slow in America. In 1950, women made up nearly 30 percent of the American workforce, and went to nearly 47 percent by 2000.¹⁴⁰ However, this increase did not occur in many male-dominated careers, including law enforcement. It was a long time after law enforcement was developed in the United States that women were allowed to become police officers. In the 100-plus years since women began working as police, the responsibilities that they are tasked with have

¹³⁸ “Gender Roles in Society | Definition & Examples” Study.com, accessed August 20, 2023, <https://study.com/learn/lesson/gender-roles-in-society-overview-examples-how-society-enforces-gender-roles.html>.

¹³⁹ Study.com.

¹⁴⁰ Mitra Toossi, “A Century of Change: The U.S. Labor Force, 1950–2050,” May 2002, <https://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2002/05/art2full.pdf>

slowly progressed from caretakers and “matrons” to more standard policing responsibilities.¹⁴¹ There is a national push to change the demographics in policing and with that a hope for a trend towards equality.¹⁴² With that push, there may be a change in the issue of excessive force used by police as women anecdotally talk more and fight less. This push for equality is, therefore, not simply about numbers but about changing the culture of police as a whole.

The feminist movement of the 20th century played a significant role in challenging traditional gender norms and advocating for gender equality and started long before the 19th Amendment of the Constitution was ratified.¹⁴³ Women’s suffrage began in Britain before settlers moved across the Atlantic Ocean to establish the American colonies.¹⁴⁴ The call for women’s equality, not specifically in political realms, but in financial aspects was initially started when Frances Wright left Britain after the Britain Owenite movement began.¹⁴⁵ Wright continued that struggle when she came to the US.¹⁴⁶ Since that time, women have continued their fight for access to education, employment opportunities, and reproductive rights, bringing attention to gender disparities and advocating for social and legal changes.

When the colonies broke away from British rule, the founding fathers created The Declaration of Independence, which explicitly states: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”¹⁴⁷

¹⁴¹ Ashlyn DeCruise-Fortune, “The Second Shift.” *Female Police Officers and the Struggle of Work/Life Balance and Promotion*, (PhD diss., NSU Florida, 2020), https://nsuworks.nova.edu/fse_etd/295/

¹⁴² 30x30, “About 30x30: A National Initiative.”

¹⁴³ Ellen Carol DuBois, “Outgrowing the Compact of the Fathers: Equal Rights, Woman Suffrage, and the United States Constitution, 1820–1878,” *Journal of American History* 74, no. 3 (1987): 836–62, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1902156>.

¹⁴⁴ DuBois.

¹⁴⁵ DuBois.

¹⁴⁶ DuBois.

¹⁴⁷ “The Declaration of Independence,” National Archives, October 30, 2015, <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration>.

The country still holds strong the undeniable truth that all men are created equal and that women are not part of that statement.

In the United States, the Constitution establishes the basic framework of American democracy and government. It separates powers across different branches, protects individual rights, allows for changes through amendments, and serves as the supreme law that all public officials swear to uphold. It was written in the late 1780s by men.¹⁴⁸ Women were not part of the creation of either of these documents that establish the basic framework of American democracy and makes proclamations against tyranny. There are several parts of the Constitution that provide some protection or equality in part, but not in whole. It was not until the Nineteenth Amendment was ratified in 1920 that women were given the right to vote.¹⁴⁹ The Fourteenth Amendment ensures that states are required to provide equal protection to their citizens under the law.¹⁵⁰ While there are amendments that have established equal protections, prohibited discrimination in voting rights, abolished slavery, and protected civil liberties for all citizens, there are large populations in the United States that still are not provided equality. Ongoing efforts to promote equal rights for minorities, women, and other groups continue to this day. The Constitution provides a foundation, but equal rights remain elusive, especially for women.

B. POLICING IN THE UNITED STATES

The evolution of gender roles in the United States has also significantly impacted the law enforcement field. Historically, policing was predominantly seen as a male profession, with women facing numerous barriers to entry and advancement.¹⁵¹ However, over the years, there has been a gradual increase in the representation of women in law

¹⁴⁸ Akhil Reed Amar, “Women and the Constitution,” *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy* 18, no. 2 (Spring 1995): 465–74.

¹⁴⁹ “19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: Women’s Right to Vote (1920),” National Archives, September 21, 2021, <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/19th-amendment>.

¹⁵⁰ United States Courts, “The 14th Amendment and the Evolution of Title IX,” United States Courts, accessed July 19, 2023, <https://www.uscourts.gov/educational-resources/educational-activities/14th-amendment-and-evolution-title-ix>.

¹⁵¹ Starheim et al., *Women in Policing*.

enforcement, challenging traditional gender roles within the profession.¹⁵² As societal perceptions about gender and work continue to evolve, more women have pursued careers in law enforcement, bringing diverse perspectives, skills, and approaches to the field. However, there is still much work to be done.

In December 2014, then-President Barack Obama created a task force of eleven members through an Executive Order in response to a long history of events between citizens and law enforcement officers that were often violent.¹⁵³ The President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing published an initial report that stated its mission, "The Task Force shall, consistent with applicable law, identify best practices and otherwise make recommendations to the President on how policing practices can promote effective crime reduction while building public trust."¹⁵⁴ This report provided a road map for many of the 18,000 law enforcement agencies in the United States.¹⁵⁵

While there were many points of implementation discussed in the report, including steps that local government, law enforcement, and the public can do, there was very little mention of balancing the scale of gender in law enforcement. This lack of acknowledging the importance of gender diversity is also seen in many reports regarding police use of force. While the demographics of individuals who are the subject of the use of force are described in detail, there are few reports that describe the demographics of the law enforcement officer(s) involved. Not addressing the importance of demographics is an assumption that all police are created equal, which is inaccurate, to say the least. Training, experience, resources, and gender all play a vital role in how and when force is used by the police.¹⁵⁶ Recognizing the importance of diversity and gender balance within law

¹⁵² Starheim et al.

¹⁵³ The President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, *The President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing Implementation Guide: Moving from Recommendations to Action*.

¹⁵⁴ The President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing.

¹⁵⁵ The President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing.

¹⁵⁶ Ben Stickle, "A National Examination of the Effect of Education, Training and Pre-Employment Screening on Law Enforcement Use of Force," 2016.

enforcement agencies is crucial to promoting effective crime reduction and building public trust.

The importance of diversity within law enforcement is vital as the United States continues to become an increasingly multicultural country. For example, Christine Sereni-Massinger and Nancy Wood state: “Law enforcement officers are experiencing greater challenges within their communities as a result of the growth of multiculturalism.”¹⁵⁷ Having similar personal identities increases the opportunity for positive relationships with those within the community. The importance of cultural diversity in a police department is often promoted as new recruits highlight their interest in policing their own communities. For example, Andrea M. Headley states that the research “highlights the importance of racial, ethnic, and residential identity insofar as they provide a way for officers to understand and relate to the community in a way that acknowledges the community’s way of life.”¹⁵⁸ There was no mention in this study as to whether gender would also play a part in developing officers’ identity, making them more relatable to the community that they serve—though officer demographics may have been the mentality behind women being assigned positions in juvenile detention when they first started entering the law enforcement profession. As the United States population becomes more diverse, police departments need to reflect that diversity in order to effectively serve their communities. Officers who share racial, ethnic, gender, or residential identities with community members can better understand and relate to those they police.

Law enforcement in the United States receives far less training than law enforcement in other countries (see Figure 1).¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ Christine Sereni-Massinger and Nancy Wood, “Improving Law Enforcement Cross Cultural Competencies through Continued Education,” *Journal of Education and Learning* 5, no. 2 (April 4, 2016): p258, <https://doi.org/10.5539/jel.v5n2p258>.

¹⁵⁸ Andrea M. Headley, “Representing Personal and Professional Identities in Policing: Sources of Strength and Conflict,” *Public Administration Review* 82, no. 3 (2022): 396–409, <https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.13473>.

¹⁵⁹ The Institute for Criminal Justice Training Reform, “Not Enough Training,” The Institute for Criminal Justice Training Reform, accessed July 19, 2023, <https://www.trainingreform.org/not-enough-training>.

Hours of police training required in other countries.



Figure 1. Police Training Time Requirements in Several Countries¹⁶⁰

A bulletin released in 2021 by the U.S. Department of Justice, Officer of Justice Programs shows that basic training for police officers averages approximately 840 total hours of training.¹⁶¹ Of the recruits who enter basic training, only one in seven are women.¹⁶² The limited training time and low female representation point to areas where American policing could be strengthened through reform. The limited training time for police recruits and the small proportion of women starting basic training highlight opportunities for improving policing through reforms. Increasing training could provide officers with enhanced skills for serving communities while boosting female recruitment and retention could lead to police forces that are more representative and responsive. Implementing such changes would be positive steps toward strengthening law enforcement and community relations.

While the duration of training is important to the success of the training, what is being taught at police academies is also a vital component. Allison T. Chappell asserts,

¹⁶⁰Source: The Institute for Criminal Justice Training Reform.

¹⁶¹ Brian A. Reaves, *State and Local Law Enforcement Training Academies, 2013*, NCJ 249784 (Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2021).

¹⁶² Reaves.

Traditional training prepared officers for a narrow focus on law-enforcement duties, rather than the more generalist approach that community policing entails. Traditional training focused on physical activities, such as firearms training, physical training, defensive tactics, and driving. Traditional training also included some knowledge areas such as law, arrest procedures, traffic enforcement, and officer safety. Neglected were areas such as communications, diversity, problem-solving, and police-community relations.¹⁶³

This highlights how police academy curricula have traditionally prioritized physical skills over knowledge and abilities needed for community relations and problem-solving. The limited training provided to police officers implies they may lack adequate preparation to effectively engage with and understand the various communities they are tasked with serving. The training gap emphasizes the need to reevaluate programs to ensure officers gain the full range of competencies required for contemporary policing. Outdated, narrow training risks producing officers lacking the skills to build public trust and effectively serve all members of the community.

In 2013, the average hours each recruit spent in firearms training was 67, with 61 hours on defensive tactics, 21 hours on the use of force, and 16 hours on non-lethal weapons.¹⁶⁴ Contrarily, only nine hours were spent by each recruit on ethics and integrity, ten hours on professionalism, and six hours on stress prevention.¹⁶⁵ An additional important point from this report is that the main cause for recruits not successfully completing their basic training, other than requesting to withdraw, is related to academics (see Figure 2).¹⁶⁶ When not considering voluntarily withdrawing from the training, men failed to complete the training 36 percent of the time due to academics, whereas women failed to complete the training only 25 percent of the time due to academics.¹⁶⁷ Men also

¹⁶³ Allison T. Chappell, "Police Academy Training: Comparing across Curricula," *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management* 31, no. 1 (2008): 36–56, <https://doi.org/10.1108/13639510810852567>.

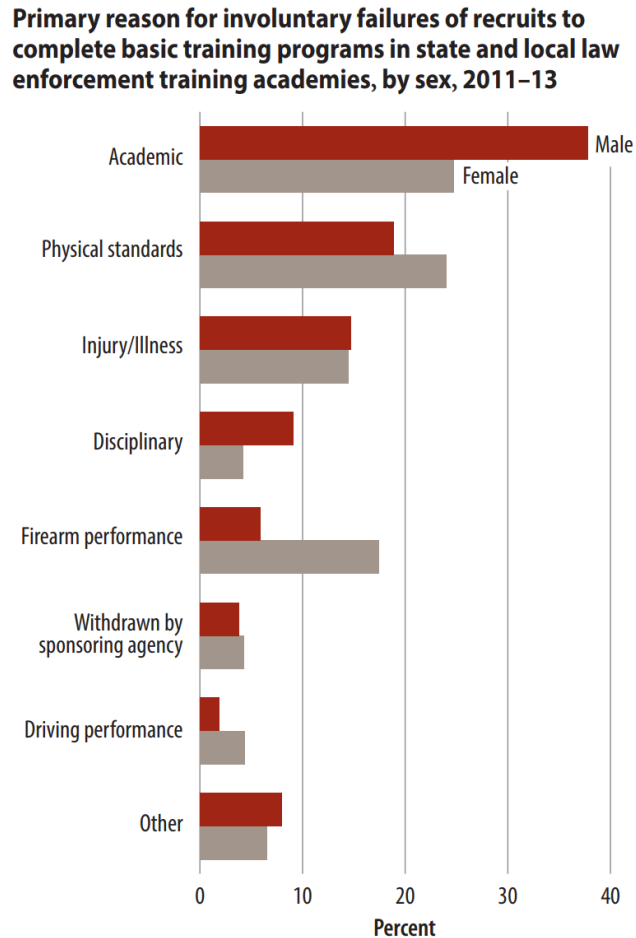
¹⁶⁴ Reaves, *State and Local Law Enforcement Training Academies*.

¹⁶⁵ Reaves.

¹⁶⁶ Reaves.

¹⁶⁷ Reaves.

fail out of basic training at more than double the rate as women for disciplinary issues.¹⁶⁸ The disproportionate focus on firearms and physical force tactics compared to stress management, ethics, and professionalism in police academy training, along with data showing men struggle more with academic and disciplinary issues, reveals how current programs emphasize masculine norms rather than a holistic approach.



Note: See appendix table 19 for estimates and standard errors.
Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Census of Law Enforcement Training Academies, 2013.

Figure 2. Primary Reasons Why Law Enforcement Recruits Fail Basic Training¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁸ Reaves.

¹⁶⁹ Source: Reaves, 13.

C. UNITED STATES USE OF FORCE

Although the use of force by law enforcement in the United States is a highly contested debate, there is no national resource that tracks the incidents that are debated. There are several open-source options for finding pieces of the use-of-force puzzle, however. The Washington Post created a website called “Policing in America” that provides multiple databases and blog posts that discuss a multitude of issues within American law enforcement including fatal shootings, the cost of police misconduct, police reform, and community oversight to name a few.¹⁷⁰ An organization called Campaign Zero created “Mapping Police Violence” because the organization believes that “Law enforcement agencies across the country are failing to provide us with even basic information about the lives they take.”¹⁷¹ The lack of comprehensive national data on police use of force incidents highlights the troubling lack of transparency and accountability around law enforcement violence against citizens. Independent efforts by media and advocacy groups to collect data piecemeal emphasize the public’s demand for accessible information and oversight of policing. This underscores the need for mandatory reporting and data collection on the use of force as part of required police reforms and promoting community trust.

The Federal Bureau of Investigations saw the lack of consistent information and created a database called the “National Use-of-Force Data Collection” which was launched in January 2019.¹⁷² The idea behind the data collection was to “offer a comprehensive view of the circumstances, subjects, and officers involved in such incidents nationwide.”¹⁷³ Unfortunately, this database may shut down due to a lack of participation

¹⁷⁰ “Policing in America,” Washington Post, accessed July 30, 2023, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/police-america/>.

¹⁷¹ “Mapping Police Violence,” Mapping Police Violence, accessed July 30, 2023, <https://mappingpoliceviolence.org/>.

¹⁷² “FBI Announces the Official Launch of the National Use-Of-Force Data Collection,” Federal Bureau of Investigation, November 20, 2018, <https://www.fbi.gov/news/press-releases/fbi-announces-the-official-launch-of-the-national-use-of-force-data-collection>.

¹⁷³ Federal Bureau of Investigation.

from law enforcement agencies nationally.¹⁷⁴ Ironically, there are several sources that list the incidents of police-involved uses of force, including the FBI's database, the Washington Post's Fatal Force, and Mapping Police Violence, most of them describe the demographics of the citizen involved in the shooting. However, there is no database that tracks the demographics of the police officers involved. Anecdotally, the police are generally identified through news sources, and more often than not men, rarely are officer-involved shootings involving women police officers.

What research has shown when looking at the reasons behind officers' use of force is that background information regarding each incident is vital to understanding why force was used. Within the background information, there is a variety of nuance that is not easily documented or understood. An involved officer's age, training, education, time in law enforcement, and previous history of use of force, are all factors that influence if and when an officer will use force.¹⁷⁵ As officers approach a subject which they may use force against, there are several factors officers consider which can increase the likelihood of using force, such as intoxication levels, aggressive demeanor, criminal history, and having a weapon.¹⁷⁶ While the intricacies of each use of force incident make analyzing the problem complex, comprehensive data collection on contributing factors like officer backgrounds and situational elements is essential to fully understanding when and why police violence occurs.

Research is limited when it comes to women law enforcement officers and how their presence has any effect on police officers who are men and how they react when justified in using force.¹⁷⁷ However, a study done by Hunter M. Boehme, Christi Metcalf,

¹⁷⁴ "DOJ Can Improve Publication of Use of Force Data and Oversight of Excessive Force Allegations," Government Accountability Office, December 2021, <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-22-104456.pdf>.

¹⁷⁵ Sean Goodison, "What Police Chiefs and Sheriffs Need to Know About Collecting and Analyzing Use-of-Force Data" (Washington, DC: Police Executive Research Forum, February 2021), <https://www.policeforum.org/assets/CollectingAnalyzingUOFData.pdf>.

¹⁷⁶ Goodison.

¹⁷⁷ Hunter M. Boehme, Christi Metcalf, and Robert J. Kaminski, "Female Officers in Use-of-Force Encounters: An Examination of Potential Correlates," *Police Quarterly* 25, no. 4 (December 2022): 497–534, <https://doi.org/10.1177/10986111211053842>.

and Robert J. Kaminski suggests that “the analysis revealed some contextual differences in use-of-force encounters across male and female officers.”¹⁷⁸ The study further recommended that additional research is needed to understand the underlying causes related to women police who use force that is not related to the need for better training, equal deployment of men and women police officers, and mitigating tasks assigned based on gender.¹⁷⁹ There are a variety of factors that are not related to gender that factor in when women police officers do and do not use force in comparison to their men colleagues.¹⁸⁰ More data is needed to fully understand the intricacies separate from factors like training, deployment, and task assignment.

Research by Bocar A. Ba, Dean Knox, Jonathan Mummolo, and Roman Rivera demonstrated that having greater diversity among officers within a law enforcement agency can improve relationships and foster more constructive engagement between the police and community members.¹⁸¹ They specifically determined that “female officers also use less force than males, a result that holds within all racial groups.”¹⁸² In their analysis of the Chicago Police Department, Ba, Knox, Mummolo, and Rivera found “that female officers use force 0.09 fewer times overall (a reduction equal to 28% of average male volume) and 0.07 fewer times per 100 shifts against Black civilians (reduction equal to 31% of average male volume, with the latter accounting for 81% of overall force reduction.”¹⁸³ While the evidence is very targeted and specific to larger law enforcement agencies, having more women in Chicago does minimize the occurrences of force used by police officers.

While there is no national source that effectively collects all important data in use-of-force incidents, many larger law enforcement agencies collect their own data for analysis and policy adaptation. In Washington, DC, the Office of Police Complaints (OPC) is an independent civilian-run government entity that receives a variety of complaints

¹⁷⁸ Boehme, Metcalfe, and Kaminski.

¹⁷⁹ Boehme, Metcalfe, and Kaminski.

¹⁸⁰ Boehme, Metcalfe, and Kaminski.

¹⁸¹ Ba et al., “The Role of Officer Race and Gender in Police-Civilian Interactions in Chicago.”

¹⁸² Ba et al.

¹⁸³ Ba et al.

regarding misconduct by members of the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD).¹⁸⁴ The types of complaints the OPC investigates include “harassment, inappropriate language or conduct, retaliation, unnecessary or excessive force, discrimination, and failure to identify.”¹⁸⁵ For the past several years, the OPC has released an annual review of the use of force by members of MPD. In 2022, OPC reports that MPD reported using force 2,107 times.¹⁸⁶ Of those reported uses of force, even though 23 percent of officers are women, women officers only accounted for 13 percent of the uses of force.¹⁸⁷ These findings were similar in 2021 and 2020 reports.¹⁸⁸

While some law enforcement agencies are working to be transparent in their reporting of use-of-force by their members, there are not enough police departments attempting to do the same. As federal, state, and local jurisdictions struggle to find common ground with the citizens that they serve, having transparency is the only way to gain the trust that is needed to make those relationships work. Chief Gina V. Hawkins of the Fayetteville Police Department in Fayetteville, North Carolina argues: “So being transparent leaves us vulnerable. But, being vulnerable means that we want you to trust us because we need your support because we work for the community. To be transparent is what builds the trust of the community that we work for and that we work with.”¹⁸⁹ Even though it feels risky to be vulnerable, law enforcement agencies need to prioritize openness

¹⁸⁴ “About Office of Police Complaints,” Office of Police Complaints, accessed August 1, 2023, <https://policecomplaints.dc.gov/page/about-office-police-complaints>.

¹⁸⁵ Office of Police Complaints.

¹⁸⁶ “2022 Report on Use of Force by the Washington, D.C., Metropolitan Police Department.” Government of the District of Columbia Police Complaints Board Office of Police Complaints, July 6, 2023. <https://policecomplaints.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/office%20of%20police%20complaints/publication/attachments/2022%20OPC%20UOF%20Report%20Final.pdf>. “2022 OPC UOF Report Final.Pdf,”

¹⁸⁷ Government of the District of Columbia Police Complaints Board Office of Police Complaints.

¹⁸⁸ “2021 Report on Use of Force by the Washington, D.C., Metropolitan Police Department.” Government of the District of Columbia Police Complaints Board Office of Police Complaints, June 13, 2022. https://policecomplaints.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/office%20of%20police%20complaints/publication/attachments/2021%20OPC%20UOF%20Report_FINAL.pdf.

Government of the District of Columbia Police Complaints Board Office of Police Complaints.

¹⁸⁹ Federal Bureau of Investigation, “National Use of Force Data Collection,” video, 3:27, YouTube, July 27, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rBI51uF-oHc>.

and accountability to earn community trust, which should be a goal for all police departments.

D. CONCLUSION

The intricate relationship between evolving gender roles and societal attitudes in the United States is a dynamic process that continues to reshape various aspects of American life. The transition from traditional, conservative views in gender roles to more progressive and equitable ideals reflects a broader transformation in societal norms. The persistence of traditional gender norms in certain fields, such as law enforcement, highlights the enduring challenges in achieving true gender equality. Over the past century, the slow integration of women in law enforcement underscores the broader need for change within historically male-dominated professions. While women are 50 percent of the population, they are not an equal percentage of the workforce in general and an even smaller percentage of law enforcement in the United States.¹⁹⁰ As a gendered profession, law enforcement continues to have a glass ceiling that is hard to crack for women.

As the nation actively seeks to diversify the demographics in policing, the aspiration for equality goes beyond mere numerical representation. It seeks to instigate a cultural shift in law enforcement, potentially impacting even issues such as the use of excessive force. Ultimately, the pursuit of gender equality within law enforcement and beyond signifies a profound endeavor to redefine the very fabric of societal structures, fostering a more inclusive and just future for all. This inclusiveness and justice society is at the very basis for the call for police reform.

¹⁹⁰ Toossi, “A Century of Change.”

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IV. THE NETHERLANDS

The Netherlands, known for its progressive social policies and emphasis on equality, provides an intriguing backdrop for studying the evolution of gender roles and their influence on institutions such as law enforcement. The country has a long history of promoting gender equality and has made significant strides in challenging traditional gender norms. Dutch society places a strong emphasis on individual freedoms and personal choice, which has played a crucial role in shaping its inclusive approach to gender roles. The Dutch model of policing is renowned for its community-oriented and de-escalation strategies, inviting exploration of how gender diversity might contribute to these distinct approaches. A comprehensive examination of this evolution reveals a multifaceted narrative encompassing shifts in societal norms, the integration of women into policing, and the substantial importance of extensive training in law enforcement.

A. GENDER EVOLUTION IN THE NETHERLANDS

The Constitution of the Kingdom of the Netherlands was originally written in 1814 with updated versions prepared in 1983 and 2008.¹⁹¹ Further updates were written in 2008 and 2018.¹⁹² The first chapter of the Constitution of the Kingdom of the Netherlands is titled “Fundamental rights” and its first article states “All persons in the Netherlands shall be treated equally in equal circumstances. Discrimination on the grounds of religion, belief, political opinion, race, or sex or on any other grounds whatsoever shall not be permitted.”¹⁹³ This article does not mention that all men are created equal but specifically states all persons. The inclusion of the principle that all persons in the Netherlands should be treated equally, regardless of their characteristics, emphasizes the commitment by the Dutch government to non-discrimination and equality.

¹⁹¹ “Constitution and Charter,” Netherlands Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, March 27, 2014, <https://www.government.nl/topics/constitution/constitution-and-charter>.

¹⁹² “Topics – Constitution – Government.NL,” Netherlands Ministry of General Affairs, July 1, 2014, <https://www.government.nl/topics/constitution/documents>.

¹⁹³ “The Constitution of the Kingdom of the Netherlands 2008 – Regulation – Government,” Netherlands Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, October 18, 2012, <https://doi.org/10.18/the-constitution-of-the-kingdom-of-the-netherlands-2008>.

The history of anti-discriminatory practices in the Netherlands started earlier than many other countries—even in the self-anointed advanced world at the time. In the Netherlands, women were first allowed to vote in 1919.¹⁹⁴ This same year, the 19th Amendment was passed by the United States Congress.¹⁹⁵ The government of the Netherlands decriminalized homosexuality in 1971, included sexual orientation in anti-discrimination legislation in 1994, established civil partnerships for same-sex couples in 1998, and introduced equal marriage and adoption rights for LGBTQ+ families in 2001.¹⁹⁶ By comparison, the state of Wisconsin was the first state in America to outlaw discrimination based on sexual orientation, in 1982.¹⁹⁷ The Netherlands was the first country in the world to make same-sex marriages legal.¹⁹⁸

In 2018, the Dutch government released its “Gender & LGBTI Equality Policy Plan 2018–2021; Putting Principles into Practice.”¹⁹⁹ This policy “shows the government’s commitment for equal treatment, for equal opportunities and for the right to live your own life in safety.”²⁰⁰ In the Foreword, Ingrid van Engelshoven, the Minister of Education, Culture and Science in The Netherlands confirms that the Netherlands has had great success in the work towards equality.²⁰¹ She also acknowledges that “Our now widely supported principles are still not always sufficiently reflected in practice.”²⁰² The plan included areas that needed further advancements for gender and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and intersex persons. Those areas targeted by the report include the

¹⁹⁴ “Women in National Governments Around The World,” Congressional Research Service, April 6, 2022, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R45483/12>.

¹⁹⁵ U.S. Constitution, amend. 19.

¹⁹⁶ “Gender and LGBTI Equality Policy Plan 2018–2021: Putting Principles into Practice – Report – Government,” Netherlands Ministry of General Affairs, June 1, 2018, <https://www.government.nl/documents/reports/2018/06/01/gender--lgbti-equality-policy-plan-2018-2021>.

¹⁹⁷ “LGBTQ Rights Milestones Fast Facts,” CNN, June 19, 2015, <https://www.cnn.com/2015/06/19/us/lgbt-rights-milestones-fast-facts/index.html>.

¹⁹⁸ “Same-Sex Marriage Around the World,” Pew Research Center, June 9, 2023, <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/fact-sheet/gay-marriage-around-the-world/>.

¹⁹⁹ Netherlands Ministry of General Affairs “Gender and LGBTI Equality Policy Plan.”

²⁰⁰ Netherlands Ministry of General Affairs.

²⁰¹ Netherlands Ministry of General Affairs.

²⁰² Netherlands Ministry of General Affairs.

workforce, individual security, and diversity/inclusion.²⁰³ The Netherlands understands the importance of having a policy and putting that policy into action, unlike the United States.

The Netherlands' government has a history of promoting equality and human rights and promotes this fact prominently on its government website, providing direct, specific priorities. The government of the Netherlands continues to investigate tactics for increasing opportunities for women and girls and promotes general human rights on a worldwide scale. The government's website states "Human rights are rights that apply worldwide, to all people, in all places, at all times. They are the foundations of a democracy in which every person counts. The Netherlands strives to protect and promote human rights all over the world."²⁰⁴ The government also produced a list of priorities for the pursuit of human rights which includes the liberty to choose expression, use the internet, and autonomous journalism, as well as choice in religious beliefs.²⁰⁵ The government's website also prioritizes equality among the LGBTIQ+ community as well as women and girls.²⁰⁶

Per the European Institute for Gender Equality, in 2022, the Netherlands had 77.3 out of 100 points on the European Union Gender Equity Index, ranking it third among countries in the European Union.²⁰⁷ Only Sweden and Denmark held higher rankings. The Netherlands' high ranking on the EU Gender Equity Index indicates that the country has made significant progress on gender equality issues compared to other European nations, though further work can still be done to achieve full equity. Highlighting the Netherlands' strengths and weaknesses allows an assessment of where the country stands and what further efforts may be needed. There are many ways to promote equality among genders in the workforce, but the real balance is to create equality while also developing and

²⁰³ Netherlands Ministry of General Affairs.

²⁰⁴ "Human Rights Worldwide – Human Rights," Netherlands Ministry of General Affairs, December 27, 2018, <https://www.government.nl/topics/human-rights/human-rights-worldwide>.

²⁰⁵ Netherlands Ministry of General Affairs.

²⁰⁶ Netherlands Ministry of General Affairs.

²⁰⁷ "Gender Equality Index," European Institute for Gender Equality, July 5, 2023, <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2022/country/NL>.

maintaining a happy workforce. At the end of the twentieth century, the Dutch looked for ways to welcome more women into the workforce by making labor requirements less restrictive.²⁰⁸ The changes included not requiring full-time workers to work as long as previously, while also allowing part-time and temporary workers to have benefits that included paying into social security and working flexible hours.²⁰⁹ This type of flexibility provided the Netherlands with the highest employment rate among the European Union in 2006 while also having the lowest average work week at only thirty-three hours.²¹⁰

A very popular tactic among the variety of workforces in the European Union is to offer flex time.²¹¹ A study written in the *International Journal of Economics, Commerce, and Management* found the use of flex time was first instituted by a German aerospace company called Messerschmitt-Bolkow-Blolm in the last 1960s.²¹² The idea grew and by the late 1970s, companies across the European continent, including the Netherlands, had instituted some form of flex time for their companies. The implementation had saved the German aerospace company “around 40,000 dollars a month, it increased productivity, lowered absenteeism and it also reported fewer recruiting difficulties and fewer travel problems.”²¹³ The opportunity for flex time allows women to not only establish a career but also handle familial responsibilities at the same time without the need to sacrifice one over the other.

B. POLICING IN THE NETHERLANDS

The Dutch police force differs in many respects from law enforcement in the United States. The “politie” in the Netherlands is created by one national police force that is

²⁰⁸ Foo Yun Chee, “Flexibility Makes for a Happy Dutch Worker,” Reuters, July 2, 2007, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-work-dutch-idUSL1540879820070702>.

²⁰⁹ Chee.

²¹⁰ Chee.

²¹¹ Sabiha Abid and Daro Khan Barech, “The Impact of Flexible Working Hours on the Employees Performance,” *International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management* 5, no. 7 (July 2017): 450–66.

²¹² Abid and Barech.

²¹³ Abid and Barech.

represented by a total of ten regional units.²¹⁴ Their sworn members equal approximately 51,000 and have a large civilian contingent, equaling approximately 14,000.²¹⁵ The Dutch police force is a national organization broken up into twenty-five regions, with the mayor of the largest town in each region often acting as the police chief.²¹⁶

In 1911, women first were allowed into The Netherlands police service, working primarily with juveniles, nicely fitting into the stereotype that women are to deal with children.²¹⁷ It was more than 40 years before they were allowed to work in uniform.²¹⁸ There was very little advancement of women in the police service over the next couple of decades.²¹⁹ However, in 1985, the Dutch government enacted a policy that would require the recruitment of only women and individuals from minority groups.²²⁰ The Equal Right Policy Plan was intended to provide equal opportunity for women across a myriad of opportunities, including professional and educational.²²¹ But it failed to change the cultural issues within the profession. Policing has always been a male-dominated vocation and legislating more women to be hired would not change the mentality that men could do the job better. While quotas are not always received favorably, this tactic increased the diversity within the Dutch police force and dramatically increased the number of women in the ranks.²²²

The police force in the Netherlands has a robust website when it comes to the recruitment of new members of their department. It highlights multiple aspects of

²¹⁴ “About the Netherlands Police,” Netherlands Police, accessed July 18, 2023, <https://www.politie.nl/en/information/about-the-netherlands-police.html>.

²¹⁵ Netherlands Police.

²¹⁶ “Dutch Police vs. American Police: How Do They Differ?,” About the Netherlands, March 28, 2021, <https://aboutthenetherlands.com/dutch-police-vs-american/>.

²¹⁷ Elizabeth Dene, “Positive Discrimination v. Positive Action: What of the Future for Women in the Netherlands Police Service?,” *The Police Journal* 64, no. 1 (January 1, 1991): 64–67, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0032258X9106400111>.

²¹⁸ Dene.

²¹⁹ Dene.

²²⁰ Dene.

²²¹ Dene.

²²² Dene.

employment including the importance of career advancement and training, providing “a proper balance between work and personal time,” the support provided for both physical and mental wellness, as well as commuting stipends for either public transit or use of a personal vehicle.²²³ There are additional incentives including extra pay for holidays worked, allowances for time worked at home, and differential pay when working irregular hours.²²⁴

While the police force in the Netherlands provides many incentives for its employees, it also has several requirements that are listed prominently on its website. In a section described as “What we ask of you,” the police force lists four core values: “integrity, reliability, courage, and binding.”²²⁵ The page also emphasizes the fact that as a member of the police force, honesty is vital.²²⁶ There is also information on career paths that are outside the “typical” scope of a street officer. The website says “In addition to working as a police officer, you can also work at the police control room, at the criminal investigation department, at intelligence or in the field of IT.”²²⁷ The incentive for hiring people extends to sworn and civilian staff, emphasizing the importance of positive group dynamics, stating, “They all have the same goal in mind. Whatever you do with the police, you always contribute to a safer Netherlands. Whether you wear a uniform or not.”²²⁸

Fundamental differences between police in the United States and the Netherlands may seem obvious based on culture. However, another very important difference is training. The police academy in the Netherlands is dramatically more structured and extensive than any police academy in the United States. The Organization for Security and

²²³ “Terms of Employment | Kombijdepolice,” Netherlands Police, accessed July 18, 2023, <https://kombijde.politie.nl/politie-als-werkgever/wat-we-bieden>.

²²⁴ “Police Employment Conditions” Netherlands Police, accessed July 18, 2023, <https://kombijde.politie.nl/binaries/content/assets/academie/algemeen/arbeidsvoorwaarden-nieuwe-medewerkers.pdf>.

²²⁵ “What We Ask of You: Our Core Values,” Netherlands Police, accessed July 18, 2023, <https://kombijde.politie.nl/politie-als-werkgever/wat-we-van-jou-vragen>.

²²⁶ Netherlands Police.

²²⁷ “Fields of Expertise in the Police,” Netherlands Police, accessed July 18, 2023, <https://kombijde.politie.nl/vakgebieden/overzicht>.

²²⁸ Netherlands Police.

Co-operation in Europe prepared a report in 2018 “to provide information on education and training models in eight European countries, the U.S., and Canada.”²²⁹ The report stated that police academy instructors in the United States were required to have a minimum of two years of professional experience while a majority of European academies required Master’s degrees to become an instructor.²³⁰ The substantial discrepancy in education requirements for police academy instructors between the United States and the Netherlands provides a meaningful perspective on the superior caliber of training that Dutch recruits receive compared to their American counterparts.

The police academy in the Netherlands has a very diverse, intensive program with several different levels of education and training. Entry requirements include having a bachelor-level degree depending on what level you enter the academy, being eighteen years of age, being of Dutch nationality, obtaining a driver’s license, being mentally and physically fit, having other medical requirements, and having integrity and reliability.²³¹ The basic police training program last for two years with a class size of eight.²³² In the basic training course, applicants are paid for their time at the academy, their training is paid for as well as materials, uniform, and travel costs.²³³ Graduate degrees are obtained depending on the avenue of training that is conducted.

In the United States, all police officers carry a sidearm as part of their standard-issued gear. In the Netherlands, basic officers must complete three years of training before they are allowed to carry a sidearm.²³⁴ Both police in the United States and in the

²²⁹ “Police Education and Training in OSCE Region,” Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, accessed May 15, 2023, <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/f/7/423401.pdf>.

²³⁰ Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

²³¹ “Entry Requirements to Become an Agent,” Netherlands Police, accessed July 18, 2023, <https://kombijde.politie.nl/agent-worden/toelatingseisen/toelatingseisen>.

²³² “Basic Police Training at Level 4,” Netherlands Police, accessed July 18, 2023, <https://www.politieacademie.nl/onderwijs/studeren/Pages/Mbo-4-politieopleiding.aspx>.

²³³ “Everything about Police Training at MBO 4 Level,” Netherlands Police, accessed July 18, 2023, <https://kombijde.politie.nl/agent-worden/overzicht-opleidingen/mbo-4/intro>.

²³⁴ About the Netherlands, “Dutch Police vs. American Police.”

Netherlands have a variety of other less-lethal options including a form of pepper spray, tear gas, and a baton.²³⁵

The police force in the Netherlands differs significantly from law enforcement in the United States in its national organization, recruiting policies, training requirements, and use of firearms. While the U.S. has thousands of local police departments, the Netherlands has one unified national police force divided into regional units. A major push to diversify the Dutch force in the 1980s dramatically increased the number of women officers. The Dutch police have extensive recruitment incentives and requirements focused on integrity. Police training in the Netherlands is much more rigorous, lengthy, and standardized than in the U.S., with instructors needing master's degrees. Dutch police do not carry firearms until completing three years of academy training, whereas U.S. officers are armed immediately. The emphasis on education and training for Dutch law enforcement aims to professionalize the force.

C. DUTCH USE OF FORCE

Unlike the United States, The Netherlands is generally regarded as having a relatively low rate of excessive force incidents by law enforcement; police in The Netherlands killed citizens at a rate of 2.3 per 10 million residents compared to police in the United States that killed citizens at a rate of 33.5 per 10 million residents, in 2019.²³⁶ The country's police force is well-respected for its professional and community-oriented approach to policing. However, there have been some well-documented incidents in the past several years.

In June 2015, a man from Aruba was visiting family and in attendance at a music festival in The Hague. He was arrested for "disrupting public order" and officers hit him in the face, placed him in a chokehold, and pepper-sprayed him.²³⁷ The man died shortly

²³⁵ About the Netherlands.

²³⁶ Statista Research Department, "Rate of Civilians Killed."

²³⁷ Cynthia Kroet, "Dutch Police Charged over Chokehold Death," Politico, September 19, 2016, <https://www.politico.eu/article/dutch-police-charged-over-chokehold-death-mitch-henriquez-the-hague/>.

after the incident and an investigation found that excessive force contributed to the man's death. Two of the five officers involved in the assault were charged with manslaughter.²³⁸

In 2019, the Dutch police used force 14, 507 times, and began using a new program that tracked what type of force is used in these incidents.²³⁹ The new program documents more thoroughly all the types of used force throughout an incident, not just the initial type of force.²⁴⁰ The reporting of force is required when “an officer uses their firearm, if more than minor injuries were sustained as a result of the force used, or if the assistant public prosecutor decides it is necessary.”²⁴¹ The Dutch police's implementation of a new force tracking program that thoroughly documents all force used throughout an encounter demonstrates a commitment to transparency and accountability around police violence.

Police force in the Netherlands is regulated by the 2012 Police Act which “authorizes police officers to use force when necessary for legitimate purpose as long as the force used is reasonable and restrained.”²⁴² Additionally, the Act determines that “Firearms may be used to effect an arrest ‘a person in respect of whom it can reasonably be assumed that he had a firearm ready for immediate use and will use it against persons’ or to arrest a person suspected or convicted of committing a crime for which a prison sentence of four years or more has been imposed.”²⁴³ The Dutch law's stipulation on proportional and restrained force, along with strict limitations on firearm use, provide a clear framework governing police violence that aims to minimize harm while still enabling officers to uphold public order when absolutely necessary.

²³⁸ Kroet.

²³⁹ “Dutch Police Used Force in 14,507 Incidents Last Year | NL Times,” NL Times, accessed August 20, 2023, <https://nltimes.nl/2020/06/29/dutch-police-used-force-14507-incidents-last-year>.

²⁴⁰ NL Times.

²⁴¹ NL Times.

²⁴² “Law on Police Use of Force in the Netherlands,” The Law on Police Use of Force, April 20, 2021, <https://www.policinglaw.info/country/the-netherlands>.

²⁴³ Law on Police Use of Force.

D. CONCLUSION

The journey of the Netherlands towards upholding gender equality and promoting human rights is exemplified by its Constitution and the progressive policy measures it has implemented over the years. From its earliest constitutional iterations to the most recent updates, the commitment to treating all individuals equally regardless of their characteristics has underscored the Dutch government's dedication to non-discrimination and equality. The historical precedence of anti-discriminatory practices, particularly in granting women the right to vote and leading the way in LGBTIQ+ rights, reflects the nation's early recognition of the importance of equality for all. The Dutch government's proactive approach, as highlighted in the "Gender and LGBTI Equality Policy Plan," shows a commitment to not just principles, but their practical implementation as well.

In a world marked by increasing diversity and complex challenges, the Dutch police force stands as a shining example of the significance of inclusivity and rigorous training. By embracing a diverse range of perspectives and backgrounds within its ranks, the Dutch police force fosters a deeper understanding of the communities it serves, cultivating empathy and trust. Furthermore, the commitment to high levels of training equips officers with the skills and knowledge needed to navigate intricate situations effectively, minimize bias, and uphold the principles of fairness and justice. As the Dutch police force demonstrates, the harmonious interplay between inclusivity and training enhances law enforcement's capabilities but also strengthens the foundations of a cohesive society, serving as a compelling model for other nations, including the United States.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

This research set out to examine approaches to gender diversity and use of force in policing, comparing the United States and the Netherlands. It specifically analyzed the recruitment and retention of women officers in each country and the potential correlation to use of force incidents. The study was conducted through a review of scholarly sources, government data, and historical accounts.

The discriminatory culture and attitudes that persist in law enforcement continue to discourage women officers from long-term careers. Outdated gender perceptions and expectations reinforce historical masculine traditions that fail to recognize the value of female officers. Furthermore, the lack of policies ensuring equitable career opportunities for women sustains barriers to advancement, stifling the professional growth of women in policing.

A. RECOMMENDATIONS

The intent of this research was to compare the United States and the Netherlands, their police forces, their uses of force, and their gender diversity. The following recommendations represent initial steps American law enforcement can take to increase gender equity within the profession and work to minimize incidents of excessive force, as the research has indicated there is a possible correlation.

1. The Officer's Identity

Social science and psychological research should be funded to better understand how identity, empathy, communication styles, and other gender difference influence policing approaches and the use of force. While statistics show clear differences in the use of force between male and female officers, the underlying reasons behind these differences need further exploration. Funding rigorous social science and psychological research would enable academics and scientists to dig deeper into the intersections of gender, identity, and policing.

There are several areas of research that could be conducted:

- How gendered socialization and developmental differences in empathy between boys and girls impact policing styles and use of force decisions later in life.
- Gender differences in communication styles and relationship-building approaches, and how these affect police interactions with community members.
- The role of gender identity in shaping perspectives on the use of aggression, physical confrontation, and violence.
- How conforming to or deviating from traditional masculine/feminine norms influences police officers' choices and actions.
- Whether increased emotional intelligence and empathy correlates to less reliance on physical force among officers of any gender.
- The impact of gender-balanced police teams versus all-male teams on use of force, complaints, and community relations.
- Examinations of police training programs and organizational culture through a gender theory lens.

This type of in-depth, multifaceted social science research could uncover root causes behind gender disparities in policing. The insights gained would help law enforcement agencies develop evidence-based policies, training reforms, and organizational change initiatives to address biases and positively influence policing behavior. Funding such research is an investment that could pay dividends in improved public safety and community trust.

2. Standardize Use of Force Reporting

The lack of comprehensive national data on police use of force hinders accountability and understanding of gender dynamics. The United States should follow the

model of the Dutch police by implementing standardized reporting and collection of use-of-force statistics across all law enforcement jurisdictions.

The nationwide framework should include mandatory reporting by all police departments of all use-of-force incidents, not just fatal shootings. A national framework allows analysis of broader patterns. The database would also include detailed situational data like subject behavior and details directly leading to the use of force. This provides context for analysis. Demographic information on both the officer(s) and subject(s) involved, including gender, race, age, and years of experience would also be included in the data retrieved. This enables the examination of intersectional dimensions. Implementing such a comprehensive statistical reporting framework at the national scale would align the United States with modern policing standards practiced in the Netherlands and other developed nations. It would enable detailed analysis of key factors correlated with the use of force, including officer demographics like gender. This evidence-based approach promotes data-driven accountability, best practices, and reforms to minimize excessive force. Additionally, the Department of Justice would be responsible for an annual analysis summarizing findings and trends.

3. Academy Training

Police academy curricula should be reformed to reduce the current emphasis on physical fitness and combat training and instead prioritize de-escalation, communication, ethics, and stress management. This shift can help address gender imbalances in policing in several ways, including:

- Focusing less on physical prowess opens opportunities for more women to successfully complete recruit training. Current testing often disadvantages women and discourages female applicants.
- Training officers in de-escalation and communication first equips them with tactics to defuse tensions and avoid situations where force might become necessary in the first place. This aligns with research showing women police tend to use force as a last resort.

- Prioritizing stress management skills better prepares recruits of all genders to maintain calm, clear judgment during intense confrontations, enabling them to minimize use of force.
- Expanded ethics training fosters improved decision-making, judgment, and conduct, potentially reducing misconduct and excessive force complaints more prevalent among male officers.
- Communication and diversity training develops relationship-building skills and cultural awareness to improve community relations, an area where female officers tend to excel.
- Scenario-based training focused on diffusing conflicts through non-physical means can effectively build these techniques as instinctual responses when facing resistance.

Police academy training in the United States requires significant reform to emphasize knowledge and skills-based learning over physical prowess if we want to advance gender equity in policing and adopt effective techniques shown to reduce excessive force. The average 840 hours of basic training for American law enforcement is grossly inadequate compared to the multi-year programs in the Dutch police academies. Expanding recruit training to two years or more like the Dutch model would allow sufficient time to thoroughly cover de-escalation, psychology, communication, diversity, ethics, and stress management. Most Dutch police instructors have master's degrees, further professionalizing the training.

Prioritizing these knowledge-based competencies over physical fitness tests and combat training would open opportunities for more women recruits to succeed. Training officers to rely on communication and de-escalation first makes use of force a last resort, consistent with research on women officers' policing styles. Extensive scenario-based training can build these non-physical resolution methods into instinct. Implementing immersive, graduate-level police education like the Dutch system would develop officers with broader skillsets suited to safe, effective community policing. Training officers to

avoid and defuse conflicts instead of dominating through force is vital to reducing police violence and increasing public trust in American law enforcement.

4. Recruitment and Retention of Women Police Officers

To increase female representation, the United States should look to the successful Dutch model of extensive police education and a unified national force structure. Specifically, police departments should examine how the Dutch police's bachelor's or master's degree requirements, multi-year paid academy training, and graduate-level instructors professionalize the force and could raise standards in America. Implementing similar rigorous education standards and incentivizing achievement through college credits and pay increases would likely expand female recruitment and retention.

Transitioning to a unified national police force or at least a national training curriculum would standardize instruction and requirements across the thousands of local departments, ensuring consistent quality. National oversight could mandate gender balance initiatives across all agencies. Local police departments could still be maintained within this structure as in the Netherlands. But centralized coordination, education standards, and shared training facilities would improve upon the inconsistent quality of America's police academies.

Professionalizing American law enforcement through advanced education benchmarks and a semi-nationalized structure informed by the effective Dutch system would boost professionalism, capabilities, and gender balance. This would likely increase public trust and safety as well as community relations.

While the Dutch model provides a promising example, implementing similar extensive education standards and a unified policing structure in the United States faces cultural challenges. Unlike the more egalitarian Netherlands, the American ethos of hyper-individualism and distrust of centralized authority could breed resistance to federal oversight and mandates. The Dutch emphasis on social welfare and harmony contrasts with deeply rooted American ideals of individualism, self-reliance, and local autonomy.

These contrasting cultural orientations could make reforms like national use of force reporting, federal diversity quotas, or required graduate degrees for police trigger debates over states' rights and big government overreach. Motivating 18,000 decentralized and politically entrenched police departments to embrace fundamental changes could prove difficult.

That said, the crisis of police violence and current demands for reform in the United States demonstrate that substantial change is necessary, even if politically and culturally difficult. While the Dutch model may be filtered through an American lens, maintaining the vision of professionalizing and diversifying law enforcement through higher education and enhanced national coordination can guide important progress despite the challenges. Creative policy solutions tailored to American ideals, like financial incentives for local departments to adopt best practices, may help overcome resistance. Ultimately, political will and public pressure are essential to transforming policing in ways that advance gender equity, effectiveness, and accountability.

B. CONCLUSION

This research set out to investigate approaches to gender diversity and use of force in American and Dutch law enforcement. Through extensive analysis, it finds that women remain underrepresented in American law enforcement and face ongoing barriers to recruitment and advancement. However, evidence indicates that gender-balanced forces can improve community relations, minimize excessive force, and increase public trust. The Dutch model demonstrates how prioritizing diversity, education, and de-escalation training enables more effective, equitable policing.

While women are half the population, they make up just 13% of police in America and are vastly underrepresented in leadership roles.²⁴⁴ Discriminatory hiring and promotion practices, sexual harassment, and the hypermasculine culture of police departments impede progress. Women officers are less likely to use force, employ de-

²⁴⁴ Starheim et al., *Women in Policing*.

escalation more, and generate fewer complaints. This suggests diversifying forces could transform policing.

In the Netherlands, women comprise more than 30% of the police force thanks to proactive recruitment and a national system.²⁴⁵ Extensive training standards further professionalize Dutch police. Consequently, the Netherlands exhibits significantly lower rates of police violence compared to America. The Dutch model proves educational requirements, unification, and gender balance can strengthen law enforcement.

Achieving equity in American policing requires multifaceted reform. Recommendations include rigorous social science research on gender and policing, national use of force data collection, training focused on de-escalation over physical prowess, incentives for education, and centralized coordination. While facing cultural resistance, implementing such changes guided by successful practices abroad can incrementally improve diversity, accountability, and safety.

In conclusion, this research affirms the persistence of gender inequality and validates evidence that balanced forces excel. Although obstacles exist, transforming law enforcement by learning from global exemplars like the Dutch is imperative. Courageous, holistic reforms centered on diversity, training, and unification provide a path toward not just inclusion, but effectiveness in delivering public safety with legitimacy and justice.

²⁴⁵ HelgiLibrary, “Female Police Officers (As % of Total).”

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