

Promotion aspirations among male and female police students

Silje Bringsrud Fekjær[‡] and Sigtona Halrynjo[†]

[‡](Corresponding author) Norwegian Police University College, Postboks 5027, Majorstuen, 0301 Oslo, Norway. Tel: (0047) 23 19 99 00; e-mail silfek@psh.no

[†]Norwegian Institute for Social Research

Submitted 16 June 2011, revision submitted 13 October 2011, accepted 15 October 2011

Keywords: women, police, career preferences, promotion aspirations

Silje Bringsrud Fekjær is Associate Professor at the Research Department, Norwegian Police University College. Her research interests include recruitment to education and the working life of police officers. Fekjær has previously published in journals such as *European Sociological Review* and *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*.

Sigtona Halrynjo is Senior Researcher at the Norwegian Institute for Social Research. Her research is focused mainly on gender and work issues. Halrynjo has previously published in journals such as *Gender, Work & Organizations* and the *British Journal of Sociology*.

ABSTRACT

A long research tradition has documented gender differences in career choices and outcomes in several professions, including the police. However, there is debate about whether such differences reflect initial preferences, socially constructed ideas about the incompatibility of family and working life or the objective constraints that men and women meet in their careers and family lives. This paper explores the initial preferences for career and promotion among male and female police students in Norway. Norwegian female police students are selected rigorously; they have chosen a traditionally male-dominated profession, and they live in a welfare society where the possibilities for combining work and family life are well

developed. Under these circumstances, will the initial promotion aspirations of men and women differ? If so, will gender differences persist when family obligations and age are controlled for? These questions were explored using 2009 and 2010 data for first-year police students in Norway ($N = 1,079$). The results showed that male and female police students have remarkably similar aspirations for promotion, and this remained true when family obligations and age were controlled for. The results indicate that differences in initial preferences do not explain gender differences in career choices and outcomes.

INTRODUCTION

Previous research has shown marked gender differences for careers in police work. Male police officers seem to earn more money (Vuorensyrjä, 2011) and have better chances of promotion (eg, Archbold, Hassell, & Stichman, 2010; G. Dick & Metcalfe, 2007). These differences correspond to gender differences found in other professions (Halrynjo, 2010). However, we do not know whether such differences can be explained by different preferences among the men and women who are recruited to the police. Alternatively, the differences could be the result of the constraints and experiences which men and women encounter in their careers and family lives,

or to the result of socially constructed ideas about the incompatibility of family and working life (schemas of competing devotions). To explore this question, we ask whether male and female police students have different career preferences when they begin police training. Are female police students less oriented towards career and promotion? If there are gender differences, will they persist when we compare students with similar family obligations and age? We used 2009 and 2010 data for first-year police students in Norway ($N = 1,079$) to examine these questions.

In recent years, the police force has changed from a typically male-dominated towards a more gender-neutral profession. In Norway, 20 per cent of sworn police officers are women, a remarkably high number relative to other European countries (Høigård, 2009, p. 327). In the last 10 years, one-third of the new police recruits have been women, which means that the proportion of women in the police force will continue to rise (Politidirektoratet, 2011). Hence, it is especially interesting to see whether female police students differ from their male counterparts when it comes to career preferences. If we find different initial preferences between male and female police recruits, the differences in their career paths could be explained by general differences between men and women and/or by the type of men and women who are recruited to the profession. Finding gendered differences in preferences when the women are carefully selected, willingly working in a male-dominated profession, and living in a country that supports family-friendly working conditions might imply deeply rooted gender differences that cannot be affected by changing working conditions. However, if the women's initial preferences are similar to the men's, it would be important to determine whether working conditions in a traditionally male-

dominated profession such as the police contribute to gendered career paths.

Asking students about their career ambitions and aspirations for promotion at the beginning of their professional training reflects preferences at an early stage. When the students are confronted with the everyday realities of police work, they will probably change some of their preferences. However, this is a good reason to measure preferences when the students have just started their education, to allow us to distinguish between initial preferences and those acquired over time. If preferences were measured later, they would be influenced by the officers' adjustments to the realities of the job and their everyday lives (Blair-Loy, 2003). The students' initial preferences are interesting not because they necessarily are stable and predict their future careers, but because they will reveal whether male and female police students have different preferences when they are recruited. Knowledge about initial preferences will help us understand the reasons for later differences in preferences and outcomes, and such knowledge could guide the efforts of those who wish to increase the proportion of female leaders in the police.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Although the proportion of female police officers has risen sharply in recent years, women are still underrepresented in leadership positions. This has been documented in several countries, including the UK (G. Dick & Metcalfe, 2007; Silvestri, 2006), USA (Archbold et al., 2010; Whetstone & Wilson, 1999), Sweden (Österlind & Haake, 2010), Australia and New Zealand (Prenzler, Fleming, & King, 2010). There is also evidence that the salaries of male and female police officers differ (Vuorensyrjä, 2011), as do their career patterns (Dodge, Valcore, & Klinger, 2010; Finstad, 1998,

p. 194; Holdaway & Parker, 1998; Vuoronsyrjä). It is interesting to note that, in spite of cross-cultural differences in police organisations and their proportions of women, the findings seem to be quite similar in different countries.

Research on the career ambitions and preferences of policewomen are sparse, and the results are conflicting. Chu and Sun (2007) found that both American and Taiwanese policewomen were moderately interested in promotion, on average, but the researchers did not compare the women with male police officers, and did not examine the officers' preferences at the beginning of their careers. Dick and Metcalfe claim that the underrepresentation of women in the senior ranks of the UK police force cannot be explained by differences in levels of commitment. Similarly, Holdaway and Parker found that, when controlled for length of service, there were no significant differences between men's and women's aspirations for promotion in UK police departments (although women rated the opportunity for advancement more highly than men did), and Wexler and Quinn (1985) found no gender differences in the American police officers' desire for training in preparation to become a sergeant. However, in a more recent study from the US, Archbold et al. conclude that female police officers have lower aspirations for promotion than men do. Earlier research on career preferences is therefore conflicting, and none of these studies examined whether differences in ambitions and preferences existed when men and women were recruited to the police, and hence whether their preferences were shaped by their experiences on the job.

To our knowledge, the only study of gender differences in the career preferences of police recruits was done by Wimshurst (1995). In a study of the New Zealand police, he found that men and women had very similar career plans and ambitions.

Both genders emphasised rank and promotion. At the same time, women displayed more uncertainty and less concrete ambitions than their male counterparts. Wimshurst's data were collected in 1992 and 1993, and the sample is limited ($N = 135$, including only 44 women). Women's position in the police profession has changed considerably in the nearly 20 years since Wimshurst conducted his study. Whether we will find similar results today is an open question.

DIFFERENT PREFERENCES, DIFFERENT CONSTRAINTS OR DIFFERENT SCHEMAS OF DEVOTIONS?

There are several theoretical explanations of gender divisions in career outcomes, and three of them are briefly described: preference theory, constraints theory and the theory of competing devotions (see Halrynjo & Lyng, 2009). According to preference theory, initial preferences are the main explanation of women's labour market participation and outcome. Hakim (2002) claims that lifestyle preferences are a major determinant of job choice and employment patterns. Motivation, values and attitudes are seen as the key determinants of labour market behaviour. While most men are described as work centred, only a small minority of women belong to this group. Most women are adaptive, wanting to combine employment and family, or home centred. According to this theory, lifestyle preferences are stable and will be the primary determinant of women's employment patterns in prosperous modern societies (Hakim).

The second theoretical perspective highlights the importance of objective constraints to understand women's adaptation to work. Such constraints include scarcity of childcare arrangements, the availability and security of jobs, financial resources and

work–family policies at institutional and organisational levels (Charles & Harris, 2007; Leira & Ellingsæter, 2006). An explanation of gender differences in police careers that emphasises the lack of family-friendly arrangements in police departments would fit into the objective constraints perspective.

In the third perspective, schemas of competing devotions, the focus is on the cultural construction of choices and constraints regarding motherhood. Blair-Loy (2003) analyses work–family conflict in terms of ‘cultural schemas’, which are frameworks for viewing and understanding what we know as reality. The work devotion schema demands that one gives an immense amount of time, commitment and emotional loyalty to one’s employer or career. In addition to a high income, the schema promises a strong sense of competence, identity and meaning. The family devotion schema, in contrast, prescribes a model of motherhood that is intensive, emotionally absorbing and centred on one’s children. It assigns primary responsibility for home and family to women, promising fulfilment, meaning and intimacy. Implicitly demanding single-minded allegiance, these schemas reproduce work and family as competing and mutually exclusive devotions. Like the finance sector, where Blair-Loy (2003) gathered her original empirical data, the police profession also promises a strong sense of specific competence, identity, belonging and meaning (eg, Reiner, 2000).

Our data give us the opportunity to test whether preference theory helps to explain gender differences in police careers. According to this theory, the gender differences found in career paths will be reflected in initial preferences and aspirations. On average, men will be more oriented towards work and career. If we do not find different initial preferences, further examination of the other theories, objective constraints and

competing schemas of devotions, would be warranted. However, the available data provide us with very limited opportunities to test the importance of these theories. In this study, the importance of objective constraint and schemas of devotions will be addressed primarily by discussing previous research on the police profession, with the exception of the importance of family obligations for career ambitions. By testing the importance of preference theory, we will provide new knowledge which it is hoped can be an important piece of the puzzle in our understanding of the gendered career patterns in police work.

DATA AND METHODS

The data in this paper are part of the research project Recruitment, Education and Careers in the Police: A European Longitudinal Study. This study will eventually cover Norway, Sweden, Finland, Iceland, Belgium, Scotland, Estonia, Hungary, Slovenia, Iceland, Germany (Hessen, Brandenburg, Thüringen, Hamburg) and Spain (Catalonia). The project will administer regular surveys to police students, starting when they enter police training and ending six years into their professional careers. The research design is based on the StudData survey, which was developed by the Centre for the Study of Professions, Oslo University College (SPS, 2011). The questions cover background characteristics, general values, opinions on police training and expectations and attitudes towards police work. Taken together, the data from this project will provide a unique opportunity to study and compare initial preferences for promotion with actual career and promotion trajectories in the police.

The data set in this paper stems from the first phase of the study, which covers all first-year police students in Norway who started their education in 2009 and 2010 ($N = 1,079$). The students filled in the

Table 1: Data overview: Norwegian police students 2009–2010

	<i>All (%)</i>	<i>Female students (%)</i>	<i>Male students (%)</i>
Age 20–22	49	55	46
Age 23–25	34	31	36
Age 26–29	12	9	13
Age 30 +	5	5	6
Married/cohabitant	25	25	26
Children	4	4	4
<i>N</i>	1,079 (100%)	404 (38%)	672 (63%)

questionnaire at college, under the supervision of their instructors. Hence, the response rate was remarkably high: 84.5 per cent.

We used two measures of the students' career ambitions. The variable 'Probably future leader' is based on students' answers to the question, 'If you try to imagine what your life will be like in 10 years' time, how probable is it that the following statements will apply to your situation?' Our focus is the item, 'I have leadership responsibility', with responses ranging from 0, 'Doesn't apply at all', to 4, 'Applies very well'. The variable 'Advancement important' is based on the question, 'How important do you personally think the following conditions are in a job?' For this variable, we have selected the item, 'Good opportunities for advancement', with responses ranging from 0, 'Not important at all', to 4, 'Very important'.

The independent variables were sex, age, parenthood status and marital status. 'Sex' was coded 0 for female and 1 for male. 'Age' was divided into four groups: 20–22, 23–25, 26–29 and 30 years and above. Information on age was missing in 6 per cent of the cases, which were excluded from any analyses involving age. 'Parenthood status' indicates whether the students had children in their care, and it was coded 0 for no children and 1 for one or more children. 'Marital status' was coded 0 for

single and 1 for married/living with a partner.

We compared male and female police students' average preference scores using independent sample *t* tests (Table 2). To examine the importance of age, marital status and parenthood status, we used multivariate linear regression (Tables 3 and 4). The sample's distribution on the independent variables is presented in Table 1.

The descriptive statistics in Table 1 show that 38 per cent of the police students in this sample were female, a relatively high number compared with other countries. The female students were slightly younger than the male students. One explanation for this is that almost all of the male students serve in the military before they start their education (Lagestad, 2011, p. 169). About 25 per cent of the students were living with a partner, but only 4 per cent had children in their care. There are small differences between the male and the female students' family obligations.

RESULTS

Are there gender differences in the police students' aspirations for promotion? This question is explored in Table 2.

The results show that there were very small differences between male and female police students in their aspirations for promotion. Male police students were slightly

Table 2: Promotion aspirations among male and female police students: average values (standard deviation), on a scale from 0–4, where 4 = applies very well

	Women	Men	Total
Probably future leader	2.8 (0.8)	2.9 (0.8)	2.9 (0.8)
Advancement important	3.0 (0.7)	3.0 (0.7)	3.0 (0.7)
N	404	670	1,074

Note:
The gender difference in means is not significant at the 0.05% level (independent samples *t* test).

more likely to believe that they would have leadership responsibility 10 years from now, but the difference is small and not significant (0.1 on a scale from 0 to 4). The women’s average score was 2.8, and the men’s average score was 2.9. This means that both male and female police students find it quite likely that they will have leadership responsibility in the future.

Turning to advancement opportunities, we find no differences between male and female police students. On a scale from 0 to 4, both men and women had an average score of 3.0. This means that police students generally state that advancement opportunities are quite important in a job.

As we have seen, both genders predicted that they were quite likely to have leadership responsibility in the future, and when asked about the importance of different aspects of a job, both claimed that opportunities for advancement are quite important. However, we do note that the standard deviation varies between 0.7 and 0.8, which tells us that there is substantial variation in the students’ answers to these questions. Neither the male students (as a group) nor the female students (as a group) completely agree in their answers to the questions

about leadership responsibility and opportunities for career advancement. We also note that additional analysis (not shown here) tells us that advancement opportunities are by no means the most important aspect of a job for police students. Both men and women answer that most important is to have an interesting job and a job where you can use your skills and knowledge.

Our first finding is that the career preferences of male and female police students were remarkably similar. However, we do not know whether this result will hold when we control for other factors that could affect a student’s aspirations for promotion. In Tables 3 and 4, we use linear regression to test whether there are gender differences when we compare students with similar age and family obligations.¹

Table 3 shows that the male and female police students in this sample had the same leadership ambitions even when we compared students with similar family obligations and age. The difference between men and women was small and insignificant. We also note that neither family obligations nor

Table 3: Preferences for future leadership career, dependent on sex, parenthood status, marital status and age: 4 = Future leader applies very well

	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>
Sex (women = 0)	0.09	0.05
Parenthood status (no children = 0)	0.18	0.13
Marital status (single = 0)	0.01	0.06
Age: 23–25 years (20–22 years = 0)	–0.07	0.06
Age: 26–29 years	–0.12	0.08
Age: 30+ years	0.00	0.12
Constant	2.8*	0.05
<i>r</i> ²	0.01	
N	1,009	

Note:
* Significant at 0.05% level.

Table 4: Importance of advancement, dependent on sex, parenthood status, marital status and age. 4 = Advancement very important

	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>
Sex (women = 0)	0.03	0.05
Parenthood status (no children = 0)	0.00	0.12
Marital status (single = 0)	0.14*	0.06
Age: 23–25 years (20–22 years = 0)	–0.11*	0.05
Age: 26–29 years	–0.11	0.08
Age: 30+ years	–0.29*	0.11
Constant	3.0*	0.04
<i>r</i> ²	0.02	
<i>N</i>	995	

Note:

* Significant at 0.05% level.

age seemed to influence the students' leadership ambitions. There were no significant differences between students of different age, or between students with and without children/partners. This last finding may seem somewhat surprising, but could be explained by the fact that these students may not have had the opportunity to experience family life combined with police work. An interesting research topic would be to see whether there is an effect of family obligations on career ambitions when the recruits have gained more work experience, and whether this potential effect would be the same for male and female police officers.

The results in Table 4 tell us that there were no gender differences in preferences for advancement, even when we compared students with similar family obligations and age. The difference between men and women was minimal and insignificant. Turning to the other results in the table, we find that students who are living with a partner were slightly more interested in advancement. This could be because of their responsibility as family providers. However, the difference is very small (0.14

on a scale from 0 to 4) and should not be over-interpreted. Table 4 also shows that the older students seemed to place less importance on the opportunities for advancement. The younger students were slightly more ambitious. Again, we should remember that although significant, the differences are small (0.1–0.3 on a scale from 0 to 4).

DISCUSSION: WHY DO WE FIND LIMITED GENDER DIFFERENCES IN CAREER AMBITIONS?

How can we explain the relative similarities in the preferences of the male and female police recruits? Several scholars have pointed out that women in the police seem to adopt the culture to a large degree (P. Dick & Cassell, 2004; Holdaway & Parker, 1998; Österlind & Haake, 2010). During their first weeks of training, when our students were sampled, their experience with police culture was very limited. However, they may already have gone through the process of anticipatory socialisation, 'a process through which individuals prepare themselves for police work prior to the entry into the organisation' (Chan, Devery, & Doran, 2003, p. 62). If so, the students would have been influenced by the myths and stories of the police, and adjusted their habitus according to rules defined by the admission requirements and their own ideas about the police. Hence, both male and female police students may already have adjusted their preferences and ambitions according to the dominant police culture.

Another explanation of the small gender differences in career ambitions is the rigorous selection process that students go through. To be admitted to police education in Norway, applicants must pass physical tests, have good grades and be accepted in an interview where motivation is emphasised (PHS, 2011). This means that the young women who are recruited are a selected group, high achievers who are

strongly motivated. The female police students have already flouted stereotypical gender roles by choosing a traditionally male-dominated profession. In addition, they live in a country where having a career and a family life is portrayed as feasible. These factors can explain the relatively high career ambitions found among the female police recruits in Norway.

Our results revealed small differences in preferences at the beginning of police training, implying that this is of very limited importance in explaining the different career patterns of male and female police officers. This finding is not in accordance with preference theory, which as we have seen, highlights gender differences in initial preferences. According to preference theory, most men will be work oriented: focused on work, career, competitive activities and career investment. However, most women will be adaptive: wishing to combine work and family life or home centred. We found no traces of such differences in our data on police recruits. Their initial preferences were remarkably similar. Hence, Hakim's theory of different initial preferences (Hakim, 2002) seems to have very limited value in explaining career differences in a selected sample such as these police recruits.

The next question will obviously be how to explain the career differences that do exist. The data in our study give limited opportunities for testing the objective constraints and schemas of competing devotions theories (although, as we shall see, some implications can be drawn from the minimal effects of family obligations on career ambitions). However, previous research in the police profession provides an interesting opportunity to discuss the application of these theories to police work. According to the objective constraints theory, the reason for gender differences can be found in objective barriers that hinder women's possibilities for promotion (Charles & Harris,

2007; Leira & Ellingsæter, 2006). One traditional explanation highlights discrimination. For example, Burke and Mikkelsen (2005) found that female police officers in Norway claimed that women experience greater difficulties than men in pursuing a career in the Norwegian police, and that this is partly because of discrimination. From the US, Harrington (2003) gives a personal account of the mistrust and barriers faced by an experienced female police officer, and Haar (2005) claims that when women drop out of police work, gender discrimination is an important reason (although these conclusions need to be tested on larger samples).

An interesting line of research highlights how women, as members of a minority group in the workplace, run the risk of being regarded as representatives ('tokens') of their group, not as individuals (Kanter, 1977). This can lead to role entrapment, boundary heightening, social isolation and performance pressure, all factors that are likely to hinder the possibilities of promotion. Wertch (1998) convincingly demonstrates how these mechanisms are affecting women in the police, and many of her results are replicated in a more recent study by Archbold and Schulz (2008). However, Archbold and Schulz's findings contradict Wertch's on some important points. Specifically, most of the women in their study do not report that they feel isolated at work. In addition, many of them have experienced that the encouragement they get from male supervisors to apply for promotion actually dissuaded them, because they felt that they were likely to be promoted just because they were women. This leads to the conclusion that tokenism in the workplace is still existent, but needs to be reconsidered. A reconsideration may especially be needed in countries such as Norway, where women today make up 20 per cent of the sworn officers, and hence exceeds the 15 per cent that Kanter originally described as

the maximum size of a token group (Kanter).

Besides discrimination and tokenism, several other explanations of career differences are also plausible. Earlier studies have pointed to certain structures in the police profession that hinder the progress of female officers. A career in police work requires extensive experience as a police officer, especially experience from patrolling (P. Dick & Cassell; Österlind & Haake). Female police officers are more likely than male officers to lack the experience and skills needed to apply for promotions. Quite similarly, Silvestri (2006) claims that the traditional male career model in police work hinders women's promotions. A career in the police demands years of service, long working hours and varied experiences, which often involves relocation. All of this is difficult to achieve for women with care responsibilities. P. Dick and Cassell also showed that careers in police work follow a set trajectory in which one must 'serve time' as an operational frontline officer before applying for promotion. This often coincides with the period in life when women are most likely to have children. The authors question whether the nature of police work really is a hindrance for female police officers. In addition, one might ask whether the physical aspects of the job and the early retirement age, which implies that the career advancement must be made at a relatively young age, make career advancement for women in police work especially difficult.

Studies from other professions find that gender divisions in career achievement and promotion are less likely to be explained by career preferences than by the division of childcare in the family (Halrynjo & Lyng, 2010). Women in police work report greater conflict between home and work than men do, and they are more likely than men to regard potential conflicts with domestic commitments as a hindrance to

their career ambitions (Archbold & Hassell, 2009; Holdaway & Parker; Wertch; Whetstone, 2001; Whetstone & Wilson, 1999). This seems to be especially pronounced for female police officers whose husbands are also police officers, because they have to deal with both parents doing shift work (Archbold & Hassell; Whetstone & Wilson). However, we should also note that dealing with family issues is not necessarily the most important reason policewomen give to explain why they do not apply for promotions. As for men, other reasons they often state for not seeking promotion include being content with their current position, preferring present assignment/shift and being undecided about the future (Holdaway & Parker; Whetstone; Whetstone & Wilson).

It is also interesting to note that our results showed a very limited impact of marital status and parenthood status on leadership ambitions, and this was true for both female and male students. This finding may indicate that family situations, and hence maybe also the theory of objective constraints, are of limited importance when explaining early differences in career ambitions. The limited importance of family situation in our data, compared with previous studies (Archbold & Hassell; Holdaway & Parker; Whetstone), may be explained by welfare arrangements which make the combination of family life and working life easier in Norway than in many other countries. For example, the parental leave in Norway is almost a year with full pay, and childcare is relatively cheap and easily available. However, one should remember that welfare arrangements that contribute to keeping women out of work for a long period also could be a disadvantage for women's career advancement (Gupta, Smith, & Verner, 2008).

It is also important to point out the difference between preferences and the actual practices. Studies of other professions

in Norway found no gender differences in preferences for career and leadership, regardless of family status. However, the gender differences in actual career realisation were strongly related to motherhood and childcare responsibility (Halrynjo & Lyng). The difference between our results and the other studies may be partly explained by the fact that the women in our study still have very limited experience of combining work and family life. Empirically, this should be further explored using longitudinal and comparative data, which will provide us with information about officers who have more experience trying to combine work and family life.

CAREER PREFERENCES AND THE RECRUITMENT OF WOMEN TO LEADERSHIP POSITIONS IN THE POLICE

We have found that male and female police students have quite similar career preferences. The multivariate analyses showed that the students' aspirations for promotion were relatively independent of marital status, parenthood status and age. They also showed that gender differences are very small when we compare students with similar family obligations. Our results indicate that preference theory, which highlights different initial preferences among men and women, does not adequately explain gendered career differences in police work. Theories that highlight objective constraints and socially constructed schemas of devotions should be explored further for the police profession.

One limitation of this study is that we were only able to describe career preferences at one point: when the students had just started their police training. Our results do not tell us whether the preferences of male and female police students will change over time, when they are confronted with the realities of everyday police work.

Longitudinal research is needed to determine whether career preferences change over time, and especially whether women tend to recalibrate their relatively high initial ambitions. Longitudinal data could also be used to check whether students' initial preferences predict their career paths. Do those with high initial ambitions go on to become leaders? Because our results showed gender-neutral initial preferences, other reasons for gender differences in police careers should be explored in further research. Judging from previous research (eg, Halrynjo, 2010; Silvestri, 2006), the possibilities for combining a career in police work with care responsibilities stands out as a particularly important subject that could be explored using, for example, qualitative interviews and/or quantitative data to describe the relationship between career paths and family trajectories.

What should be done if the goal is to increase women's representation in leadership positions in the police? A strategy that encourages women to apply for leadership positions has a risk of backfiring: female police officers have reported that they do not want to apply for leadership positions, because they fear that they will be promoted only because they are women (Archbold et al., 2010). When our main finding is that men and women have very similar aspirations for promotion, lack of motivation is not the main reason why female police officers are less likely to be promoted. If the reasons for women's lower promotion rate are to be found in the experiences they have after joining the force, efforts should be made to examine the division of care responsibilities between mothers and fathers and/or the organisation of police work and careers. Several studies have suggested that special demands in the career model of police work make it difficult to combine a police career with care responsibilities (Archbold et al.; P. Dick & Cassell, 2004; Österlind & Haake, 2010;

Silvestri). Our results suggest that male and female police recruits are equally ambitious. However, because women may be hindered by the special demands of a police career, we might ask whether these demands really are necessary for creating good police leaders, or whether the conditions to meet the demands could be distributed on a more gender-neutral basis. Further research also needs to explore whether the cultural schema of family devotion hinders female police officers in realising their initial career aspirations after childbirth — and to what degree this schema can and will be challenged.

NOTE

1. To see whether the effects of the independent variables are different for men and women, we also tested interaction terms between sex and age, marital status and parenthood status. None of these was significant.

REFERENCES

- Archbold, C. A., & Hassell, K. D. (2009). Paying a marriage tax: an examination of the barriers to the promotion of female police officers. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management*, 32, 56–74.
- Archbold, C. A., & Schulz, D. M. (2008). Making rank: The lingering effects of tokenism on female police. *Police Quarterly*, 11, 50–73.
- Archbold, C. A., Hassell, K. D., & Stichman, A. J. (2010). Comparing promotion aspirations among female and male police officers. *International Journal of Police Science and Management*, 12, 287–303.
- Blair-Loy, M. (2003). *Competing devotions: Career and family among women executives*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Burke, R. J., & Mikkelsen, A. (2005). Gender issues in policing: Do they matter? *Women in Management Review*, 20, 133–143.
- Chan, J. B. L., Devery, C., & Doran, S. (2003). *Fair cop: Learning the art of policing*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Charles, N., & Harris, C. (2007). Continuity and change in work–life balance choices. *British Journal of Sociology*, 58, 277–295.
- Chu, D., & Sun, I. Y. (2007). Female police officers' job-related attitudes. *Women & Criminal Justice*, 18, 107–130.
- Dick, G., & Metcalfe, B. (2007). The progress of female police officers? An empirical analysis of organisational commitment and tenure explanations in two UK police forces. *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 20, 81–100.
- Dick, P., & Cassell, C. (2004). The position of policewomen: A discourse analytic study. *Work, Employment and Society*, 18, 51–72.
- Dodge, M., Valcore, L., & Klinger, D. A. (2010). Maintaining separate spheres in policing: women on SWAT teams. *Women & Criminal Justice*, 20, 218–238.
- Finstad, L. (1998). En av gutta? Om kjønn i politiet. In A. Kongstad, B. Kyvsgaard & A. Storgaard (Eds.), *Kvinder på randen* (pp. 180–198). Aarhus: Aarhus Universitetsforlag.
- Gupta, N. D., Smith, N., & Verner, M. (2008). De økonomiske effekter af familievenlig politik i de nordiske lande. *Søkelys på arbeidslivet*, 25, 142–151.
- Haar, R. N. (2005). Factors affecting the decision of police recruits to 'drop out' of police work. *Police Quarterly*, 8, 431–453.
- Hakim, C. (2002). Lifestyle preferences as determinants of women's differentiated labor market careers. *Work and Occupations*, 29, 428–459.
- Halrynjo, S. (2010). *Mødre og fedre i møte med karrierelegikkens spilleregler. Hva skjer med høyt utdannede kvinners og menns karriere- og familietilpasning når de får barn? Og hvordan kan tilpasningene forklares?* Oslo: Unipub.
- Halrynjo, S., & Lyng, S. T. (2009). Preferences, constraints or schemas of devotion? Exploring Norwegian mothers' withdrawals from high-commitment careers. *British Journal of Sociology*, 60(2), 321–343.
- Halrynjo, S., & Lyng, S. T. (2010). Fars forkjørsrett – mors vikeplikt? Karriere,

- kjønn og omsorgsansvar i eliteprofesjoner. *Tidsskrift for Samfunnsforskning*, 51, 249–275.
- Harrington, P. E. (2003). Advice to women beginning a career in policing. *Women & Criminal Justice*, 14, 1–13.
- Holdaway, S., & Parker, S. K. (1998). Policing women police. Uniform patrol, promotion and representation in the CID. *British Journal of Criminology*, 38, 40–60.
- Høigård, C. (2009). Denmark, Norway and Sweden: Extensive works and broad themes. In P. Ponsaers, C. Tange & L. v. Ouirve (Eds.), *Insights on Police* (pp. 325–377). Bruxelles: Bruylant.
- Kanter, R. M. (1977). Some effects of proportions on group life – Skewed sex-ratios and responses to token women. *American Journal of Sociology*, 82, 965–990.
- Lagestad, P. (2011). 'Fysisk styrke eller bare prat'. *Om kjønn, fysisk trening og ordenstjeneste i politiet*. (PhD dissertation). Oslo: Norwegian School of Sport Sciences.
- Leira, A., & Ellingsæter, A. L. (2006). *Politicising Parenthood in Scandinavia. Gender Relations in Welfare States*. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Österlind, M., & Haake, U. (2010). The leadership discourse amongst female police leaders in Sweden. *Advancing Women in Leadership Journal*, 30(16), 1–24.
- PHS (2011). Entry requirements. Retrieved 28 March 2011 from <http://www.phs.no/en/Studies1/Bachelor--Police-studies-1/Entrance-requirements/>
- Politidirektoratet. (2011). Plan for mangfoldsarbeidet i politi- og lensamennsetaten 2008–2013. Retrieved 1 July 2011 from https://www.politi.no/vedlegg/rapport/Vedlegg_562.pdf
- Prenzler, T., Fleming, J., & King, A. L. (2010). Gender equity in Australian and New Zealand policing: A five-year review. *International Journal of Police Science and Management*, 12, 584–595.
- Reiner, R. (2000). *The Politics of the Police*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Silvestri, M. (2006). 'Doing time': Becoming a police leader. *International Journal of Police Science and Management*, 8, 266–281.
- SPS (2011). StudData – Database for studies of recruitment and qualification in the professions. Retrieved 28 March 2011 from <http://www.hio.no/content/view/full/10591>
- Vuorensyrjä, M. (2011). Education, experience and earnings. The career co-ordinates of female vis-à-vis male police officers in Finland. Submitted to *Police Practice and Research*.
- Wertch, T. L. (1998). Walking the thin blue line. *Women & Criminal Justice*, 9, 23–61.
- Wexler, J. G., & Quinn, V. (1985). Considerations in the training and development of women sergeants. *Journal of Police Science and Administration*, 13, 98–105.
- Whetstone, T. S. (2001). Copping out: Why police officers decline to participate in the sergeant's promotional process. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, 25, 147–159.
- Whetstone, T. S., & Wilson, D. G. (1999). Dilemmas confronting female police officer promotional candidates: Glass ceiling, disenfranchisement or satisfaction? *International Journal of Police Science and Management*, 2, 128–143.
- Wimshurst, K. (1995). Anticipating the future: The early experiences and career expectations of women police recruits in post-Fitzgerald Queensland. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, 28, 278–297.