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ASPECTS OF DISCRIMINATORY TREATMENT OF WOMEN POLICE OFFICERS SERVING IN FORCES IN ENGLAND AND WALES

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The British Journal of Criminology, Volume 38, Issue 2, 1 March 1998, Pages 265–282,
<https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordjournals.bjc.a014235>

Published: 01 March 1998

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Abstract

Discriminatory treatment is defined in terms of limited job related opportunities and exposure to sexual harassment. The structural status of women police in England and Wales in terms of rank and role is described by reference to secondary analysis of national data from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary. This reveals limited access of women officers to higher rank and specialist roles. Differential deployment and sexual harassment are explored by means of a questionnaire survey conducted in several British police forces. Results indicate widespread exposure to harassment and other forms of discriminatory treatment. The persistence of discrimination is demonstrated by reference to recent surveys by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and policemen's resistance to women colleagues is discussed in terms of occupational culture. Some elaboration of the sex-role spillover thesis is offered in the light of policewomen's experiences.

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Online ISSN 1464-3529

Print ISSN 0007-0955

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