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Managing women's post retirement career in law enforcement organisations: lessons from developed nations for emerging economies

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Abstract: This paper explores protean careers US and Australian policewomen seek post retirement. Two research questions address why policewomen seek a protean career after retirement from law enforcement. The study utilised a phenomenological approach involving semi-structured interviews conducted with 40 policewomen in middle and top management roles in the USA and Australia. Analysis of data involved coding for emergent themes based on the interpretivist research philosophy. Interview transcripts of 40 policewomen from these countries show that more than 90% of the women from the USA were aggressively seeking to develop protean careers while that was not the case in Australian law enforcement. The paper demonstrates the current situation in the USA and Australia; and how it can conceptualise models for emerging economies. It provides important lessons for women in organisations, especially in emerging economies on how to create protean careers post retirement.

Keywords: post retirement career; self-determination theory; law enforcement organisations; managing women's career.

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1 Introduction

Law enforcement is a para-military organisation along with the defence force, air force, and navy. Largely, these law enforcements are male populated and women still occupy a statistical minority in the overall numbers employed (Prenzler and Sinclair, 2013). There is scant literature on gender studies in mainstream literature with even further paucity on women in policing at the middle and top level. Despite significant progress made by women in the workforce, they still face difficulties in entering into senior leadership roles. Exacerbated and further limited by the professionally active policewomen that must retire because of mandatory retirement policies. The shift in contemporary law enforcement has turned to austerity and the impact of retirement and the aging population of the law enforcement in general (Wilson and Heinonen, 2012).

Major studies on women in paid employment confirm the slow progress of women in key leadership roles. The paucity of policewomen in the organisation may not be debated in the near future as governments prepare for dealings with the workforce rather than the diversity that policewomen can bring to the organisation.

While it has been widely agreed that the competitive advantage in today's knowledge economy is human aptitude, this is becoming scarcer because of labour shortages (Bartlett and Ghoshal, 2002; Frank et al., 2004). This being the case, policewomen studied in this paper have an added advantage over their male colleagues because of their tertiary qualifications; their intent to develop a protean career. Extant literature has covered protean careers of both genders, with limited female applications, and this study allows for considering female police officers.

For the purpose of this paper, a definition of emerging economy is defined as being less developed in their financial, legal and economic status; preceded with the notion that emerging economies lack innovation and have a bigger challenge being able to compete with other markets (Chattopadhyay et al., 2012; Lee et al., 2015; Sun et al., 2015). Contextually, protean career is relatively innovative in law enforcement, albeit the organisations do not tap into this pool of talent that incrementally outflows to other organisations.

To transition into a corporate career has its challenges and further research into the transition is not part of the scope of this study. Broadening the pool of organisations, to include other para-military organisations viz., the navy, the army and the air force, suggests how protean careers post retirement can create a significant relief to the labour market shortage.

Individuals in law enforcement develop skills that are unique and robust at an early career age when they enter the academy. Mostly both men and women enter the academy as a first job, where they are inculcated into a gendered leadership. Subsequently trained into a stable linear career. With embodied extensive skill set over a lengthy period of service, para-military organisations unwittingly are not fully optimising the available talent. Incrementally there is a talent drain to a corporate career.

Hewlett (2007) purports that more than 21 million baby boomers would retire in the next decade and there would be a severe labour shortage to fill those vacant positions. OECD (2013) supports these statistics with German demographics indicative of a challenge on society where there is an increase in life expectancy and low birth rates. Subsequently there is a strain on the governments to fund retirement benefits with skilled labour and a younger insecure generation with little job stability (Dubois and Anderson, 2012; Gramke et al., 2010). In the face of volatile economic environment coupled with personal life styles, individuals are also becoming self-directed in their careers (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996; DeFillippi and Arthur, 1994; Feldman, 2002; Gunz et al., 2000; Hall, 2002; Roehling et al., 2000).

This study examines on a sample that is rarely studied; however, the findings apply to other organisations as transferable skills and capabilities. By contributing to other sectors in the economy ranging from non-government organisations, and the not for profit sector, both of which play a crucial role in the strengthening of the fabric of emerging economies.

2 New lens on protean career

Generally, men and women begin their careers with similar goals. However, over time and through changes in lifestyle viz., family responsibilities, child rearing, carer roles and semi-retirement, invariably a break in the careers occur (Becker and Moen, 1999; Cabrera, 2009; Hull and Nelson, 2000) particularly for the women. Protean careers reflect an individual managing a career through personal skill sets, within their lived experience, to fulfil their intrinsic needs (Fletcher, 1996; Hall, 1976; Hall and Moss, 1998; Hall and Harrington, 2004). Building on Crant's (2000, p.436) definition of proactive behaviour it includes "taking initiative in improving current circumstances or creating new ones; it involves challenging the status quo rather than passively adapting to present conditions". It also means the individuals planning their own career paths rather than waiting for the organisation (Giacolone and Rosenfeld, 1990; Wayne and Liden, 1995). Conversely, career progression is becoming less of the organisation's responsibility and the onus is on the individual to manage their careers.

Contemporarily, developing a protean career is considered as being the most innovative strategy to create new careers for the individual (Hall, 2004). There is a shift in the dynamics between the employer and employee where the latter takes charge of the career rather than the responsibility shouldered by the organisation. In this instance, the employee is able to factor in self-fulfilment and other variables deemed important to self. When developing a protean career, the individual possesses a stronger skill set as compared to when they initially commenced their first career. Subsequently giving the individual a greater choice of employment and a competitive advantage over others. Vardi (1991) notes that although the more conservative may prefer to remain in similar positions.

Furthermore, organisations have shifted the responsibilities to the individual, allowing proactive, self-directed, motivated and energised approaches. Sullivan and Mainiero (2007) who link career patterns to the innate ability of the individual discuss the alpha/beta pattern; hence, the decision-making process on embracing the requirements to

career progression is a personal decision of the individual. Conversely, the individual is in control and ultimately would be a better performer in the organisation.

Women and men define careers differently, the former view career success as being subjective (personal satisfaction) while the latter view career success through a more traditional lens where success is measured through monetary rewards or progression on the corporate ladder (Lirio et al., 2007; Sturges, 1999; Pachilicz et al., 2008; Valcour and Ladge, 2008; Wise and Millward, 2005). McDonald et al. (2005) agree that men have longer-term goals, reflecting a linear career path, than women. Which attributes to women having to interrupt their careers temporarily to fulfil family responsibilities and later re-enter the workforce. Sargent and Domberger's (2007) study found a unique value in protean careers characterised by individuals internalising and adding personal enrichment and a sense of giving back to the community.

3 The policewoman through self-determination lens

Hall (1976, 2002) purports that when there is a strong desire to self-manage one's career it represents an aspect of self-determination and being motivated to take charge over the individual's career path. Building on this is an empirical study conducted by Mainiero and Sullivan (2005) [cited in Ortiz-Walters (2010)] who reports that almost half of the 497 respondents who were highly qualified professional women left their employment at some stage of their career. The reasons cited by the respondents were a change in career focus and family responsibilities. Marini and Brinton [cited in Ortiz-Walters, (2010), p.107] notes, "individuals with strong feminine identities place emphasis on family responsibilities and their role as home makers". Eagly et al. (2000) further compound this and O'Neil (1981) view that family responsibilities take precedence over career. Those who returned to the work force looked for flexibility and life balance. Within this context, questions arise about women's ability to acquire leadership positions in gendered organisations and the need for a dramatic reconfiguration of organisational culture (Alvesson and Billing, 2009; Still, 1994).

Invisible obstacles and limited promotion opportunities make it extremely challenging female police officers to progress. Litzky and Greenhaus (2007) found that women were less inclined compared to men in their aspirations to senior positions, because the women perceived "incongruence between their personal characteristics and senior management", leading them to believe opportunities for them was scant. Much debate surrounds a workforce in general and it is important that research build around women who work in gendered organisations such as police; as contemporary literature suggests, challenges would be different for women in relation to work and family responsibilities in another type of organisation.

4 Retirement age in policing

A relatively unexplored issue that has the potential to hamper the motivation of police officers is the retirement age in policing, which varies from state to state, and between jurisdictions, relatively a global phenomenon. Table 1 is a breakdown of the retirement age for police officers in the USA and Australia. The difference of ten years (age 55 to age 65) in the available retirement ages is not readily explainable if police universally

perform the same jobs; however, the nominated age is a decision uniquely set by the jurisdiction.

The organisational logic pivots on the argument that the nature of policing requires physically fit and healthy police officers. However, the rationale does not take into consideration the fact that women who have been away from work for a period for family responsibilities may now be at a stage in their lives where they can concentrate wholly on their careers.

Table 1 Australia and USA police retirement ages

<i>Country – Australia</i>	<i>Retirement age</i>	<i>Prerequisite</i>	<i>Comments</i>
New South Wales	55		State jurisdiction
Queensland	60		State jurisdiction
Northern territory	65		State jurisdiction
Tasmania	65		State jurisdiction
Western Australia	55		State jurisdiction
Victoria	55		State jurisdiction
Australian federal police	55		Federal jurisdiction
United States – Federal Agencies'	57	Mandatory	Federal jurisdictions
	57	Negotiable	State jurisdictions – retirement age is negotiable but not recommended

5 Police career transition

Unlike other professions, police training and employment is intensive and only a minority make it through the academy past the rigorous training. Overall, it is a costly exercise to train recruits into police officers (Lonsway et al., 2002). Policing, as a career is unique, characterised with the perception that law enforcement provides a linear career for life, gradually moving through several career progressions with secured income and subsequent power in a hierarchical organisation (Levinson, 1978; Super, 1957). However, over the decades, with careers being redefined progressively, there is a strong awareness amongst policewomen to approach their careers partly as an instrument to create another career (Jones, 1996; Saxenian, 1996).

Practically this implies that from a traditional hierarchical para-military environment the individual now has to develop a competitive advantage to compete in the business world. This phenomenon is studied with policewomen as they prepare to move from a rigid bureaucracy to a dynamic corporate world. Contextually protean careers for policewomen reflect a slight shift from the traditional meaning where the individual develops a set of new skills while working in law enforcement.

Traditionally protean careers are developed and self-directed by the individual who moves to another career once they are qualified. An additional challenge exists for the individual who moves from a rigid environment to one of fluidity as the transition has its own sets of challenges in adapting to the new environment (Ashkenas et al., 1995; Drucker, 1999; Goleman, 1996). Feeling employable reduces the stress of job insecurity

especially for policewomen who may feel that the gendered organisation environment leaves little chance of promotion to senior positions. Hence creating a protean career gives the individual the freedom to be self-directed.

Schein's (1978) early work describes the role of professional/self-identity where professional identity evolves over the course of one's career. When policewomen are in the 'vacuum' of inherent gendered leadership, there are two salient effects: either they embrace the gendered leadership and conditions or they decide to pursue a protean career outside the institution. There is scant literature of whether being in the 'vacuum' catapults the decision making to seek another non-policing career.

However, data shows that women leave only after retirement; optimising all the benefits that are offered as a retirement package. Contextually, the preparation for the next career is developed; and on hold until the individual has left the organisation on mandatory retirement. Mandatory retirement policies differ between state and federal law enforcement where mandatory retirement age of 57 years or 22 years of service applies only to federal law enforcement, while being negotiable within state law enforcement.

6 Methods

The policewomen represented both state and federal law enforcement and were chosen through a snow balling sampling. The cohorts had some form of leadership experience hence only middle and top level policewomen were sought for this study. That was an important criterion as the individuals can reflect on their own ambitions and future career paths in policing; draw on their lived experiences, particularly in relation to promotional progress within their organisation. At this stage the individuals would consider being self-directed in the career.

Qualitative research places as an activity in the lived experiences and the meanings attached to them through text rather than interpreting meaning through numerical data (Flick, 2007; Pathak et al., 2013). All respondents were given a hard copy of a non-complex questionnaire using nominal and ordinal scales to measure the individual's demographic data. It was designed to elicit information on occupation, education and biographical data to assist in the triangulation process; e.g., questions about the length of service, highest qualifications attained, and age, in order to supplement the later interview data. The questionnaire was designed to get a clear picture of the individual's age, qualifications, length of service and career plans.

In qualitative research, there is impetus to explore and examine the phenomenological paradigm; hence, in this study, encapsulating both exploratory and explanatory elements. A compelling argument for the examination of the policewomen developing protean careers approach in a qualitative paradigm is the capacity it provides for exploring and describing the phenomena (Marshall and Roshan, 1995). The questions aimed at achieving an understanding of the respondents' interest in creating additional skill sets and their exposure to decision-making. Furthermore, the qualitative approach employs a broad range of interconnected methods to interpret and make meanings of phenomena (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). The alignment of exploratory and explanatory components in this qualitative study allowed for a new perspective for approaching the policewomen and their development of a second career while being in service. Furthermore, it gives a new perspective as to how the individual perceives self when self-directing a career.

Furthermore, the study spans two different countries where there are different political, historical, legal and social impacts on respondents. How they perceive the social phenomena adds complexity to the qualitative inquiry grounded in individual's understanding of their lived experience (Leitch et al., 2010). Qualitative research uses a naturalistic setting (Vrasidas, 2001). Contextually, that is important in this study, in seeking to understand the comparison of different social settings of respondents in Australia and the USA.

In a phenomenological study with face-to-face interviews, it is important to have a meeting place where the respondents feel familiar and are comfortable in expressing their lived experiences, even though they may not be located all in one area (Creswell, 2005). The respondents sampled were from policing organisations in Minnesota, Washington DC and Los Angeles, Perth, Melbourne, Sydney and Canberra. With the US respondents, the researcher was able to conduct several telephone interviews due to geographical location and accessibility. The respondents in this research were office-based policewomen. The work-site was chosen as the location for the interviews for two reasons: firstly, some respondents were in covert positions and being seen at an interview session external to their work place was not safe. Secondly, to ensure that the office environment was conducive to the respondents for convenience and being in an office environment, there was potential for the researcher to observe and collect secondary data.

7 Analysis

Data suggests that developing another career is a trend predominantly amongst policewomen rather than policemen. Baruch and Quick (2007) in their study of second careers of US navy admirals found that many of the respondents preferred to seek jobs that were similar to their first career (navy), which is in contrast to the policewomen in this research who preferred to seek positions that are not related to law enforcement.

Age is not an issue for those seeking a protean career (Baruch and Quick, 2007), reflected in the respondents who did not find their age or the perception of retirement an issue. A difference in attitude was however noted in this study where the policemen worked until retirement age. The policemen generally do not take the earlier option of 22 years' service retirement as they were not keen on a second career, unlike the policewomen. The majority of the policewomen were keen to complete the earlier age retirement option which is a completion of 22 years' service instead of reaching the age of 57 to retire.

8 Economic incentives

The US cohorts find it stressful having to develop a protean career, as one respondent says, "except in this economy, that is why a lot of us are hanging on. We can retire, but cannot retire". The economic reasoning is opposite amongst the Australian respondents, who prefer to retire because, "women have more interests and know that this job is not their life", and: "there are other things women want to explore". Although Australian law enforcement has encouraged a particular retirement age, Australian respondents are able to work longer and the government encourages later retirement due to the national

economic climate. Moreover, the Australian respondents do not experience the demand to develop new skills to seek another career after retirement.

9 Retirement drivers

Retirement is not optional for police as both US and Australian governments have a stipulated age when the individual must retire, a practice applicable in most para-military organisations globally. Retirement has a larger impact on the US policewomen than their Australian counterparts; because of the USA government policies and legislation which are difficult for negotiation at an organisational level. Hence, a number of policewomen strategise for a second career. One respondent explained the retirement policy in the USA:

“The federal law enforcement does stipulate; you have to go at 57 or you can get a waiver. In fact, in my previous job, I did waivers; you can get a waiver for 60. That is granted by the President, but in other law enforcement you can work until you want to ... the federal government is the only mandatory retiring age as they think law enforcement is a young and vigour profession that is why they force them out at 57.”

However, in regard to State law enforcement, a top-level respondent stated, “my job at the XXX – I had a gentleman working for me and he was 72 years old. Therefore, in some urban and state law enforcement, you may have people there who are 60 years old, they could have 40 years’ service, and that is not uncommon depending on the retirement”.

The compulsory retirement age is dependent on different laws in different countries, even though these are along similar job parameters globally. There is limited research in the USA on policy differences, between federal and state local law enforcement rules on retirement age. Ascertaining that people live longer, consideration can be given to extending retirement age beyond the current policy.

Some respondents see retirement policy as a window of opportunity to develop another career: similarly, the individual may see it as a sense of liberation to pursue other interests. Although some respondents welcome the retirement age when they have to retire, most participants are concerned about their financial status, which increases anxiety, as the individual has to begin planning for the future while still being in the organisation. One respondent stated, “men will stay till they are 57; more women will leave before that”. Another participant observed, “I think generally that people want to do some more work”. An alternative viewpoint was that, “most do not wait for 57”.

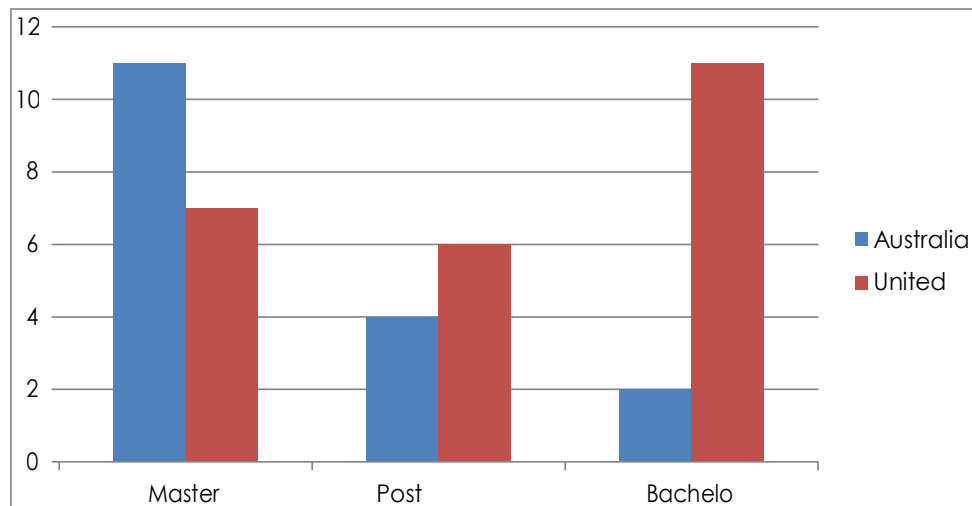
The majority of the US respondents admitted they were under pressure to develop additional skills for a post retirement career. This was applicable more so to US federal law enforcement than to state policing. The respondents perceived the economic situation as being the key issue why policewomen cannot retire, “except in this economy that is why a lot of us are hanging on. We can retire, but cannot retire”.

10 Qualifications

Women have used education to increase their human capital (Burke and Mattis, 2005). Frustrated by lack opportunities within the organisation, they self-direct their career

paths. The graph (Figure 1) below shows data that is derived from the nominal questionnaire. Besides gauging a comparison between the US and Australian cohorts on the level of education that the respondents have acquired it was also to see the relevance to competitive advantage.

Figure 1 Qualification of women in Australia and USA (see online version for colours)



More Australian policewomen have post tertiary qualification viz., Master's degrees compared to US counterparts. One US respondent stated about her organisation's view on higher qualifications, "it does not recognise any other qualifications so we stop tertiary qualifications in the USA".

US policewomen have not been motivated to continue postgraduate studies during employment; hence the low numbers by comparison with those in Australia. The rationale as to why organisations do not encourage individuals to pursue other education other than law enforcement is that traditionally professional qualifications necessary for police service align to law enforcement and security courses. The undertaking of business studies, for example is seen as irrelevant to the organisation, as other individuals who are non – law enforcement professionals in the area, deliver that service. There is a contradiction here that even though the US cohorts have fewer qualifications, they are keener to develop protean careers as opposed to the Australian cohort. US policewomen are more determined to seek another career post retirement, albeit with less tertiary qualifications.

The police entry qualification level in the USA is a Bachelor's degree, while that is not necessary in the Australian context, subsequently US policewomen do agree on the value of qualifications to policing. Education appeared to be one of the key reasons why women wanted to create a protean career. Having advanced education assisted the women to up skill their skill sets that can be related to being self-directed in their career management.

The policewomen's dissatisfaction with their jobs leads them to develop skill sets that would provide them with both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. Lawler et al. (1968) strengthen the argument that organisational structures that are well melded provide

satisfaction for its individuals hence there is less motivation for the employees to seek employment elsewhere.

11 Findings and discussions

In order to facilitate a comparative study, the focus was on women in US and Australian law enforcement agencies. For rigour and validity, the researcher compared the 'lived experiences' of policewomen in state and federal law enforcement of both countries and their plans in developing a protean career. The experiences and challenges identified in the paper are similar in that they relate to a gendered organisation (law enforcement) that, additionally, has a para-military context. By using a qualitative approach, the methodology provided ways to develop deep insight into the lived experiences of the policewomen and the reasons why they aggressively develop new skill sets.

Comparing the findings in this study with those of the literature review represents a fresh view of how policewomen are represented in law enforcement. More often the extant literature points either to a quantitative study based on past data on several law enforcement agencies in the USA or to pockets of general policing where women are disadvantaged because of inherently gendered leadership and organisation. Published data on police organisations does not cover education, family responsibilities, protean careers and/or retirement. The current study has covered these aspects of policing, enabling a perspective that encapsulates the whole career of a policewoman in a qualitative study within a phenomenological paradigm.

However, the findings from this study point to a new paradigm where the policewoman that is placed in a gendered organisation makes a shift in her career decision to either remain or move her career forward through upward mobility. In this research, the relevance of the findings is discussed, and the shift from the current literature to add to the body of knowledge is identified. Findings from this study answer the research questions, where both positive and negative perceptions emerged as part of each research question. While the participants' lived experiences had commonalities and contrasts, all participants agreed that policing was a unique vocation and felt it was the individual's responsibility to be self-directed. Analysis from the data uncovered the emergence of several key recurring themes. The themes shape the discussion and the research was concluded with new findings that contribute to theory and management policies.

The theory contribution compounds that the policewomen make informed decisions to create a career path post retirement, thus underpinning parts of the self-determination theory. This became evident where middle-level policewomen, even after a decade of being a police officer, was not convinced that they wanted to move up the career ladder and preferred developing a protean career.

It is a double bind for US policewomen who have tertiary qualifications with an academic stream outside law enforcement; this is reflected in the organisation not being bound to invest in the individual. Logically, it is evident that the organisation is able to procure sundry talents elsewhere, so policewomen are not recognised for having talents or qualifications outside of policing. However, US respondents actively seek to complete tertiary qualifications in a broad range of fields because they require additional skills for a protean career once they retire from law enforcement. There appears to be a gap between the organisational need and the individual's needs where the incompatibility in

the skills shortage is apparent when the individual is clearly developing skills for a career outside law enforcement. Once again, the onus is on the individual to decide the career path during and after retirement from law enforcement.

Data shows that US policewomen start their preparation for a second career at middle management level, where their focus is at that level and the subsequent decision is not to progress, career wise, within policing. Consequently, the organisation limits its development of policewomen who are preparing for post career qualifications. Moreover, their career progression is not organic, unlike the case for US policemen who mostly remain until retirement age, and develop or stagnate within law enforcement.

This is critical for the organisation to invest in the band of middle management policewomen which has not been previously invested through professional development. The organisation invests in the new recruits that have graduated from the Academy. In line with organisational objectives to maintain a young and healthy workforce new skills sets is developed for the individual at the entry level and this appears to decline once the individual moves to the middle management level. The gap remains when the next professional development applies only to the senior management level. It is at this point of career path when the individual decides on a new course of study that is not law enforcement. Critically there is a band of individuals in mid management that is not supported by the organisation through developing skill sets that is salient to up skill to the next career progression. Consequently, the cohorts in the mid band become self-agents on career plans.

The mandatory retirement policy in the US policing jurisdictions has a serious impact on the way women police officers viewed their career paths. Many indicated that the policy resulted in them aspiring to seek further promotion. Relevant research findings show that 90% of the middle managers preferred to take the option of retiring after 20 years of service to pursue a career outside law enforcement, while policemen stayed on to complete their service at the mandatory age of 57 (see Table 1). From the systems point of view, a pool of expertise is lost to policing because of early retirement, i.e., once the female police officers leave the agency. To replace and train new recruits is a costly exercise especially in times of austerity, and an area that needs consideration by organisations. Options of re-engaging women and using policewomen in non-operational positions are areas for future consideration under management policies implication.

The lessons learnt from this study of how law enforcements can utilise the human talent productively is by taking back the responsibility of career progression of those individuals who are developing their protean career. Bias occurs when the individual compromises by developing their skill sets for another organisation while being in one. In justification of the individual, the organisation does not encourage the individual to invest in their professional development. The current policy of retirement age needs to be re-designed and opportunities be offered to individuals who have shown potential. Albeit it is the right of the individual to develop skills the transparency should be viewed as positive rather than negative by the organisation.

Previous studies have not researched into the middle and top – level management roles of policewomen who develop a protean career; neither does the organisation consider the financial impact of training new recruits. However, most extant studies focused on protean careers in a general context, and this study has established critical findings, which have added to the body of knowledge in the protean career discipline and the mobility of policewomen after mandatory retirement. The middle-level policewomen

face critical decisions regarding whether or not they wish to remain in a middle-level management role or develop skills to progress their career further.

The findings can operate at an organisational level where the emphasis is on the women who leave with strong skill sets for another organisation. Questions remain how best this growing trend potentially can benefit within the organisation. It also relatively answers the question of stagnation at middle-level managers who are not interested in developing leadership skills in the gendered organisation. This cohort prefers to utilise their skills elsewhere. The findings are lessons learnt for other organisations to tap into a well-resourced pool of talent that exists within para-military organisations.

For emerging economies, the lessons cover multiple perspectives. One perspective relates to the optimisation of female talent and executive capabilities influencing leadership. Although this study focuses on the intentions of policewomen it is safe to assume that similar trends are likely to occur amongst women in other gendered organisations such as the military. While the under representation of women in senior management roles is a reality shared by both developed and emerging nations, this study suggests that an awareness and understanding of the protean career prospects can assist in extending the contribution of female executives across a range of sectors. Saliently the investment in training and development both by the individual and law enforcement is not unused; but becomes a force in progressing the development of good practices in administration, governance, leadership and management across other sectors and industries in both the private and government sector.

Likewise, to be successful, emerging economies rely heavily on the effective use of public resources and capabilities of senior public executives. This paper suggests that a large number of female police officers at the middle management reach a point of career saturation. Either because of personal interests or ambitions such as academic studies; not fully aligning or unacceptable gendered organisational demands. In order to optimise the investment in training and capabilities of this cohort of mid-managers, the public administrative system would benefit significantly from creating opportunities for transitioning out of the gendered organisations' environment into a protean career. By doing this, female managers' skill set can be utilised, ambitions and subsequent expansion of capabilities, can be re-energised and channelled towards the much needed gender diversity in the executive sphere of these economies.

The limitation of the study is that it focuses on gendered organisations with policewomen as central to the study and their protean career post retirement. The sample size does not implicate the general population thus limiting the generalisability. However, other research on women and protean careers has cited there is a growing trend amongst women who prefer to be self-agents in their career development.

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