Gender, Policing and Social Control:

Examining Police Officers' Perceptions of and

Responses to Young Women Depicted as Violent.

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Declaration

I declare that none of the work contained within this thesis has been submitted for any other degree at any other university. The contents found herein have been composed by the candidate, Suzanne Young.

Acknowledgements

Abstract

In Britain, there have been growing concerns over the increasing female prison population and treatment of girls and women by the criminal justice system (see Carlen and Worrall, 2004; Hedderman, 2004; Batchelor, 2005; Hutson and Myers, 2006; Sharpe, 2009). In particular, there has been a rising female prison population in Scotland which has been associated with greater punitive controls over the behaviour of women (McIvor and Burman, 2011). The British press have depicted a social problem of certain young women becoming more violent and have attributed this to women's liberation, particularly in the night time economy (MacAskill and Goodwin, 2004; Gray, 2006; Evening News, 2008). These concerns have attracted widespread media and political attention leading to a steady growth in academic research exploring the apparent rise of violent young women (Burman et al., 2003; Burman, 2004b; Batchelor, 2005). Despite this, there are relatively few studies that examine responses to young women with an emphasis on violent offences. Furthermore, there is a lack of research that has examined the role police officers have played in the control and depiction of young women's violence.

This research investigates the perceptions of and responses to young women depicted as violent from police officers in Scotland. Thirty three qualitative interviews were carried out with front line police officers in 2008 to investigate social control mechanisms employed to regulate the behaviour of young women. The research utilised feminist perspectives to develop an understanding of how young women deemed as violent face formal and informal mechanisms of social control from police officers.

The study challenges the apparent increase in violence among young women and instead argues that institutional controls have contributed to young women being labelled as violent. Changes in police practices and zero tolerance approaches towards violence have resulted in a net widening effect that has impacted on the number of young women (and men) being brought to the attention of the police for violent offences. It is argued that this mechanism of institutional control could be a contributing factor towards the rise in the number of young women being charged for violent offences. Police discretion on the basis of gender did have an influence on arrest practices for some of the officers, but there was insufficient evidence to suggest the police officers responded any harsher or more lenient towards women. However, what was apparent was that police officers believed women needed to be 'controlled'; they perceived them as more unmanageable than men and this defiance towards authority resulted in women being arrested. Women depicted as violent remain to be categorised on the basis of socially constructed gender norms and it is argued that this mechanism of discursive control continues to locate violence within the realm of masculinity. In conclusion, women who are depicted as violent are portrayed as unfeminine and in need of greater social control which is exercised through both formal and informal measures by police officers.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

This thesis examines how front line police officers in Scotland perceive and respond to young women depicted as violent. This chapter commences by contextualising the study by explaining the background and rationale of the research. This is followed by an outline of the study and presents the layout of the thesis.

Background and rationale

The apparent rise in young women's violence

A recurring feature in the British media throughout the 1990s and into the twenty first century has been a portrayal of an increase in the number of young women using violence and participating in girl gangs[1] (Burman et al., 2000; 2003; Worrall, 2004; Batchelor, 2009; Young, 2009). Although violent crime is generally over reported in the media due its newsworthiness and does not represent the 'reality' of offending (see Jewkes, 2004), newspaper articles, television programmes and political concerns have deemed the behaviour of certain young women as a social problem[2] that needs to be addressed (Burman and Batchelor, 2009).

The young women being classified as a social problem are those that binge drink, shout, swear and behave violently. They are deemed a social problem, particularly in

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[1] Defining what a gang is has proved to be a contentious issue among scholarly research and has varied between groups of friends to criminal organisations (see Batchelor, 2009).

[2] A social problem is one that moves from being an individual problem to an issue that needs to be addressed by policy intervention; in order for something to be classified as a social problem there has to be a collective concern (Mills, 1959). It is a behaviour or event that is perceived to threaten a healthy society, for example, by threatening the economic climate, burdening the health service or impacting on people's safety (Blumer, 1971). There has to be recognition that something is a social problem before it can be defined as such, which usually comes from politicians, government organisations and the media (Schneider, 1985). Once something has been defined as a social problem, the task is to intervene in an attempt to resolve the problem (Blumer, 1971; Schneider, 1985).

the eyes of the media, for three main reasons; firstly their behaviour is criminal when they physically injure another individual and secondly they are seen to be burdening the health services with more young women being admitted to accident and emergency for either alcohol intoxication or injuries resulting from violence (Hickley, 2007; Saner, 2008). The final reason for the problem is less tangible, but just as important, which is that the behaviour of these young women is presented as a disturbance to the moral fabric of society, their actions are causing concern that women no longer want to be 'ladies' that settle down and have families (Day et al., 2004; Jackson and Tinkler, 2007: 264). These young women are commonly referred to in the British media as 'ladettes' due to their non-conformity to traditional femininity (Muncer et al., 2001; Wilkinson, 2001; The Guardian, 2003; Jackson and Tinkler, 2007). Much of the research conducted with the apparent ladettes has concentrated on alcohol consumption, since this is perceived to be a contributing factor in female violence (see Day et al., 2004; Jackson, 2006; Jackson and Tinkler, 2007; Lyons, 2008). Binge drinking[3] alone is classified as a social problem according to the Institute of Alcohol Studies because the consequences impact on family, friends, health services, law enforcement and economic productivity (IAS, 2002). Women's binge drinking is now being associated with an increase in violence used by young women, resulting in

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[3] The term binge drinking results in literature and research that is incomparable since it is difficult to compare research findings when they apply varying measures of binge drinking. For instance, there is the subjective definition of binge drinking which defines binge drinking as feeling drunk on a weekly basis (Engineer et al., 2003). However, there is also the unit based definition, which classifies binge drinking as the consumption of a certain amount of alcohol within a set time frame. Anderson (2008) defined binge drinking as the consumption of 60g of alcohol (for men) and 40g (for women) within two hours. Studies of binge drinking in Britain classify binge drinking for men as consuming more than 8 units of alcohol in a day and for women it is the consumption of more than 6 units of alcohol in a day (see Engineer et al., 2003; Richardson and Budd, 2003).

binge drinking and violence being a concern for law enforcement, politicians and health professionals (Fraser, 2008)[4].

The media depictions of young women's violence have led to a growing body of research that has examined the issue in Britain (Burman et al., 2003; 2004a; Batchelor 2005; 2009; Young; 2009) and North America (Chesney-Lind, 1999; Chesney-Lind and Belknap, 2004; Steffensmeier et al., 2005; 2006; Zhan et al., 2008) that have all suggested that young women's violence remains relatively rare in comparison to the number of young men who use violence. These studies have challenged the apparent increase in violent young women and argue that isolated incidents are being misrepresented as a social problem in the media.

Violent offences have traditionally been associated with men and regarded as a masculine characteristic, which has resulted in the majority of research on violent offences concentrating on male offenders (Morgan, 1987; Stanko, 2001; Gelsthorpe, 2004). Since women commit such a small percentage (8%) of all proven charges for non-sexual violent crimes in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2011a), the pivotal focus of research on violence perpetrated by young people has focussed on males (Muncie, 2002; Burman, 2004b). Although women only contribute to a small percentage of violent offences committed, they are playing a role in criminal activity and are therefore important for criminological research (Heidensohn, 1985). It has been well documented that female criminality has been largely neglected by criminology, (see Klein, 1973; Gelsthorpe and Morris, 1990; Rafter and Heidensohn, 1995; Williams, 2001), and although feminists' recognition of this has resulted in increasing research

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[4] The social construction of the terms binge drinking and ladette makes them considerably ambiguous therefore this current research does not label young women as either binge drinkers or ladettes.

on women as offenders and victims, research on violence is still dominated by a focus on male criminality (Burman et al., 2000:2).

The focus on violence perpetrated by men is understandable since approximately 92% of proven charges for non-sexual crimes of violence are committed by men in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2011a). People under the age of 21 commit 32% of non-sexual crimes of violence, 32% of offences of handling an offensive weapon and 24% of common assault charges in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2011a). Young women commit approximately 8% of recorded youth non-sexual violence (under 21 years old), which mirrors the trend whereby females commit far less crime than men (Burman, 2004b). Despite the small proportion of violent offences committed by young women, evidence suggests that there has been a rise in the number of women involved in minor violent offences (see Scottish Prison Statistics, 2010; McIvor and Burman, 2011; Scottish Government 2011a). This raises the question of whether young women are actually becoming increasingly violent or if the crime statistics represent changes in policy as opposed to changes in women's behaviour.

It is necessary for research to explore how young women who use violence are perceived and responded to (particularly from criminal justice institutions) due to the growing concerns regarding the behaviour of young women (see Burman, et al., 2000; Batchelor, 2005; Chesney-Lind and Irwin, 2008). Alder and Worrall (2004) argue that young women are being subjected to more punitive attitudes from the criminal justice system, especially for violent offences, because of the masculine stereotype of violence. It is suggested that the stereotypical view that women who are violent are not conforming to gender roles has led to harsher punishments by means of higher

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tariff disposals in sentencing (Cavadino and Dignan, 2003; Carlen and Worrall, 2004; Barry and McIvor 2010). These concerns have not been isolated to the UK with a growing body of literature from North America demonstrating that fears over young women's behaviour is resulting in a more punitive attitude from criminal justice institutions (see Chesney-Lind, 1997; 2006; Steffensmeier, 2006; Zhan et al., 2008). This illustrates the impact of negative labels attributed to young females and is therefore important to examine the traditional stereotypical views attributed to young females that could be leading to more punitive measures taken by the criminal justice system.

Worrall (2001) proposes that the rising incarceration rates for violent offences by women are partially a result of increasing controls being exercised by the criminal justice system to penalise non conformity to female gender norms. Violence is still considered to be an activity associated with masculinity and deemed unacceptable when displayed by women. Despite a growing body of research being conducted with probations services (Sharpe, 2009) courts (Hedderman and Gelsthorpe, 1997) and prisons (Batchelor, 2005) on their response to female violence, very little is known about the treatment of women by police officers in relation to violent offences. The focus of this study is to extend the limited understanding of female violence by examining how police officers in Scotland perceive and respond to young women depicted as violent.

Policing violence

The Home Office (2008) placed violent crime high on their agenda and outlined a three year action plan (2008-2011), which aimed to reduce violence and provide better

support for victims of violence. This focus on violence has continued with new funding being allocated in 2011 to tackle various forms of violence including gangs, guns and knives and violence against women and children (Home Office, 2011). A similar approach towards violent crime has been taken in Scotland since it was announced by a UN report in September 2005 that violence in Scotland had doubled over the past twenty years (Tweedie, 2005). Tackling violent crime is high on the political agenda in Scotland and the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) was set up by Strathclyde Police in 2005 to focus on reducing incidences of violence, focussing particularly on alcohol induced violence and crimes involving weapons. Crimes with a proven charge of non-sexual violence increased in Scotland by 24% between 2000 and 2010, (a 37% rise in serious assault and attempted murder and 15% rise in homicide), there was a 22% rise in handling an offensive weapon and a 37% increase in common assault between 2000 and 2010 (Scottish Government, 2011a). Policies such as the 'Community Initiative to reduce Violence Crimes', 'No Knives Better Lives' and the 'Anti-Violence Campaign' are examples of current agendas to deal with violent offences in Scotland leading to increased policing of these offences. In 2008 BBC News reported that "increasing numbers of violent women are stretching police resources" and this was blamed on a "new phenomenon" of young women drinking and joining gangs. As a consequence of the increasing attention to tackle violence and the concerns of young women's violence, this current research explores police officers' experiences of young women using violence.

Police officers play a significant role in the criminal justice system and their decision making is a pivotal part in determining who is regarded as 'criminal'. Police officers exercise various forms of power including governmental, authoritarian and disciplinary

(Foucault, 1977; Lukes, 1986; Sanders and Young, 2003) that are utilised to regulate the behaviour of others in an attempt to maintain social order. However, this power has been shown to have particularly negative consequences for marginalised social groups such as ethnic minorities (Bowling and Phillips, 2003), the unemployed (Smith and Visher, 1981) and young people (Lundman et al., 1978). Institutional discrimination resulting from 'cop culture' has been shown to result in these marginalised groups being subjected to greater regulation by the police (see Sealock and Simpson, 1998; Bowling and Phillips, 2003; Narduzzo, 2007). These prejudices are evident within the organisation of policing whereby ethnic minorities and women are marginalised by white male colleagues and these practices are extended towards people who offend (see Waddington, 1999; Brown and Heidensohn, 2000; Westmarland, 2001a; Rabe-Hemp, 2008).

Despite a growth in research exploring gender within the police, there remains to be a lack of attention being paid to how gender impacts on arrest decision making (exceptions include Visher, 1983 and Horn and Wincup, 1995). Studies undertaken within courtrooms demonstrate how the social construction of appropriate gender norms can have a negative consequence for women who offend (Carlen, 1983; Heidensohn, 1985; Worrall, 1990; Hedderman and Gelsthorpe, 1997), but less is known about police officers' responses. Feminist research has suggested that young women face increasing social controls resulting from concerns that women are rebelling against traditional gender roles. Gendered controls are exercised in varying domains of society; work, leisure, parenting, domestic tasks and education (Walby, 1990). It is argued that these controls stem from patriarchal structures in society where men exploit and oppress women to remain the dominant sex (Heidensohn,

1985). A feminist framework of social control examines both the formal and the informal methods of social control (Smart and Smart, 1978) by exploring how gender is socially constructed around traditional notions of patriarchy. It is unknown what police control mechanisms are being exercised that could assist with understanding how women are treated and the potential impact this has in the wider criminal justice framework. Identifying this gap in the literature along with the growing concern over the behaviour of young women highlights the necessity to carry out this research.

Definition of key concepts

The thesis uses key concepts that require clarification before turning to the literature review: young people, violence and discourse.

Young People

There is difficulty defining what is classified as 'youth crime' because there is no definitive age group used with policy makers and researchers applying their own interpretation. The 2004 Scottish Social Attitudes Survey considered young people to be between 11 and 24 years of age .However a study carried out by Whyte (2004) on youth crime in Scotland sampled young people between the ages of 12 and 16. Both the academic literature and media reporting refer to various age groups when referring to female violence. The terms girl and women have all been incorporated into the literature, which can make it difficult to determine which age group the text refers to. Since the literature draws on a range of age groups it is preferable to employ the term young women for this thesis. The concept 'young women' incorporates ages between 16 and 25, since it is this age group receiving the heightened attention from the media (see Batchelor, 2005).

Violence

Violence is a fluid concept that varies across time and space, it is contextual depending on who is observing and who is perpetrating the violence, making the term rather ambiguous (Jones, 2000). The term can incorporate varying behaviours from verbal abuse to murder and defining the term depends on both the individual and social context (Croall, 1998; Burman et al., 2003). In Scotland there are many offences that come under the heading violent crime including, serious assault[5], murder, and crimes involving a firearm, however petty/common assault is categorised under miscellaneous offences. Adopting these legal definitions of violence is problematic due to the social construction of such classifications (see Muncie and McLaughlin, 2001). Feminist literature on domestic violence identifies that violence encompasses many forms of intimidating and injurious behaviour other than purely physical harm (see DeKeseredy, 2000; Dobash and Dobash, 2004) and therefore it is important not to belittle violence on the basis of seriousness of physical injuries sustained.

This thesis uses the term 'violence' to discuss a range of behaviours, and in some contexts includes behaviour, other than that legally defined as violent crime. It is important to point out that when referring to official statistics (i.e. non-sexual crimes of violence) this does not refer to verbal abuse or common assault (these are legally categorised as miscellaneous offences). The term 'violence' is used to discuss both verbal aggression and physical assault, thus focussing on behaviour that is perceived to be 'violent' rather than 'violent crime'. The participants in this study were asked for

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[5] Physical assault incorporates both minor and serious forms of violence against the person, in order for an assault to be classified as serious it would have to result in the victim requiring hospital treatment (Scottish Executive, 2007).

their definition of violence rather than assuming a preconceived meaning and their interpretations of violence are discussed in more depth in chapter five.

Discourse

In *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (2002: 121) Foucault defines discourse as "the group of statements that belong to a single system of formation". For Foucault discourses are social practices whereby ideas and beliefs are produced as knowledge and it is this knowledge that develops power relations (Foucault, 1982). Discourse is expressed through varying forms of communication, both written and verbal, but Foucault views discourse as more than simply a form of communication; discourse is described as a system of values and practices that individuals adopt to make sense of the social world. Key to understanding discourses, such as policing, is the relationship between power and knowledge, because discourses are composed of knowledge and practice (McNay, 1992). According to Foucault power stems from knowledge, in other words when individuals adopt beliefs of particular discourses (such as legal, medical and psychological) these discourses become respected as the 'truth', so ideas become normalised through discursive fields (Hall, 2001). This knowledge is then utilised in discourses to regulate people but also leads to people regulating their own behaviour (Foucault, 1977). In this thesis, the police described are a discursive field; they have their own discourse which is internalised by members of the police, which is then utilised in their practice of policing.

The study

The theoretical and methodological frameworks that this study utilises aim to understand what role, if any, police policies and practices have played in the increasing

number of women being portrayed as violent in Scotland. Furthermore, the purpose is to uncover underlying police officers' beliefs about young women, who are depicted as acting violently (i.e. using verbal *and* physical violence), and assess whether these beliefs have any bearing on arrest decisions.

In order to establish how policing impacts on the treatment of young women depicted as violent this research employs qualitative interviewing with thirty three front line police officers in Scotland. The key objectives of the interviews address the following questions:

- How do police officers define violent crime?
- Have police officers witnessed any changes in the prevalence of violence among young women? If so what do they attribute this to?
- How do police officer characterise young women who are deemed as violent?
- How do police officers respond to young women's violence?

This thesis draws on feminist perspectives of patriarchy and social control to assist with understanding why women who use violence are deemed as doubly deviant and at risk of greater social control (Heidensohn, 1985). Feminist perspectives have contributed significantly to understanding gender and crime in relation to issues including offending, victimisation, punishment, and rehabilitation to name a few. This thesis utilises feminist criminology to contextualise why women are more inclined to be labelled violent than men, and how criminal justice practices have had a negative consequence on women who offend. In order to theorise how police officers control the behaviour of women the thesis also employs Michel Foucault's analyses of power relations to demonstrate the complexity and the varying ways power can be exercised.

Thesis contribution

This thesis contributes to existing literature on gender, social control and the criminal justice system by enhancing the understanding of the role police officers play in criminalising young women who are regarded as violent. In particular the findings highlight how young women are being controlled at an early stage within the criminal justice system, assisting with developing a broader understanding of gender and justice, which has so far been largely limited to courts, probation services and imprisonment. This thesis also assists feminist perspectives of gender relations by demonstrating how social control can be exercised on three interconnected levels; institutional, discretionary and discursive. It recognises that social control can be implemented through legislation, practices and discourse, which all impact on one another. Social control can therefore be studied as a cycle of control mechanisms that work together to regulate the behaviour of young women.

The study contributes to the policing literature by highlighting the impact changing police policies and embedded gender stereotypes have on arrest decision making. Police research in Scotland is a growing field with the development of the Scottish Institute for Policing Research (SIPR), which aims to contribute to police policy and practice. The findings from this research will be of interest to both academics and practitioners in policing to highlight how their policies are impacting on other areas of criminal justice. In particular, the research raises the equity and equality debate in relation to policing, suggesting that the implementation of gender neutral policies and practices has a negative effect on young women. The thesis does not aim to make any policy recommendations to the police but rather highlights the beliefs and practices of

a sample of front line police officers and the implications these have on how they respond to young women deemed as acting violently.

Layout of thesis

The thesis commences with literature reviews on gender, justice and policing. Chapter two contextualises the study within feminist criminology perspectives to demonstrate the rationale for the theoretical framework. The chapter examines the way women who offend, particularly those regarded as violent, have been depicted through academic, media and criminal justice discourses. It discusses data from court proceedings and incarceration in Scotland in order to assess whether the apparent rise in young women using violence is reflected in official statistics. Chapter three discusses the institution of policing by examining the development of the institution, what is meant by police power and the treatment of women within policing. This chapter then explores the importance of police discretion and shows how it can be regarded as a method of discretionary control. These two chapters highlight the necessity for this research by identifying gaps in the literature and show the relevance of the theoretical framework.

The methodological approach is outlined in chapter four. This chapter provides a justification for the methods employed, illustrates the research design, and discusses the fieldwork. This chapter provides a reflexive account of carrying out research with police officers and the challenges it raises. The data analysis is discussed and the difficulties that arose interpreting interview transcripts from an inductive approach.

Chapter five provides an introduction to the findings chapters (six, seven and eight) reflecting on the development of the theoretical framework and clarifying the use of

the term 'violence'. Chapter six examines the institutional controls that can help to explain an apparent rise in female violence and demonstrates that changes in policing have impacted on the number of women being detected and recorded for violent crimes. Chapter seven explores the discursive stereotypes applied to women who use violence by discussing how women were characterised by the police officers and examines how traditional gender stereotypes are applied to young women who are perceived as violent. The final findings chapter, chapter eight, investigates the discretionary controls exercised on young women. It outlines how the police officers are trained to deal with violent incidents and the reality of this in practice. This chapter also explores the varying factors that impact on arrest decision making and how these are related to the discursive stereotypes.

Chapter nine is the final chapter that draws together all the arguments presented in the findings chapters. It makes the final conclusions in relation to the broader theoretical framework and demonstrates the contribution the thesis has made. This chapter also discusses the limitations of the research and proposals for future research.

Chapter 2 - Gender, Justice and Social Control

The current research has been influenced by feminist perspectives within criminology, with particular emphasis on how patriarchy and social control have affected women who offend. This chapter provides an overview of academic discourses on gender, justice and social control and establishes where the current study can contribute to existing knowledge. Despite a lack of research focussing on the role of policing in relation to the control of women depicted as violent, there is a body of literature that can assist with contextualising the policing of young women within the broader criminal justice framework.

The first section of this chapter outlines how feminist perspectives within criminology can facilitate with understanding how women are subjected to various mechanisms of social control and sets out the theoretical framework utilised in the thesis. The subsequent section of the chapter examines how offending is gendered by varying discourses and how the criminal justice system has responded to female offending, and in particular female violence. The chapter concludes by assessing statistical evidence from court proceeding and imprisonment in Scotland to determine whether there has been an actual increase in young women's violence.

Identifying a feminist approach

It is necessary to outline briefly what is considered a feminist approach in order to demonstrate the influence feminist criminology has had on this research. Gelsthorpe and Morris (1988) draw attention to the difficulties in defining feminism given the diverse approaches and interpretation of such perspectives. On a basic level feminism

recognises the "subordination of women on the basis of their sex" (ibid: 224), however the root cause of this oppression is debated within feminist literature (Delmar, 1987; Gelsthorpe and Morris, 1988; Beasley, 1999). Feminist approaches "problematize gender" and aim to "empower women" by identifying necessary social change (Daly and Chesney-Lind, 1988: 504). This definition of a feminist approach acknowledges the construction of gender, and that feminist research aims to deconstruct gender relations in order to assess how this social construction impacts on women's lives.

There are various feminist perspectives that have developed during the feminist movements. During the 1960s and 1970s feminist movement distinct strands of feminist thinking emerged, these being liberal, Marxist, radical and social. Although dividing feminist approaches can be beneficial to understanding the varying approaches and goals of feminists, Tong (2009: 1) argues that "this list of labels is incomplete and highly contestable". The difficulty with separating feminist thought into distinct categories is that they are not isolated approaches and they do share common objectives (Daly and Chesney-Lind, 1988). Feminist approaches argue that patriarchy is the basis of women's oppression: "Patriarchy is a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women" (Walby, 1990: 20). Feminists utilise the concept of patriarchy to demonstrate how men uphold power over women in both the public and private sphere. "Patriarchy's chief institution is the family" according to Millet (1971: 33), because it is within the family that children are socialised into sex roles and it where men are head of the household and women are constrained into domestic roles. These approaches identify that a woman's 'role' is taken for granted and feminists challenge the subordinate position of women in private and public spheres. However, Weedon (1997) points out that

feminist approaches that developed during the 1960s-70s fail to take account of women's subjectivity. She argues that they assume an overpowering structure that oppresses and dominates women, failing to recognise differences within women's experience; their resistance to social control; and the complexities of power relations within different social structures (Walby, 1990).

Since the 1980s further branches of feminism developed to critique this essentialism including black and lesbian feminism and postmodern feminism. Feminist scholars such as Judith Butler, Lois McNay and Chris Weedon identify that women will experience social control at varying levels, dependent on varying social divisions such as age, class and race, thus feminist approaches ought to examine differences between women themselves (McNay, 1992). Patriarchy remains to be a key focus for feminist scholars, however there is acknowledgement that patriarchy is not a sole overarching structure but rather is exercised through varying public and private spheres of society. Walby (1990) identifies six patriarchal structures in society; the household, paid employment, the state, domestic violence, control of sexuality, and cultural institutions. Therefore feminists aim to examine different understandings and representations of gender roles within varying social structures from both a macro and micro structure approach. Feminist approaches continue to highlight how patriarchal power is exercised through institutions and the meanings attached to these power relations but do not assume that all women experience the same levels or forms of oppression (Weedon, 1997).

> It is the collectivity of women whose interests we wish to represent and the inequalities of women's lives which draw us together… [B]ut to treat women as a homogenous group is to do women a grave disservice – to do

something which does not work in the interests of all women. (Naffine, 1997: 53)

This identification highlights how gender relations cannot be separated from other divisions such as age, class and ethnicity (Naffine, 1997). The progression of feminism since the 1980s continues to centre on highlighting and preventing male power over women, however there is a far more nuanced understanding of gender relations and oppressions with awareness that power and control are exercised at different levels and experienced in diverse ways.

It is evident that a feminist approach can take different forms and the boundaries between each approach are often blurred given that each aim to voice women's experiences to highlight different social structures (such as the home, at work and in leisure) that oppress women. As Tong (2009) points out, labelling a feminist approach can be contentious and it is important not to lose focus of the aim of feminist scholars. Thus, Daly and Chesney-Lind (1988: 504) set out five basic principles of a feminist approach that distinguishes it from other (non feminist) perspectives. The first of these is the awareness that gender is socially constructed; secondly, gender relations have a profound impact on social institutions; thirdly, the construction of gender stems from male superiority; fourthly, knowledge reflects male subjectivity; and finally, women should be placed firmly within academic enquiry. These five principles assist with understanding what makes an approach feminist and the following discussion examines the impact these feminist perspectives have had in criminology.

Feminism and criminology

The initial discussion highlighted that there is no single feminist approach and this is consistent in criminology. Gelsthorpe and Morris (1988) highlight the varying approaches by feminist scholars within criminology, and argue that there is no distinct feminist criminology. Feminist perspectives (in criminology) developed in the 1960s and 1970s during the critical movement in criminology[6]. Feminists such as Dorothy Smith (1974) highlighted the neglect of women within sociological discourses, both as academics and participants for scholarly enquiry, as a result of institutionalised patriarchy. Smith (1974) argues that the discipline (theories and practices) is dominated by men's experiences whereby women's perspectives are deemed as inferior due to them stemming from the domestic sphere.

> The two worlds and the two bases of knowledge and experience don't stand in equal relation. The world as it is constituted by men stand in authority over that of women. [...] The domestic world stands in a dependant relation to that other and its whole character is subordinate to it. [...] Hence in these terms women are alienated from their experiences. (Smith, 1974: 7)

Although Smith's argument was related directly to sociology the problem was not isolated to this discipline and became a prominent focus for feminists in criminology during the 1960s and 1970s (Scraton, 1990). Up until the 1950s female criminality was either non-existent within criminology literature or was explained on the basis of biological and/or psychological traits (Klein, 1973; Heidensohn, 2002; Gelsthorpe, 2004). Women who committed crime were perceived as either abnormal, they had biological imbalances that led to criminal behaviour (see Lombroso and Ferrero, 1895; Thomas, 1923), or they were psychologically unbalanced (see Freud 1933; Deutsch,

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[6] Critical Criminologies (including labelling and Marxist approaches) emerged as a critique to the positivist tradition within the discipline (see Scraton and Chadwick, 2003).

1944; Pollack, 1950). Both the biological and psychological approaches to explain crime made two assumptions; firstly criminality was a masculine trait, therefore the social construction of gender was ignored; and secondly, crime was viewed as independent of social structures, thus neglecting the social construction of crime and criminals. Sociological theories of offending developed to challenge the determinist nature of the biological and psychological approaches and aimed to investigate the social construction of crime and the relationship between crime and social structures (i.e. strain theory, differential association, Marxism, labelling theory). The problem with these approaches is that they fail to recognise gender as a key social division and were developed by men to explain male offending (Leonard, 1982).

Feminist writing, (such as Heidensohn, 1968; Klein, 1973; Smart, 1976), highlighted the neglect of women in criminology as researchers, theorists, offenders and victims with the aim of positioning women firmly within the discipline. The goal for feminists including Carol Smart, Dorie Klein, Frances Heidensohn and Freda Adler was to understand female offending and victimisation by examining the lives of women, and challenge existing theories of crime and criminal justice policies that had developed without consideration for women as offenders or victims (Naffine, 1997). The neglect of women in criminology led to key research being carried out that examined gendered assumptions within criminal justice institutions (Chesney-Lind, 1973 and 1977; Worrall, 1981; Carlen, 1983). These studies identified discrimination in sentencing women who offend and the requirement for gender awareness in the criminal justice system. The victimisation of women, in particular rape and domestic abuse, was also identified as major social problem that needed to be examined (Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Daly and Chesney-Lind, 1988). Smart (1981) states that the discriminatory practices of the

criminal justice system stem from patriarchal structures, whereby men stereotype women in relation to their domesticity.

The feminist critiques of criminology and early studies on the criminal justice system contributed greatly to highlighting key gender divisions in crime and justice, and in particular, the recognition of the need to criminalise male violence against women (Heidensohn, 2002). However, their approaches were not excluded from the more general feminist criticisms that arose in the 1980s. Gelsthorpe and Morris (1988) argue that female offending and victimisation cannot be reduced to a single explanation, but rather varying factors need to be accounted for, such as age and ethnicity. Heidensohn (1985) argues that feminists in criminology ought to examine broader issues of social control and how these impact on women in relation to offending. Furthermore research should not be limited to studying women, gender relations more generally need to be investigated to uncover how notions of deviancy are constructed within criminal justice institutions:

> Exploration of social control issues is essential to an increased understanding *of how* knowledge is sustained and mediated and *how* structural constraints affect our everyday lives. (Gelsthorpe and Morris, 1988: 231, original emphasis)

Since the 1980s feminist research in criminology has greatly expanded into work with the police, courts, prisons, and probation services to examine the different levels of social control placed on women and girls and related this to wider broader issues of social control. Feminists in criminology have recognised the need to take into account other important factors that coincide with gender such as age, class and ethnicity to produce a more comprehensive understanding of the complex relationship between

gender, crime and victimisation (Gelsthorpe, 2002; Heidensohn, 2002; Chesney-Lind, 2006).

> Contemporary approaches to gender and crime [...] tend to avoid the problems of reductionism and determinism that characterize early discussions of gender and gender relations, stressing instead the complexity, tentativeness, and variability with which individuals, particularly youth, negotiate (and resist) gender identity. (Chesney-Lind, 2006: 8)

Chesney-Lind (2006) argues that current feminist research has taken on board the criticisms of essentialism, not only by investigating the difference between women, but also by acknowledging that in order to understand women it is necessary to theorise gender more generally. Thus, feminist scholars in criminology acknowledge the importance of the construction and exercising of masculinity and femininity to explain the relation between gender and crime.

Feminists in criminology are credited for investigating how patriarchal structures have impacted on women who offend, women as victims and criminal justice responses. By moving away from a macro structural approach feminist researchers are able to investigate how mechanisms of social control are exercised at varying levels and the impact these have on women who come into contact with the criminal justice system (McRobbie, 2004).

Theorising patriarchal power

The term power and its relationship to patriarchy is key to understanding how women experience varying mechanisms of social control but it is important not to take this term for granted given that the concept of power can be used in different ways to describe varying behaviour (Punch et al., 2007). Power can take many forms; physical,

whereby force is inflicted on someone (e.g. war); authoritative, when rules are developed that people are expected to obey (e.g. the law); and influential power, whereby an individual(s) can influence a person's choices or behaviour (e.g. propaganda) (see Lukes, 1986). The concept of power is used in different ways to describe both individual and institutional relationships, it is not simply an object but rather a relationship between those who regard themselves as powerful and powerless (Lukes, 1986; Punch, et al., 2007). This thesis draws on Michel Foucault's understanding of power, expressed in *Power/Knowledge* (1980), to examine the varying forms of gendered social controls.

Foucault's perspective on power is twofold; power is both oppressive and productive (Sarup, 1988). Power creates knowledge (and vice versa) and resistance and so by exercising power individuals continually develop their own social meanings, which in Foucault's view is productive rather than repressive.

> What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repressive. (Foucault, 1980: 119)

The notion that power is exercised rather than it being a possession can assist with understanding gender relations as an ongoing productive process. A critique of feminist approaches during the 1960s and 1970s was their portrayal that men held the power and used it to oppress women, whereas from a Foucauldian perspective gender stereotypes can be understood as fluid, changing over time within varying discourses. McRobbie (2004: 256) argues that there has been a move away from analysing larger

structures of power to a more focussed concentration on different forms and relations of power:

> Under the prevailing influence of Foucault, there is a shift away from feminist interests in centralised power blocks – e.g., the State, patriarchy, law – to more dispersed sites, events and instances of power conceptualised as flows and specific convergences and consolidations of talk, discourse and attentions.

Despite criticisms of Foucault's earlier work from feminists on the basis of gender blindness (see Ramazanoglu, 1993; McNay, 1992), his work has been influential in focussing attention away from power as an object to an action. In his book *Discipline and Punish* (1977) Foucault argues that there has been a move away from centralised sovereign power to disciplinary power, which occurs in everyday social relations, whereby norms are internalised to regulate the behaviour of individuals. For example, Bartky (1988) argues that women's bodies and characteristics of femininity are a form of disciplinary power; the construction of feminine identity in western societies (such as body size and appearance) aim to control women's behaviour. Although Bartky (1988: 107) acknowledges this as a form of self-regulation, she argues that it stems from patriarchal beliefs:

> The woman who checks her make up half a dozen rimes a day to see if her foundation has cracked or her mascara run [...] has become a self policing subject [...]. This self- surveillance is a form of obedience to patriarchy.

This example demonstrates how Foucault's understanding of power can be utilised to examine various methods of patriarchy. Patriarchy is not simply an overarching structure but a set of beliefs about women's role in society in relation to men, and patriarchy can be exercised through both formal and informal means (Ogle and Batton, 2009). The work of Adrian Howe (1994) embraces Foucault's analysis of power and

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social control and demonstrates how the increasing surveillance and social controls exercised in society can be successfully applied to understand the punishment of women:

> Foucault's ideas about the establishment of a 'carceral network', understood as an extension of surveillance and normalisation throughout society, connect in self-evident ways to feminist sociologies of the social control of women. (Howe, 1994: 115)

Bartky (1988) and Howe (1994) demonstrate how the normalisation process of gender roles, stemming from disciplinary power, reinforce patriarchal relations and impact on the social control of women. Foucault (1977) argues disciplinary power is a mechanism of regulation that distinguishes between normal and deviant behaviour. This process of normalisation can assist with identifying how individuals and social groups come to be labelled as deviant, which in turn helps to understand the control mechanism employed to regulate behaviour that deviates from the norm. Patriarchy in this thesis is therefore presented as an oppression of women exercised through a network of discourses that repress women on the basis of their sex. As Howe (1994) argues, patriarchy has to be understood in relation to broader social relations of power and control in order to locate it within a criminal justice setting.

Women, deviance and social control

This thesis utilises the term patriarchy to understand how young women are subject to greater control on the basis of their gender. In order to investigate the impact patriarchy has within the policies and practices of the criminal justice system it is necessary to contextualise this within other areas of social control. Hutter and Williams (1981) argue that to understand how women are controlled we must move

beyond focussing on the overt controls (such as legislation) and also take into account the covert controls. Therefore research must not only look at sanctions imposed on women who offend, and indeed all women, but also uncover underlying beliefs about female offenders as it is these perceptions that will impact on the overt controls. As Schur (1984: 51) explains:

> Under the gender system women are subject to an enormous array of dominant norms…While these norms sometimes may be buttressed by formal definitions and procedures (as in psychiatric diagnosis and legal rulings) they operate for the most part on a level of informal interaction.

Heidensohn (1985) outlines four areas of society in which she believes women are controlled; at home, in public, at work, and in social policies. In all four of these areas a women's role is primarily perceived as a domestic role and this belief impacts on the way women are treated at work (job segregation and harassment) and in the public sphere (labelling appropriate female behaviour) and has an influence on social policies (particularly in relation to social security[7]). Heidensohn goes on to argue that these beliefs about how women should conform have been taken for granted rather than challenged and are now embedded in and maintained by the social structures of society. These structures are similar to those discussed by Walby (1990) but a key sphere not categorised by Heidensohn (1985) is the cultural controls over women. These controls (that Walby (1990) argues stem from patriarchy) include how women and appropriate femininity are represented within cultural institutions such as the media, education and religion.

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[7] There have been several developments in the UK since Heidensohn's (1985) work such as the Gender Equality Duty 2007 and Equality Act 2010, which put legislation in place to prevent discrimination on the basis of gender.

The principles of feminism, and in particular their focus on patriarchal structures, have led to distinguished research that has illustrated the varying ways women are controlled within society. For example, domestic abuse has become a prominent field of enquiry for feminist scholars in criminology, whereby the abuse is understood as a mechanism of social control (Edwards, 1987; Walby 1990). Feminist scholars have continually argued that domestic abuse is related to wider patriarchal social structures, whereby men use violence and abuse to oppress and control women (Dobash and Dobash, 1978 and 1979; Hanmer, 1978; Walby, 1990). The methods of control used by men[8] include physical and sexual violence, verbal abuse and emotional abuse (Edwards, 1987; Dobash and Dobash, 1992). These controls attempt to provide men with a sense of dominance to remain top in the gender hierarchy, particularly within the home (Hanmer, 2000). Despite zero tolerance approaches towards domestic abuse being practiced by the police in the UK, it remains a serious social problem that relates to wider social structures of patriarchy (Itzin, 2000).

> Patriarchy is a system of social stratification, which means that it uses a wide array of social control policies and practices to ratify male power and to keep girls and women subordinate to men [...]. Often, the systems of control that women experience are explicitly or implicitly focused on controlling female sexuality. (Chesney-Lind, 2006: 10)

According to Chesney-Lind (2006) women's sexuality has been subject to varying mechanisms of social control, which results from patriarchal structures. For instance women's reproduction was deemed to be controlled by men up until the 1950s with the introduction of contraceptives. Despite women being 'allowed' to engage in sexual

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[8] It should be noted that domestic abuse is perpetrated by both men and women, however men commit a significantly higher proportion of domestic abuse (82% of all recorded domestic abuse cases in Scotland 2009/10 were committed by men) (Scottish Government, 2010) and women are more likely to use violence in retaliation to victimisation (Dobash and Dobash, 2004).

activity with the use of contraceptives they were encouraged to do so only within the family structure (Smart, 1981), thus any sexual activity outside the family structure was still very much deemed as deviant. In Foucault's *The History of Sexuality* (1978) he outlines how sex is not a fixed entity; it is constructed through history with varying meanings. He argues that sex and sexuality have become a focus of control in which power is exercised through discourses to control sexuality (Weedon, 1997). Acknowledging that sexuality is constructed through historical discourses and dependent on the power relations highlights how gender is portrayed and understood by different social institutions. Furthermore it allows for an examination of how the control of sexuality is resisted within given power relations.

Women's sexual activity is deemed as in need of control because sexual promiscuity is unfeminine and a threat to the moral fabric of society (Smart, 1981). Women who defy sexual norms, such as heterosexuality and marriage are considered sexual deviants and at risk of greater social control (Messerschmidt, 2008). Sexual promiscuity in men is considered masculine but women who behave in this manner are labelled with derogatory terms such as 'slut' or 'whore' (see Smart and Smart, 1978; Schur, 1984). Hudson (2008) supports this contention arguing that young women are more likely to be labelled for any form of 'inappropriate' sexual activity (i.e. having several sexual partners), yet it is not questioned with young men (Heidensohn, 2000). Despite societal changes in the representations of women's sexuality since the 1980s sexual promiscuity among women is still labelled as unfeminine and unacceptable. Jackson and Cram (2003) argue a sexual double standard exists whereby men are expected to be open about their sexual desires whereas women are not.

A further example of the social control of women's sexuality is the regulation and criminalisation of prostitution. Smart (1981) argues that prostitution is deemed unfeminine and requires social control as prostitutes are perceived as "fallen women" deviating from the norms of femininity (Chadwick and Little, 1987: 264) Research on prostitution demonstrates that the policies in place for regulating prostitution are gendered (they specifically target female sex workers) and result in women being policed more frequently (Sanders, 2009). Scoular and O'Neill (2007) suggest that apparent welfare approaches towards prostitution introduced by New Labour in 2004 and 2006 masked the underlying objectives that aim to exert greater controls over female sex workers.

> The current prostitution policy has a subtle agenda that goes far beyond the protection of individual women who are commercially sexually exploited or 'trafficked', Instead, the moral messages of proper sexual conduct, expressed in the prostitution laws and other sexual offence laws, emphasizes that society should be made up of certain kinds of citizens. (Sanders, 2009: 519)

Policies to protect and criminalise sex workers contain a gender bias as do stereotyped images of prostitutes (Whowell, 2010). These control mechanisms alongside more informal controls such as the derogatory names applied to young women who are sexually active, i.e. 'sluts' (see Schur 1984; Tanenbaum, 2000), demonstrate cultural norms of femininity.

An area that has received increased attention in relation to the social control of women is leisure studies, particularly the control of women in the night time economy. Otto (1981) demonstrates that although women's alcohol consumption became more acceptable in the second half of the twentieth century, drunkenness was still very much perceived as a masculine activity. Being drunk is perceived as unacceptable

among women because it goes against the female sex role, as Otto (1981) explains, women who drink excessively are seen to be abandoning their domestic responsibilities, and are more at risk of being sexually promiscuous:

> [T]he notion of 'loss of control' inherent in heavy drinking behaviour simply has no place in our society's concept of motherhood […]Hence, as with sexuality, there exists a double standard which allows both men and women to drink but only men to become drunk. (Otto, 1981: 156)

Otto's research was carried out thirty years ago, and could be argued as outdated, or at least not a representation of contemporary drinking culture. However, Lyons (2006) demonstrated that drunkenness is still perceived as a masculine activity today, and particularly women who have children are viewed as acting against their role as mothers. Lyons argues that certain women (mainly older, single, non-professionals) who part take in heavy alcohol consumption are condemned on the basis of traditional notions of femininity. There is a principle of control when it comes to the night time economy whereby women are expected to act responsibly, as like other structures, the night time economy has been developed around masculinity. Day et al. (2004) argue that alcohol consumption in bars and pubs has historically been regarded as a masculine activity and women who part take are considered unfeminine. Day et al.'s (2004) research demonstrates that media representations of women who consume large quantities of alcohol relate to the feminine role. The media discourses justify social control mechanisms by portraying women who drink as masculine, sexually promiscuous, and aggressive (Jackson and Tinkler, 2007). This reinforces the stereotype that heavy alcohol consumption is for men and women who participate are not adhering to appropriate gender norms, despite research showing that women do not themselves perceive their drinking in this way (see Lyons and Willet, 2008).

A further method of control to regulate women's drinking behaviour is demonstrated in the growing focus on women's health and safety. Media headlines have warned women about the dangers of alcohol consumption such as liver damage (BBC News, 2003; Hope, 2004) and breast cancer (Sky News, 2008). Furthermore concerns over safety have been expressed with women being advised they are more at risk of sexual victimisation (BBC News, 2004; Tozer, 2004; Hope, 2004; BBC News, 2007). These cultural controls are aimed at persuading women not to consume large quantities of alcohol by targeting their sexual fears. Thus in relation to the night time economy dual mechanisms of control are being employed; women are being stigmatised for their behaviour and they are being warned over the danger of their sexual safety. Both of these controls relate to traditional portrayals of femininity, reinforcing the normalisation of men's drinking behaviour.

It is evident that women are socially controlled in both the public and private sphere from the examples given. There are various dimensions to social control, as expressed by Heidensohn (1985) and Walby (1990), and different discourses (such as health, education and politics) continue to oppress women by sexualising appropriate and inappropriate behaviour.

Controlling femininities: Dichotomies of female offending

Gender conformity and crime

Individuals are identified by their sex (man/woman) at birth but their gender (male/female) is socially constructed on the basis of their sex. According to Messerschmidt (1995) gender is an action constructed in particular social contexts, therefore sex is a given label while gender is identified through social interactions.

Individuals act according to their gender differently depending on the social expectations of others. Gender is defined by the social processes and interactions people encounter on a daily basis and individuals learn to define their gender through observations and relations with others. Therefore, individuals are constantly adapting their masculinity/femininity in social situations in order to receive the acceptance of others (Messerschmidt, 1995). Gender is internalised by individuals and institutions which results in gender roles being developed and considered social norms. This internalisation begins in childhood; children observe the behaviour of others and particularly that of parents, peers, friends and what they observe on television (Sobieraj, 1998). Femininity and masculinity are fluid concepts, their meanings adapt to the social surroundings therefore gender can be viewed as a social practice rather than a fixed identity (Connell, 2005). Since gender is not fixed, it can change over time and space and is dependent on class, age and race. For Messerschmidt (1995) gender is a structured action, individuals act in particular ways to demonstrate their masculinity and femininity in a given setting, therefore gender is not only created by others but individuals are continually constructing their own gender identities. Viewing gender in this way makes it easier to explore how gender roles develop over time and space, and assists with understanding how appropriate gender norms are exercised.

Sex role theories are useful for exploring how concepts of masculinity and femininity are learnt through socialisation and can demonstrate how social contexts shape individual behaviour (Parsons, 1947). Connell (1987) outlines three key components to sex role theory that make it advantageous for exploring gender and crime. Firstly, it moves beyond the simple biological explanations for crime and focuses on the social learning processes. Secondly, it stresses the importance social structures have on

individuals and how these structures can impact on the behaviour of groups and individuals. Finally, since behaviour can be explained by social interactions, rather than just biology, it means that there is scope to change, since socialisation is not fixed. The sex role approach ties in with patriarchy; females from a young age are deemed as subordinate to men and these constructions of gender demonstrate how women are 'expected' to behave. However the problem of accepting the sex role theory approach is that it distinguishes between men and women but fails to explain differences between men and differences between women (Connell, 2002). So although sex role theories recognise the social construction of gender and the usefulness to explain gender differences and crime, it cannot assist with understanding why some men and women commit crime and others do not. It is therefore necessary to explore how masculinity has been constructed in relation to crime, and in particular, violent crime.

The masculinisation of violence

Features of femininity have stereotypically included being submissive and vulnerable, therefore violent behaviour does not fit with the gender identity. Violence can be viewed as a method for 'doing gender' (West and Zimmerman, 1987; Hall and Winlow, 2003) it demonstrates gender identity in the form of control, a characteristic associated with masculinity, and thus it is undesirable for women to be violent (Miller and White, 2004). It is important to note that although masculinity has been linked to crime, and particularly violent crime, not all men are violent and masculinity can be 'achieved' without committing crime (Croall, 1998). A minority of men choose to use violence as a means to display their masculinity, so it is crucial to remember that simply being a man does not automatically make them violent and that the gender and

crime debate is far more complex than simply assuming that masculinity leads to violent crime (Walklate, 2004).

The concept of hegemonic masculinity assists with understanding how masculinity takes different forms and thus only a small proportion of men will use violence to exert their masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity is a debated concept that became popular in the 1980s (Connell, 2002). The concept is used to describe a socially constructed normative image of masculinity:

> It embodied the currently most honored way of being a man, it required all other men to position themselves in relation to it, and it ideologically legitimated the global subordination of women to men. (Connell, 2005: 832)

Hegemonic masculinity is a concept utilised to understand social structures of patriarchy within a broader framework of gender relations (i.e. men's domination towards women and other men). It is "the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy" (Connell, 1995: 77). Hegemonic masculinities are perceived as the most dominant masculinities and oppose feminine characteristics, thus men who exhibit attributed female qualities, such as 'emotional' and 'sensitive' can be perceived as weak, along with women[9]. Take for instance research by Tomsen and Mason (2001), it demonstrates the lengths people go to in order to maintain traditional gender roles by targeting homosexual behaviour. They argue that violence committed against

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[9] The concept of hegemonic masculinity has been challenged as being an abstract concept that is difficult to apply in practice, assumes a unity of men and focuses on negative behaviour (see Collier, 1998; Martin, 1998). As a result of these criticisms, the concept was reformulated by Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) and is appreciated as a fluid concept adapting over time and space that can be used to study differences (between men) and various levels of gender hierarchies. Furthermore, it is now accepted that, in order to understand varying forms of masculinity, the relationship between men and women should be central. Thus the focus has shifted from using hegemonic masculinity to study men to examining more complex gender relations at both the individual and structural level.

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homosexual men by heterosexual men is about masculinity and gender conformity. In other words, some heterosexual men feel the need to defend their masculinity by oppressing men that do not conform to their gender roles. Accepting homosexuality, Tomsen and Mason (2001) argue, would be perceived as a weakness in masculinity, so they choose to harass, bully and be violent towards gay men to show their 'manliness'.

There has been a growing field of academia that explores masculinities and crime since the early 1990s with research focussing on understanding masculinity within criminal justice institutions (Newburn and Stanko, 1994) and with male offenders (Messerschmidt, 1993). Literature on violence has explored how masculinity is constructed and maintained through different forms of leisure (see Miedzian, 1992) and the creation of violence as a mechanism of patriarchy (Bowker, 1998). There have been various proposals put forward to explain why men commit more violent offences as a result of masculinity. Segal (1990) argues that it is not so much that men are more aggressive than women, but women are taught to suppress their aggression, and are therefore likely to avoid violent confrontations. Men learn to be tough through early socialisation and this is evident by looking at the way masculinity is demonstrated in the family, the media and in sport (Miedzian, 1992; Smith, 2005). Men dominate areas of social life where violence is expressed and accepted such as in sport at football matches and wrestling or in jobs that require the use of force i.e. the army and the police force. Violence has been linked to masculinity because it is men that predominantly enter in social spheres that require some level of force and aggression (Segal, 1990).

This social learning of violence has been associated with hegemonic masculinity, whereby violence is deemed as a method of demonstrating masculine qualities (for some men). Connell (2002) and Collier and Hall (2000) draw caution to merely assuming some causal link between masculinity and violence; violence is employed in different circumstances (i.e. in the home, face to face, during war) by men of varying classes, ethnic origins and sexualities. Thus hegemonic masculinity is regarded as a useful concept to understand how different masculinities are constructed as normal and the term can be applied to assist with understanding the relationship between power and violence.

Power is not simply about force or strength, but rather it involves access to resources, status and respect (Segal, 1990). Those who exercise power do not necessarily have physical strength, what they have is the ability to have control over other people, whether this is an employer controlling their staff or parents controlling their children. Connell (1995) states that although violence is not always used to gain power, for some men this is how they view power. Men that are violent towards others, in particular, women, children and homosexuals, according to Connell (1995), are exerting a form of control over them to gain respect and status as a man. Furthermore, Wrong (1979) argues that influencing other people's behaviour and decisions and having the ability to manipulate people provides individuals with a sense of achievement and they feel they have control over others. Gilligan (2000) states that historically and culturally men are respected for their power and strength, whereas women are respected for their conformity and avoidance of violent behaviour. Physical fighting among males is considered normal and in boys it is perceived as a sign that he will grow up to be a 'real man' (Stanko, 1994). For men, violence is perceived as a form

of control and they are likely to justify their motivations for violence, whereas for women violence is a loss of control and are therefore likely to feel guilty for their actions (Ray, 2005). This indicates that it is not that masculinity leads to violence but rather violent behaviour incorporates characteristics such as power and control associated with masculinity.

There appears to be a key relationship between power, violence and masculinity and this is certainly the case in domestic violence. Returning to Messerschmidt's (1995) term of *doing gender*, domestic and sexual violence is a method for men to exert their masculinity and remain the dominant sex (Archer, 1994; Walklate, 2004). Men learn that violence is acceptable for certain purposes, in war and sport, but some men take this a step further and believe that it is the tool for demonstrating their manliness in any given situation. I do not wish to enter a debate on domestic abuse here, but it is important to highlight that although social learning of violence (such as witnessing or being a victim of violence at a young age) may impact on future behaviour, since some abusers have themselves been the abused[10] (see Goodwin, 1994; Hoffmann et al., 1994), the relation between masculinity and violence is more complex. Archer (1994) argues that violence by men against women is an extension of the power they hold in other areas of their lives such as work and family and thus is a demonstration of patriarchal attitudes. The subordination of women gives some men a sense of control and status and thus they use physical strength and intimidation to demonstrate their power (Smith, 2005). All of this suggests that when men, who believe violence is an important part of their masculinity, feel they need to demonstrate their control they may resort to violent behaviour.

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[10] It must be noted that not all individuals who have a history of witnessing or being a victim of violence will necessary use violence (Lackey, 2003).

These constructions of violence being a trait of masculinity assume that women should not exercise this form of power and control and Smart (1981) argues that these underlying beliefs about appropriate gender norms ultimately impact on the responses and treatment of women who offend, particularly those who use violence.

Depictions of female offenders: women as 'mad' or 'bad'

Controlling 'mad women'

Criminology in the nineteenth century was concerned with biological determinism and theories regarding offending were developed on the basis of the biological make-up of men and women (Klein, 1973; Williams, 2001; Smart, 2008). It was believed that individuals were born criminal and therefore female offenders were similar to male criminals in that they were somehow physiologically different to non-deviants (Williams, 2001). The idea of a born criminal is closely associated with the work of Lombroso (1920), who argued that criminals were born with certain physical traits that led to crime (including dark hair, large jaw line and a protruding chin). When attempting to explain female crime, Lombroso and Ferrero (1920) suggested that these women were biologically imbalanced and had been born with masculine characteristics (cited in Gora, 1982). Lombroso and Ferrero (1895) believed that females were not as 'evolved' as males and therefore the more primitive a woman was, the more likelihood there was for her to offend. Thomas (1923) tried to explain why women do not commit crime by suggesting that their sex automatically makes them carers and mothers and thus avoid behaviour that does not conform to their biological make-up. All of these theories share a common theme, that is, if women

committed crime then it was viewed as a biological imbalance that they were born with (Croall, 1998: 141).

These works have been seriously criticised on the grounds that their theories were based on research conducted with men and they did not take account of the social construction of gender or social and economic factors associated with crime (Gelsthorpe, 2004). However, what is interesting is that even in these early writings it was assumed that women who committed crime were in some way more masculine. Thus, the concepts of masculinity and femininity have always played an important role in explaining crime.

Psychological theories of crime developed in the latter half of the nineteenth century and argued that females who committed crime must be psychologically unbalanced. Women were viewed as the passive caring sex and therefore any criminal activity was perceived as a result of a psychological problem. The work of Freud (1933), Deutsch (1944) and Pollack (1950) are examples of women being stereotyped as the submissive and domestic sex and any women who committed crime would have to be unstable and require psychiatric help. Freud (1933) believed that women suffered from 'penis envy' and committed crime to compete with men; women who were deviant were envious of men and tried to act out behaviour typically regarded as masculine (see Klein, 1973). Furthermore, Freud (1933) suggested that women were born passive and submissive, so any behaviour that did not conform to these characteristics must be a result of psychological problems. Pollack (1950), on the other hand, argued that women are naturally devious and actually commit more crime but they can deceive people more easily and are therefore not found out. Pollack (1950) suggests that even

when women commit traditionally male crimes they do so in a feminine way and the majority of crimes women do commit are linked to their sexuality. For instance, women are more likely to shoplift because they do more of the household shopping.

These early depictions of the female offender as abnormal on the basis of their biology and/or psychology are still evident within contemporary discourses (Fishbein, 1992; Campbell, 1995; Campbell et al., 2001; Bennett et al., 2005) particularly in the media. There has been research conducted to explore the representation of violent women in newspapers, particularly in relation to women who kill. Berrington and Honkatukia (2002) demonstrated how in the case of Rosemary West[11] the media depicted her as an evil monster whereas in the case of Sanna Sillanpää[12] the media depicted her as in need for of treatment for mental health problems. Rosemary West was portrayed as evil not only for the heinous crime committed but also her defiance of appropriate gender roles. In particular, the lack of maternal instinct was damned because in the eyes of the media she should have protected children not abused them. Both examples show that, when it comes to seriously violent women, the media depicts their actions in relation to their gender roles (Berrington and Honkatukia, 2002). Whereas for men their gender is not questioned, rather their violence is normalised as a characteristic of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2002). Jones and Wardle (2008) demonstrate how media coverage of Maxine Carr[13] also depicted her as evil and there was more media coverage of her than of Ian Huntley, despite the fact that Maxine Carr was not actually involved in the killings of the two girls (Jones and Wardle, 2008). She

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[11] Rosemary West was sentenced to life imprisonment in 1995 after being found guilty for killing ten young women and girls in Gloucester. Rosemary West committed the murders with her husband Fred West, but he committed suicide only a short while after being convicted.

[12] In 1999 Sanna Sillanpää shot and killed three men in Helsinki and was sentenced to a mental hospital after being diagnosed as schizophrenic.

[13] Maxine Carr lied to the police to protect her boyfriend Ian Huntley who was found guilty of killing two ten year old girls in Soham in 2002. She was found guilty for perverting the course of justice but later released in 2004.

was despised because she lied to the police to protect Ian Huntley. This case illustrates that yet again the media perceived Maxine Carr as abnormal for not adhering to a maternal instinct by protecting the two girls, instead she chose to defend her boyfriend. These examples are just some that highlight how newspaper reporting base their judgements on either biological or psychological factors associated with offending.

Controlling 'bad' women

Since the 1990s the British press have depicted certain young women as violent and, as a result, becoming more like men (Alder and Worrall, 2004). Like other moral panics, what often happens is that isolated incidences are used to assume a growing problem (see Cohen, 2002), which according to Pollock and Davis (2005) is what has happened with regards to young women and violence. The women are accused of acting out with appropriate norms of femininity and female violence that has increased as a result of women trying to act like men (Jackson, 2006). Tabloid newspapers have printed headlines such as; "The rising tide of female violence" (Henry and Day, 2004), "Drunk women as likely to fight in pubs as men" (Duffy, 2005), "Ladette drinkers can cause violence in city" (Robertson, 2005), and "Rise of the girl yobs" (Beattie, 2009). The media depict acts of violence as being a consequence of women's fight for equality, thus young women are viewed as becoming more masculine in order to achieve equality (Chesney-Lind and Irwin, 2008). These concerns over the link between emancipation and crime are not new, the twentieth century witnessed ongoing anxieties surrounding women moving into the public sphere and their involvement in crime (see Thomas, 1923; Pollack, 1950; Adler, 1975) and thus scepticism should be used when interpreting the media hype. One newspaper article illustrates that political

discourses have also been a factor in developing concerns over violent young females. John Vine, the president of the Association of Chief Police Officers Scotland was quoted as saying:

> We are dealing with more and more drunken and violent young women in our town centres…it's a worrying problem that we need to look into. (Cited in Batchelor, 2005: 358)

Female offenders are perceived as newsworthy on the basis of their gender, since crime is traditionally associated with men. The notion of newsworthiness is important when discussing the media, particularly newspaper coverage, given that journalists and editors choose what stories will create public interest and ultimately sell their paper (Jewkes, 2004). Traditional notions of femininity such as being passive, caring and maternal are still embedded in some areas of contemporary society, therefore women who do not conform to the socially constructed gender roles through criminal activity are doubly deviant and newsworthy (Jewkes, 2004). Some forms of violence by males are tolerated because it is seen as boys 'messing around', such as play fighting and wrestling, however no form of violence by females is tolerated this way (Worrall, 2004: 53). Smart (1976) suggests that women are more likely to be labelled by the media as violent when they act in this way, i.e. meaningless fighting, because any activity that does not conform to femininity is viewed as more appalling than if a male behaved in that manner.

News reporting masculinises female crime pointing the finger at liberation, in other words the media claims the liberation of women has resulted in some women attempting to be more like men and thus committing crimes traditionally associated with masculinity (Chesney-Lind, 1999). Adler's (1975) liberation hypothesis provided a

starting point for explaining female criminality, whereby women have to compete with men in all areas of society to gain equality including crime. Although this theory has been heavily criticised due to methodological problems and lack of evidence to show a link between emancipation and crime (see Smart 1976; and Box and Hale, 1983), the hypothesis is still utilised in criminology to explain female crime. Adler (1975) explained violence as behaviour associated with men, therefore as women moved into male centred areas of society they too began to use violence; women have to compete with men in all areas of social life in order to gain equality and violence is no exception. As the previous discussion highlighted, violent behaviour has historically been associated with power and status and it is argued by Adler (1975) that women use violence to obtain this status. However, Chesney-Lind (1997) contends that the violence is less to do with competing against men and rather it occurs due to women accessing predominantly male centred arenas of society. Women will not only have more opportunities to commit crime but will be exposed to deviant behaviour, of men, which some will adopt.

Brinkworth (1994) even argues that the liberation of women has led to more crime, not because of opportunities, but rather the emancipation has not met the aspirations of all women (cited in Worrall, 2004:46). These individuals are resorting to violence in frustration and attempting to meet their expectations such as wealth and access to resources through illegitimate means. This argument certainly critiques Smart's (1979) analysis of Adler, who claimed that the liberation movement should show a decrease in female crime because women were achieving more in terms of social opportunities and employment. The liberation hypothesis is still being debated in the literature today and there appears to be continuing disagreement as to its relevance. Some

researchers such as Messerschmidt (1995) view the liberation of women as having an impact on violence but not that women are trying to act like men. He believes that women have to redefine their femininity since they are entering social spheres that were previously dominated by men. Similarly, Campbell (1984) agrees that women are redefining their femininity in gangs, rather than attempting to be more masculine.

Young women who are deemed as becoming out of control (i.e. not acting the appropriate feminine way) have been labelled as 'ladettes'. Research by Jackson (2006) illustrated that ladettes are girls who are arrogant, consume large quantities of alcohol, smoke, swear and are aggressive. British celebrities such as Denise Van Outen and Sara Cox were labelled as ladettes in the 1990s by the media for their loud, outspoken and drunken antics, which have been accused of influencing young girls' behaviour and contributing to a rise in ladettes in the UK (Jackson and Tinkler, 2007: 253). The British media have adopted this term when referring to young women and it is commonly used in the tabloid headings such as; "'Ladette' culture blamed for rise in young girls being locked up" (Henry, 2003) and "Ladette culture on Teesside is out of control" (Argument, 2008). The term is an adaptation of the word lad and ultimately assumes that these women are simply acting in a manner normally associated with men.

Jackson and Tinkler (2007) have suggested although the term ladette might have been coined in the late twentieth century, ladettes have in actual fact existed throughout the twentieth century. Their document analysis from the 1920s illustrated that similar moral panics and media hype were aimed towards young girls during the 1920s. They argue that the media depiction of 'ladettes' associates their behaviour to liberation;

an expression of their right to equality in public areas and their entitlement to participate in activities that have been perceived as acceptable for men but problematic for women. However, Jackson and Tinkler (2007) critique these depictions, instead arguing that these portrayals mask the difficulties young women face in contemporary society. The apparent 'masculine behaviour' is more complex and associated with social strains such as poverty and stress (Parker and Reckdenwald, 2008), a far cry from the emancipated woman.

According to Faludi (1991) the media are attempting to demonstrate the dark side of feminism by documenting how liberation has led to a breed of uncontrollable women. It takes the attention away from women as victims and displays them in a negative light. Furthermore, it does not give an accurate reflection of the lives of young women or accredit women for their non-offending behaviour (Chesney-Lind and Irwin, 2008). The result of this is that a large population of women are being demonised, targeted and judged on the basis of the media's portrayal, with little understanding of the lives of these women.

Television and film are further media sources that are influencing perceptions of young women. Films that show violence construct notions of femininity and masculinity, where often the man is heroic and women are victims in need of rescuing (Cavender, 1999). Since the 1980s there has been a growth of films that have females using violence in a leading role, such as Basic Instinct (1992), Single White Female (1992), Kill Bill (2003 and 2004) and Resident Evil (2002-2010), which can influence the viewer's perception of women, i.e. just as capable of being as violent and dangerous as men (Chesney-Lind, 1999; Gilpatric, 2010). It begs the questions as to whether women are

in fact more violent in society or is it simply a means for the industry to attract viewers, since the topic grasps the attention of the public. The latter of these two is far more plausible since these films, like newspapers, do not give an accurate reflection of the lives of women, those who get arrested for violent crime are likely to be from deprived areas with a history of abuse or drug misuse, not wealthy and not well educated (Chesney-Lind, 1999; Batchelor, 2005; Chesney-Lind and Irwin, 2008; Gilpatric, 2010).

Television programmes are also drawing on this apparent rise in masculinised femininity and are utilising the concept of ladette to grab the public's attention. Programs such as Channel 4's 'Ladette to Lady' and Channel 5's 'ASBO Teen to Beauty Queen' suggest that Britain is attempting to teach troublesome young women to be feminine. ITV aired a documentary entitled 'Ann Widdecombe Versus Girl Gangs', in which the former MP sought to understand why an increasing number of young women joined gangs (aired on ITV 18th September 2008). This program did not attempt to dispel the myth of girl gangs, it started out with the argument that more young women are entering gang culture in the UK and Ann Widdecombe wanted to investigate why; 'It seems many girls are just as aggressive, terrorising neighbourhoods across the nation'. The documentary depicted young women as out of control and terms such as 'menace' were used to describe their behaviour. It suggested that girl gangs do exist but because they commit less serious crimes and are less visible to the police they are not shown in the statistics. What the documentary did reveal was that people perceive young women to be a social problem. There is a sense in both suburban and city centre areas that young women are becoming an increasing problem with individuals feeling intimidated by females. However, these were the views of only a handful of individuals, many of whom took it upon themselves to speak

on behalf of their friends, family and local community. There was no empirical evidence in the documentary that a representative proportion of Britain's population actually agree with this, again demonstrating that the media reports require scrutiny. At the end of the program Ann suggested that what is required is 'pretty active intervention'. This is just an example of how the television is portraying young women in Britain, there was no mention in this documentary about young women who do not commit violence or even a clear distinction between gangs and groups.

An important aspect of the media is that much of their reporting is contradictory, so whilst some young women are being depicted as violent, the media is also indicating that young women are displaying their femininity through sexuality and success (see Arthur, 2003). Cosmetic surgery, weight loss and fashion are other ways in which young women are being portrayed. So whilst there may be concerns about young women exhibiting characteristics thought to be associated with men, i.e. smoking, binge drinking and fighting, there are also concerns about young women attempting to be more feminine and putting their health at risk in doing so (see Clay et al., 2005). Young women are being shown as glamorous in TV programmes such as Hollyoaks and young female idols such as Cheryl Cole and The Saturdays[14] portray images of sex appeal and success. This is significant because firstly, not all young women are being portrayed as out of control and masculine and also even when young women are attempting to become more feminine, they are criticised for going about it the wrong way. Thus, the media do not reflect the lives of real young women, they appear to depict them as successful and glamorous or out of control and violent, and it is doubtful if either of these images represent the majority of young women in the UK.

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[14] The Saturdays are a British female popular music group.

This is noteworthy because it should be remembered that when discussing the media's portrayal of young women, the media are not showing all young women as troublesome.

It is interesting to observe the discursive controls of young women in the media; despite two very contrasting pictures of women being portrayed, they both criticise the behaviour of women, either being too masculine or being too sexual. This continues to reinforce how femininity is being presented through media discourses and is problematic because it has a negative impact for young women in today's society, as expressed by Jackson and Tinkler (2007: 268):

> The implications of negative discourses about young women should not be underestimated as they can work to constrain acts of feminine assertion and claims to equality [...] popular discourses about girls have real consequences for the ways in which girls are perceived and treated.

It is therefore important to understand how these informal discursive controls influence formal legislative controls (Schur, 1984).

Criminal justice responses to female offenders

Criminal justice responses to women who offend have demonstrated that much of the decision making relates to the women's gender conformity. Hudson (2002: 256) argues that the treatment of women from the criminal justice system often depends on whether women display characteristics of stereotypical femininity. Furthermore, Stanko and Heidensohn (1995) claim that a woman's femininity is regularly more important in criminal justice decision making than the severity of crime they have committed.

Worrall (1990) argues that traditional gender stereotypes are embedded within criminal justice institutions on the basis on patriarchy. She states that women are judged on their domesticity, sexuality and pathology rather than their reasoning or structural factors (economic, social and political). Thus decision making by the courts appears to take notions of femininity into account when dealing with women and their supposed role as mothers and wives influences how the courts deal with them. Despite the courts dealing with small numbers of women who offend (in comparison to men), they are easily able to stereotype women on the basis of their domestic roles (Heidensohn, 1985). According to Beresford (1996) the law itself facilitates the stereotyping of gender in their policies. She argues that in the eyes of the law femininity is associated with motherhood, heterosexuality and monogamy, essentially the law creates appropriate gender norms on the basis of biology.

It is important to reflect on findings from studies carried out in courts as they indicate how gender roles can influence the punishment women receive. Carlen (1983) found that judges were more lenient towards women with children, who appeared to be good mothers, whereas single childless women were treated more harshly. Similarly Allen (1987) showed that in cases of female perpetrated violence the court reports focus on the mental state of the women accused whereas this is not questioned as much in cases where men have been violent. In the case of filicide, women are far more likely to plead diminished responsibility on the grounds of their mental state than men (Wilczynsk, 1997). The courts are more inclined to take the treatment rather than punishment approach when faced with crimes of filicide, which supports the notion that violent women are seen as mad or evil, whereas men's violence is more accountable (Wilczynsk, 1997).

Hedderman and Gelsthorpe's (1997) interviews with magistrates showed that magistrates based much of their decision making on the domestic and feminine role of the women. Their findings highlighted that if women demonstrated characteristics of femininity such as being a good mother and crying in court then the sentences were more lenient. The magistrates took into account biological factors, such as the menopause, and family relations with women, however these were not considered when sentencing men. This research demonstrates that gender roles can influence a magistrate's decision and women who present themselves as more feminine could have an advantage in court over women who do not display feminine characteristics.

These studies all demonstrate how women face discretionary controls that are based upon appropriate gender norms that stem from biological and psychological assumptions about sex roles. They have shown that women who go against historical notions of appropriate femininity are at risk of facing harsher penalties from the criminal justice system and courts are more inclined to question the mental health of women.

Heidensohn (1985) states that women can be treated with chivalry on the basis of their sex role, but women who go against appropriate femininity are treated more harshly, because they are perceived as doubly deviant. For instance Dell (1999) states that stereotypes of women who use violence are utilised to uphold the dominant position of men in society. Women who use violence are perceived as a danger to the moral fabric of society, i.e. 'normal' women do not use violence because this is a characteristic of masculinity. By maintaining traditional ideologies of gender roles, Dell

argues, this will sustain a patriarchal structure whereby women are oppressed on the basis of sex roles.

Alder (1998) argues that that unacceptability of violence perpetrated by females may contribute to difficulties in knowing how best to deal with them. Rather than approaching young women with a protection strategy, law enforcement is replacing protection with justice. This is supported by Worrall (2001) who suggests that the media depictions of young women becoming more violent have resulted in public demand to criminalise young women who are not conforming to their socially assigned gender roles. She argues that there has been a shift in the criminal justice system from perceiving young women as vulnerable and in need of support and protection to one of punitiveness, whereby young women need to be punished.

Therefore the courts can be seen as a mechanism for controlling 'bad' women by moving from welfare to justice approaches. For instance Sharpe (2009) has demonstrated how girls and young women who appear to be at risk of deviant behaviour are now being processed through the criminal justice system as a means of protection. So there may not be an actual increase in female deviancy but rather more control over their deviancy as it is being portrayed as unacceptable. So Sharpe (2009) concludes that rather than a move from welfare to justice, the practices coincide; welfare is being used to protect girls and young women 'at risk' and justice is being used to punish those who were exercising characteristics of the ladette. Thus a dual dichotomy is being practiced based on sexualised ideologies. What this study highlights is how legal discourses are using their disciplinary power to control behaviour of young women who are deemed unacceptable.

Worrall (2002: 48) suggests that women are now depicted as "real criminals" and therefore are no longer viewed as in need of protection and rehabilitation, but rather need to be punished. There has been a marked increase in the number of women incarcerated, particularly for violence and drug use, which can be explained by an increase in punitive attitudes (see Morris, 1987; Worrall, 2002; Cavadino and Dignan, 2003; Hedderman, 2004; Worrall, 2004). Hedderman (2004) proposes that the courts are more severe in their punishment (for men and women) which has resulted in more women being incarcerated. Research has shown that young women are not in fact becoming more violent but rather they are subjected to growing controls on the basis of appropriate femininity and increasingly punitive penal policies (see Batchelor, 2005).

Challenging the assumptions

The portrayal of women's violence has been shaped around traditional gender norms, and these have had a negative effect on women who come into contact with the criminal justice system. Women have been depicted as either mad or bad and these representations have been linked to the mental health of women and the women's liberation. The characteristics of women in prison demonstrate that these women are by no means what would be classified as emancipated or empowered. Research with female offenders has found that many women have problems with drugs and alcohol, have come from socially deprived backgrounds, self-harm and have suffered physical and/or sexual abuse (see Loucks, 2004; Malloch, 2004; Batchelor, 2005). The Corston Report (2007) identified that there is an over representation of women in prison with histories of abuse, drug addiction and mental health problems. For instance, in Scotland, 47% of females in Cornton Vale were receiving treatment for drug use

compared to 32% of men in prison in 2009 (SPS, 2010). Furthermore, women in prison have poor educational qualifications and a large proportion are unemployed when imprisoned (Loucks, 2004). Similarly research has found that there are several factors associated with women who use violence, including poverty (Sommers and Baskin, 1994; Zhan, et al., 2008), drug and alcohol misuse (Batchelor, 2005), poor parenting (Zhan, et al., 2008), and physical/sexual abuse (Wesley, 2006) which mirror features found among young men known to use violence (Alder, 1991).

The assumption that women who use violence are in some way irrational has also been challenged. Research has shown violence to be a rational response to social disadvantages such as past abuse (Dobash and Dobash, 1984; Sommers and Baskin, 1994; Batchelor, 2005; Wesley, 2006) and a means to gain respect which demonstrated that they are capable of looking after themselves:

> By communicating that they were prepared to stand up for themselves [...]
> the young women maintained a level of self respect and status. (Batchelor, 2005: 370)

Current research from North America supports the previous research findings with regards to young women (Zhan et al., 2008). They found that young women who are violent towards their peers do so to protect their reputation and to defend themselves. Young women are more likely to use violence within the home than young men, and the violence is often a response to abuse, neglect and over controlling parents. These research findings highlight several main themes in female's use of violence, none of which suggest that women are irrational, liberated or simply evil. The women in the research studies noted have histories of physical and sexual abuse, live in poverty, have problems with drugs and alcohol and usually resort to violence as a

survival strategy rather than one of control. In this respect women's violence is different from men's in that it is not an adoption of masculinity but a response to the victimisation of femininity.

The perception that women who use violence are emulating masculine behaviour needs to be addressed. During the 1990s there was increasing worries, particularly in North America, about the apparent rise of girl gangs (Chesney-Lind and Irwin, 2008: 17), and although this research is not focussing on gangs, the research does assist with understanding the context of female violence and the notion of femininity in a previously male dominated arena[15]. Research has continually shown that the young women make up a very small proportion of gang membership and when violence is used it is less prevalent and of a less serious nature (Esbensen et al., 1999).

Campbell (1990) discovered that female identity was very important in gangs and the young women wanted to distinguish themselves from males. Young women act appropriately depending on the social situation and therefore in situations where violence occurs, they adapt their gender role accordingly. These findings correspond with those in Messerschmidt's (1995) study of girl gangs. He found that girls in gangs are actually reaffirming their identity and roles as females within society. The violence that is used is a means of developing and sustaining reputations that reinforce their femininity. Violence is a method used to gain social status within society in order to prevent them being perceived as submissive recipients of traditional patriarchy. Messerschmidt (1995) therefore argues that females are not trying to be like men but

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[15] The majority of research on girl gangs has been conducted in North America (with the exception of Batchelor, 2009 and Young, 2009) thus the discussion is based on research with young women in North America.

rather their movement into previously male dominated areas has meant they need to redefine their identity as females.

Messerschmidt's (1995) research demonstrated that girls participate in gender difference activities such as child care but also partake in gender similar activities in the gangs. The girls in the study value their sexuality as being female while engaging in violence with boys (Messerschmidt, 1995: 183). The male members of the gangs did not perceive the girls to be 'boy-like' but rather they were females expressing their sexuality and loyalty through violence. In the gang situation gender becomes secondary to the group dynamic and therefore in situations such as gangs there can be a crossing of traditional gender identities but this does not result in girls becoming men (Messerschmidt 2002: 463). Although the girls in the study may have appeared to be acting like men, they were in fact still proud of their female identity and did not want to be like men, thus they still took pride in their appearance to identify themselves as female. Although Miller (2001) criticises Messerschmidt (1995) for this adaptation of femininity on the grounds that girls who adopt masculine traits are acting like boys, Messerschmidt points out that gender is constructed and therefore theorists ought not to assume that certain behaviour automatically depicts a particular gender.

A key theme that emerged from research by Miller and Brunson (2000) and Laidler and Hunt (2001) was that the use of violence was used to maintain status and to be respected by others; it was not used as a way to be more like the males, but to exemplify power and strength as a female. This is supported by Batchelor's (2005) research with women convicted of violent offences and highlights that violence is

utilised as a structured action, rather than an attempt to be more masculine. The backgrounds of young women in gangs are similar to those women who have used violence:

> Criminally violent young women are not liberated young women, but young women who are severely constrained by both their material circumstances and attendant ideologies of working-class femininity. (Batchelor, 2009: 407)

It is evident that empirical research with young women deemed as violent challenge the assumptions that women are either mad or bad, rejecting biological and liberation hypotheses. Thus the criminal justice responses do not accurately reflect the lives of young women, but rather expose gendered sentencing practices.

Assessing the evidence

There is continuing debate on the reliability of statistics when examining crime rates, however what is universally agreed is that women commit less crime and of a less serious nature than men (Gora, 1982; Heidensohn, 1987; Chesney-Lind, 1997; Croall, 1998; Walklate, 2004). The Criminal Proceedings in Scotland (2009-10) shows that men still commit the majority of violent offences and the most serious in Scotland. Despite this, a closer examination is needed to examine whether violent offences committed by women are actually increasing. The investigation commences by discussing arrests for violent offences and whether young women are actually 'becoming more violent'. This is followed by an analysis of charges for violent offences and an exploration of the Scottish Prison Statistics (2010), which outline the main offences individuals have been imprisoned for between 2000/2001 and 2009/2010.

Police arrests for violent offences

Police recorded statistics in Scotland do not break down the crimes and offences by gender[16] so it is difficult to obtain an accurate representation of the number of young women who have been arrested for violent offences. Despite this, McIvor and Burman (2011) were able to obtain data from five of Scotland's seven police forces on recorded crimes and offences involving women. This data shows that there is an overall increase in the number of women involved in minor assaults from 2001-2009. Only a very small number of women have been involved in serious assault and attempted murder and this has remained stable over a ten year period. Data from North America has come to similar conclusions demonstrating that the most significant increases in young women's violence involves minor offences (see Steffensmeier et al., 2005; Zhan et al., 2008; Feld, 2009). The growing number of young women being arrested for less serious forms of violence requires further analysis. There have been several constructionist approaches proposed, mainly from North America, that argue young women's' behaviour has not changed but instead a net widening of policing has resulted in more young women being detected and arrested for violent behaviour.

The first proposal is that changing definitions of what constitutes violent behaviour has led to more young women being labelled as violent (Pollock and Davis, 2005). Steffensmeier et al. (2005) show that, (in North America), police intolerance to even minor forms of violence has a direct impact on young women because their violence is less serious. The changing definitions as to what is regarded as violent means that interpersonal 'fights' are being recorded as violent offences. Feld (2009) came to similar conclusions arguing that increased policing of minor delinquency create an

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[16] A request was made to obtain this data but it was not available.

artificial 'crime wave' of youth offending. Phillips (2003) found that verbal abuse and 'fighting' was common among girls at school and Steffensmeier et al. (2005) argue that this form of behaviour was once ignored or at least dealt with 'informally', whereas now it is being directed to the police. This was supported by Zhan et al. (2008) who suggest that zero tolerance approaches to school violence has increased police involvement in schools.

Zhan et al. (2008) found that rise in the number of girls being arrested for minor assault was disproportionate to number of boys being arrested over since 1980. The increasing number of girls arrested was attributed to more policing of the home, where girls are more likely to use minor violence (Steffensmeier et al., 2005; Feld, 2009). This has stemmed from a zero tolerance approach to domestic violence in the US where mandatory arrest policies for domestic violence are exercised (Chesney-Lind, 2002). This suggests that changes in police policy and practice are explanatory factors for more young women coming to the attention of the police. However, there is a lack of evidence that women are becoming more violent, as indicated in news articles. Only a small proportion of women are involved in violence and those that are use minor forms of violence.

Proven charges and imprisonment for violence

Table 1[17] illustrates the number of women with a proven charge for non- sexual crimes of violence in Scotland from 2001 to 2010. It can be seen that there has been an increase in the number of women with a proven charge for all age groups: a 44% increase in the number of women under 21, a 38% increase in the number of women

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[17] The time period from 2001-2010 has been used to provide a reasonable snapshot of changes over this period.

aged 21-30 and a 49% increase for the over 30 age group. This can be compared to the increase in the number of men charged shown in Table 1. Again the biggest increase for men from 2001 – 2010 is the over 30 age group with a 36%. This table highlights that women still make up only a very small number of those with a proven charge for non-sexual crimes of violence and despite an increase in the figures there has also been an increase for men. Women under the age of 21 have made up less than 2% of all proven non-sexual crimes of violence charges from 2001-2010. In addition, there has been a fluctuation in the number of women (in all age categories) with a proven charge for non-sexual crimes of violence which provides little evidence of any trend.

Table 1 – Number of males and females with a charge proven for non-sexual crimes of violence, including handling an offensive weapon, Scotland, 2001 -2010.

Age and Gender	2001	2002	2003	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	Total Increase
Men										
Under 21	1719	1566	1627	1862	1870	2008	1943	1893	1607	-7%
21 – 30	1580	1712	1841	1993	1821	1980	2137	2130	1902	20%
Over 30	990	1087	1236	1420	1328	1422	1497	1574	1349	36%
Total	4289	4365	4704	5275	5019	5410	5577	5597	4830	12%
Women										
Under 21	72	103	129	94	99	115	117	115	104	44%
21 – 30	139	172	190	195	184	188	229	241	192	38%
Over 30	117	138	163	217	167	185	218	213	174	49%
Total	328	413	482	506	450	488	564	569	470	43%

Source: Criminal Proceedings in the Scottish Courts 2001- 2009/2010.

The non-sexual crimes of violence have been broken down in Table 2 to focus on serious and attempted murder. Again, there appears to be a larger rise in the number of women with a proven charge for these crimes, however the small base numbers indicate that only a small proportion of women commit these crimes. The proportion of these crimes of which women (all age groups) have been charged increased from 7% in 2001 to 9% in 2010. Despite this, the inconsistency over time once again shows little

evidence of a trend in the number of young women with a proven charge for serious assault and attempted murder.

Table 2 - Number of males and females with a charge proven for serious assault and attempted murder, Scotland, 2001 -2010.

Age and Gender	2001	2002	2003	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	Total Increase
Men										
Under 21	341	404	414	422	588	492	585	563	504	48%
21 – 30	366	449	527	443	695	501	597	613	554	51%
Over 30	283	327	332	355	537	339	389	371	305	8%
Total	990	1180	1273	1220	1820	1332	1571	1547	1363	38%
Women										
Under 21	17	27	60	32	31	38	45	49	41	141%
21 – 30	26	31	38	38	41	27	49	60	47	81%
Over 30	32	38	39	48	37	25	56	36	50	56%
Total	75	96	137	118	109	100	150	145	138	84%

Source: Criminal Proceedings in the Scottish Courts 2001- 2009/2010.

This thesis focuses on violent 'behaviour' as opposed to violent 'crime' so it is necessary to also examine proven charges for common assault because an assault can still inflict physical injury. Table 3 shows the number of men and women with a proven charge for common assault from 2001-20010. Even though Table 3 indicates an overall increase in the number of women with a proven charge for assault, this has also been the case for men[18]. In 2001 women under the age of 21 made up only 4% of all proven common assault charges, and in 2009 this figure increased by less than 1% to 4.9% of all proven common assault charges. However, when isolating the under 21 age group, young women made up 15% of all proven common assault charges in 2001 and this rose to 20% in 2010.

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[18] The percentage increase is larger due to the small base numbers for women.

Table 3 – Number of males and females with a proven charge for common assault, Scotland, 2001-2010.

Age and Gender	2001	2002	2003	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	Total Increase
Men										
Under 21	2451	2524	2627	2609	3083	3541	3506	3193	2748	12%
21 – 30	3140	3208	3489	3839	3900	4426	4545	4549	4334	38%
Over 30	3694	3845	4036	4696	4663	4884	4793	4698	4485	21%
Total	9285	9577	10152	11442	11646	12851	12844	12440	11567	25%
Women										
Under 21	454	495	516	594	671	777	770	752	703	55%
21 – 30	516	548	594	669	713	782	793	871	806	56%
Over 30	588	674	770	827	923	1001	1053	1042	1031	75%
Total	1558	1717	1880	2090	2307	2560	2616	2665	2540	63%

Source: Criminal Proceedings in the Scottish Courts 2001- 2009/2010.

It is evident that women continue to make up a very small percent of violent offences in Scotland and with regards to the legally defined violent offences (i.e. serious assault and attempted murder) there is a lack of evidence to suggest a continuous growth in the number of women charged. The recorded police data and proven charges for violence support verify that young women still make up a very small proportion of violent offences. This data supports the findings of McIvor and Burman (2011) who found increases in proven charges for women committing miscellaneous offences until 2006-2007, but have since started to decline. These statistics do not support the media portrayal of an increasing number of young women using violence.

Table 4 shows the number of men and women imprisoned in Scotland for non-sexual crimes of violence including handling an offensive weapon. There has been an increase in the number of men and women incarcerated for these crimes, but a disproportionate increase for women. In 2001/2002 women only made up 4% of the overall prison population imprisoned for these crimes but in 2009/2010 this proportion increased to 7%. Women under 21 have only made up 1% of the overall prison

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population for these crimes since 2001 showing no change during this time. When the under 21 age group is isolated, there is no change is the proportion made up by young women, which has remained at 4%.

Table 4 - Number of males and females imprisoned[19] for non-sexual crimes of violence, including handling an offensive weapon, Scotland, 2001-2010.

Age and Gender	2001	2002	2003	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	Total Increase
Men										
Under 21	504	597	565	583	665	700	708	671	708	40%
Adults	1404	1601	1696	1638	1619	1747	1925	2090	1959	40%
Total	1908	2198	2261	2221	2284	2447	2633	2761	2667	40%
Women										
Under 21	18	32	29	31	21	46	43	32	33	82%
Adults	54	66	82	84	96	97	446	143	147	172%
Total	72	98	111	115	117	143	159	175	180	150%

Source: Scottish Prison Statistics 2010.

In terms of serious assault and attempted murder (Table 5), the percentage shows a 219% increase in the number of adult women imprisoned, but again the numbers are so small it is best to look at the actual number, which rose from 27 to 86. For adult men there was a 28% increase, 152 more cases of serious assault and attempted murder. There has been a large increase of young males sentenced for serious assault and attempted murder rising from 218 to 338 (55% increase) from 2001/02 to 2009/10. For young female offenders the numbers rose from 5 to 20, a small overall total but still a large proportionate increase in comparison to men. By comparing the proportion of total imprisonment for serious assault and attempted murder it shows that in 2001 adult women made up 5% of the adult Scottish prison population for this crime but by 2010 adult women made up 11% of the total adult prison population for this crime. In the case of young women, they made up 2% of young offenders

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[19] Direct sentenced receptions

imprisoned for serious assault and attempted murder in 2001/02, rising to 6% in 2009/10. Women make up only a very small proportion of the prison population for these crimes and the numbers have varied across this time period, again refuting claims that there has been an increase in violence perpetrated by women.

Table 5 – Number of males and females imprisoned[20] for serious assault and attempted murder, Scotland, 2001-2010.

	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	Total Increase
Men										
Under 21	218	282	274	282	279	297	313	328	338	55%
Adults	535	587	668	564	562	563	653	725	687	28%
Total	753	869	942	846	841	860	966	1053	1025	36%
Women										
Under 21	5	6	15	20	13	26	24	23	20	300%
Adults	27	16	37	32	44	34	51	78	86	219%
Total	32	22	52	52	57	60	75	101	106	231%

Source: Scottish Prison Statistics 2010.

In terms of common assault (Table 6), at first glance it appears there has been a large increase with a 155% rise in women imprisoned for common assault, however due to the very small numbers of women in total the percentage change appears more dramatic. In actual fact only 67 more adult women have been imprisoned for common assault during this period[21]. For adult men, there was an 84% increase in the number imprisoned for common assault, 675 more men convicted in 2009/10 than 2001/02[22]. In 2001 women made up only 4% of all individuals imprisoned for common assault, and they made up only 6% in 2010. In this case there has been a disproportionate increase in the number of women (compared to men) being imprisoned for common

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[20] Direct sentenced receptions

[21] Table 13f of the Scottish Prison Statistics 2010 lists the number of direct receptions for female offenders by the main offence.

[22] Table 13e of the Scottish Prison Statistics 2010 lists the number of direct receptions for male offenders by the main offence.

assault, but it is still a very small number. In the case of young women (under the age of 21), the number imprisoned has increased from 19 in 2001/02 to 31 in 2009/10 (63%)[23]. Young women made up only 7% of young people imprisoned for common assault in 2001 and this rose to 8% in 2010. These statistics indicate very little change in the number of young women being imprisoned for common assault.

Table 6 – Number of males and females imprisoned[24] for common assault, Scotland, 2001-2010.

	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	Total Increase
Men										
Under 21	237	223	226	253	323	389	416	420	344	45%
Adults	807	867	870	1,079	1,186	1,305	1,355	1,515	1,482	84%
Total	1044	1090	1096	1332	1509	1694	1771	1935	1826	75%
Women										
Under 21	19	14	18	25	14	14	17	22	31	63%
Adults	32	58	57	69	78	74	77	81	99	209%
Total	51	72	75	94	92	88	94	103	130	155%

Source: Scottish Prison Statistics 2010.

The statistics examined do not signify increases in the number of women using violence as expressed in media and political discourses. Despite some small increasing in the number of young women convicted of violent crime, there no indication of a continuous growth and violent crime still appears to be predominantly a male activity (McIvor and Burman, 2011). Among the under 21 age category, the largest increase in number of young women with a proven charge has been for common assault, supporting the police data collected from McIvor and Burman (2011) that shows women's involvement in crime is in relation to minor miscellaneous offences.

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[23] Table 13c of the Scottish Prison Statistics 2010 lists the number of direct receptions for young female offenders by the main offence.
[24] Direct sentenced receptions

The evidence provided in this section clearly shows that overall only a small number of women are involved in violent offences; however the small rise in numbers is misconstrued with the large percentage increases. The largest increase in detected offences is minor assaults and there appears to be a disproportionate increase in the number of young women (the under 21 age bracket) that have received a proven charge for violent offences. Given that very few women commit violent offences and, those who do, commit relatively minor offences, it raises the issue as to whether the portrayed increase in female violence is actually representing very minor violent offences. McIvor and Burman (2011) suggest that changes in police definitions of violence and crime recording standards could contribute to increases in minor forms of violence being detected and this is an important aspect that will be explored in the fieldwork.

Summary

This chapter utilised a feminist framework of patriarchy to analyse how women are at risk of greater social control on the basis of socially constructed gender norms. Women are vulnerable to more social control both publically and privately as a result of women being socially constructed as submissive to men. This chapter has highlighted that women who offend, particularly for acts deemed as violent, are characterised as going against appropriate gender norms and thus doubly deviant. This has resulted in discretionary control mechanisms by the courts, whereby sentencing is influenced by the woman's demeanour and exercising of feminine traits. Public concerns over the behaviour of young women (i.e. it resembles characteristics of masculinity) has had a negative consequence whereby young women are viewed as punishable rather than

treatable. The assumptions that women who commit violent offences are either mad or bad has been challenged and the chapter demonstrated that women who use violence are active agents and the violence is related to wider issues of social deprivation and patriarchy.

Statistical evidence was assessed to investigate whether more women are being detected and prosecuted for violent offence. The discussion highlights that there is little evidence support the contention that more women are using violence. Instead, the argument proposed is that changes in policing may be contributing to young women being labelled as violent. Young women commit a very small proportion of violent offences and they are of a less serious nature than men's violence. However, a disproportionate number of young women have received a proven charge for common assault offences.

Although there is growing literature on criminal justice system responses to female offenders there is little known about how these controls are being exercised at the level of policing (Visher, 1983; Horn and Wincup, 1995). This thesis examines the control mechanisms exercised by front line police officers in Scotland. This assists with establishing whether policing policies in Scotland have had any impact on the number of women being detected for violent offences. In addition, the current study investigates how young women are depicted by the police and whether this has any influence on their arrest decision making. The subsequent chapter discusses the importance of researching the police to understand controls of women who offend within a broader criminal justice framework.

Chapter 3 - Police, Power and Patriarchy

Chapter two demonstrated the various ways women who offend, particularly for violent offences, are portrayed. This chapter moves on to focus the attention of control within policing given that there is little research that has studied how police officers respond to women who use violence. In order to understand the decisions made by police officers, and particularly decisions regarding young women, it is essential to investigate how police cultures and structures impact on decision making.

The first section provides a brief outline of the development of the police by discussing the history, structure and role of the police. This is followed by demonstrating how the police as an institution can be regarded as a 'discursive field' and how police powers can be interpreted from a Foucauldian perspective.

The second section of this chapter examines how gender is shaped within the institution of policing. It explores gender relations within the police establishment in order to examine how women are treated within the police, which in turn could assist with understanding how police officers respond to women offend.

The final section of the chapter investigates police discretion and the impact this has on arrest decisions. It expands on the examination of police powers by embarking on an investigation into factors that influence arrest decision making and the influence this has on offenders. This research specifically focuses on police responses to young women who use violence and therefore it is necessary to achieve a comprehensive understanding of how police officers respond to women who offend. This section concludes by considering what role the gender of the offender plays in police discretion.

The role of policing

The historical context

The 19th century saw the establishment of professional police forces in Scotland (Glasgow Act 1800) and England (The Metropolitan Police Act 1829, established by Sir Robert Peel), which grew out of increasing concerns about crime and disorder during a time of increased urbanisation (Carson, 1984; Reiner, 1992; Emsley, 2003; Dinsmor and Goldsmith, 2005). From a liberal perspective, the role of the police at this time was to deter people from committing crime since the Home Office believed police presence was an effective method to prevent crime from occurring (Emsley, 2003). Sir Robert Peel wanted police officers to be perceived by the public as upstanding members of the community that were in place to protect them. The image of the police was to be respectable rather than military and thus the uniforms consisted of top hats and long coats (Baldwin and Kinsey, 1982). The police were recruited to be the public's police, to be considerate and respectful towards others, and "[w]herever possible, to rely upon public consent and co-operation rather than upon formal legal powers" (Baldwin and Kinsey, 1982: 10). The role of the police in Scottish communities was to work with the members of the community to prevent crime from occurring; these small police bodies were perceived as protective and helpful rather than intimidating and controlling (Dinsmor and Goldsmith, 2005). As industrialisation and urbanisation grew in Scotland, particularly in the cities, more police forces were set up to tackle the rising concerns over crime and disorder.

Although this liberal view would suggest that the police were put in place as protectors of the people (see Reiner, 1992), they were in fact enforcers of state power, brought in

to protect the wealthier people of society with the subsequent criminalisation the poor (Scraton, 1985; Villiers, 2009). The introduction of the police was to control and regulate the behaviour of the 'dangerous classes'; the poorer members of urban society (Villiers, 2009). The police were not the public's police, they were working on behalf of the sovereign, and their presence came with hostility from the public that often led to violent altercations with those who opposed such presence (Stead, 1977; McLaughlin, 2007). Scraton (1985: 13) points this out when discussing the introduction of the Metropolitan police service:

> The Met. was then a power looked on by the masses with great mistrust: viewed, as it naturally was, as a military organization in the hands of the government, which led to stubborn and protracted agitation against them.

The police, although depicted as protectors, were regularly deployed to control the unruly working and lower classes, particularly during political strike movements (Scraton, 1985), thus the police have historically been more than enforcers of the law, but rather enforcers of state power. This resulted in the construction of 'criminal classes' (Scraton, 1985) whereby police resources were concentrated around the poorest populations of society, and were as much law enforcement as they were social control officers (McLaughlin, 2007). Scraton (1985) argues that this early policing led to a statistical myth that lower classes (particularly the unemployed) committed more crime. A more realistic interpretation of crime statistics of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century is that the unemployed were more regularly recorded as criminals. The public hostility toward the police and regulation of the unemployed areas of society highlight that the image of the 'respectable bobby' was a far cry from the reality of the sovereign enforcers of control and punishment.

The 1920s witnessed a growing concern regarding the behaviour of police officers, in particular their violence towards members of the public (Scraton, 1985) and as a result The Royal Commission on Police Powers and Procedures was established in order to detect and prevent police corruption (Emsley, 2003). The police had gained public support from the middle and upper classes for their determination to rid society of the crimes of the lower classes, however this support started to diminish in the 1950s (Reiner, 1992). There continued to be incidences of police corruption reaching media headlines and a growing number of complaints being made against the police in the 1950s. Increasing moral panics during the 1950s with regards to young people (see Cohen, 2002) put pressure on the police to ease public anxieties (Reiner, 1992). The increasing use of cars and growing departmental divisions of policing meant that the public began to lose faith in policing because fewer officers were visibly patrolling the streets (Newburn, 2003). During the latter part of the twentieth century there was a marked shift of public attitudes towards the police, which can be attributed somewhat to the behaviour of the police during events such as the Brixton and Greenham riots (see Johnson, 1989; Graef, 1990) and the mining strikes during the 1980s (see Evans, 1989). These events demonstrated high levels of police control, and particularly physical violence towards members of the public. Events such as these continued to reinforce an 'us' and 'them' environment where the police were regarded as enforcers of the law, who could use their authority to demonstrate their position of power within communities.

Despite the introduction of the police being portrayed as protectors of communities rather than a military body, they were in fact protectors of sovereign and state power. This continues today whereby the police are utilised for crowd control and

intervention during riots, which often involve them wearing military style uniforms consisting of bullet proof clothing, shields and helmets. This is a dramatic change from the top hats and tail coats of the nineteenth century. The institution of policing can therefore be viewed as an extension of the state (Westmarland, 2001a) and it is often regarded as an isolated part of the criminal justice system since much of their operation and decision making is secretive (Punch, 1993). The organisation of policing have their own policies, practices and cultural beliefs that impact specific to the institution and influences the way they carry out law enforcement (Foster, 2003).

Police culture[25]

A key characteristic of policing is that of solidarity, whereby the police are taught to rely upon each upon and work together in the fight against crime. The development of solidarity begins during their training, whereby new recruits are taught that they have to trust each other because of scepticism from outsiders (i.e. the public) (Foster, 2003). Again this resembles similarities to the military; soldiers are trained to work as a team rather than as individuals and to always look out for one another (Foster, 2003). Police officers look for acceptance from their peers because they want to be respected (Westmarland, 2008). This solidarity among police officers can lead to problems since new recruits can find themselves displaying prejudices on the basis that their peers do it (Foster, 2003). Police officers require solidarity because they have to work together and rely on each other's support, particularly in more dangerous situations (Reiner, 1992). In order to gain acceptance from colleagues police officers have to prove themselves, prove they are capable of police work and are trustworthy. Historically

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[25] There is no singular all encompassing police culture. Although policing divisions share norms and values each has their own identity (see Westmarland, 2008).

police officers required the respect from the public they were protecting (Emsley, 2003), whereas now it is institutional respect they seek (Reiner, 1992) and the respect comes from them portraying the 'right' image.

Contemporary images of policing are complex and are sourced from individual experiences alongside media representations (Walklate, 2004). These images include the heroic and courageous police officer; the corrupt police officer; the friendly neighbourhood police officer; the tough crime fighting police officer; the interviewer; the investigator and so on. The complex representation of policing makes it difficult to understand what the role of the police officer actually is, but it is routinely perceived to be one of masculinity (Walklate, 2004).

According to Prokos and Padavic (2002) male officers perceive the image of an officer to be heroic; police work is dangerous, physically demanding and the police are thought of as crime fighters. The image of danger and risk appeals to men because it is viewed as a symbol of masculinity (Coffey and Brown, 1992; Westmarland, 2001a) however, much of police work is taken up with mundane paper work and the police have various responsibilities including report writing and traffic control that are not concerned with the detection and detention of criminals (Coffey and Brown, 1992; Prokos and Padavic, 2002). Coffey and Brown (1992) argue that although the perception of policing is one of danger, policing is in fact less risky than many occupations such as construction and agriculture. Thus, the perceived image of a police officer is far from the reality of actual police work. Waddington (1999) suggests that police officers, particularly men, believe that the heart of policing lies in crime fighting, this is considered 'real' police work. Therefore, acting authoritative and strong, even if

not practicing it, gives police officers a sense of pride especially among their fellow officers. This is why police work is considered a masculine occupation; it requires the characteristics of masculinity, such as assertiveness, physical strength and force, in order to combat the fight against crime (Waddington, 1999; Westmarland, 2001a). Despite sex discrimination and equal opportunity legislation being developed and enforced, masculinity is still a key symbol of policing and policing is still considered to be a man's job (Reiner, 1992; Foster, 2003; Westmarland, 2001a; Rabe-Hemp, 2008).

A further dimension of police culture is racism, which has in recent years received great attention from academics and researchers. The majority of police officers (71.4% in Scotland) are not only male but also white and the solidarity among the white men has led to the development of police cultures that view individuals of a different race as the 'others' (Waddington, 1999). Immigration after WWII resulted in more ethnic minorities residing in Britain, particularly of black origin and these individuals were perceived as dangerous (Waddington, 1999). Police work involves contact with marginalised groups in society, one of these groups being ethnic minorities resulting in the police perception that these people are deviant and not to be trusted. Historically ethnic minorities in Britain have been perceived as deviant and widespread racism was evident throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century (see Narduzzo, 2007). Police officers of ethnic minorities frequently find it difficult to be accepted by their colleagues and can be subjected to racism within the force (Foster, 2003). The third section of this chapter will discuss racism in relation to offenders, however it is important to understand the racism directed towards fellow police officers. The stereotyped attitudes of ethnic minorities in society transpired through the institution

of policing and consequentially ethnic minorities have been perceived as outcasts within the institution of policing itself (Bowling and Phillips, 2003).

The police are a complex organisation that involves hierarchies, moral codes and prejudices (Reiner, 1992; Foster, 2003). They are a hierarchical organisation based on a common understanding and appreciation of the law and crime control and within the organisation are particular beliefs regarding offending, justice and police practice, which all members of the police force are expected to adopt (Westmarland, 2008). Working as a police officer requires individuals to be physically and mentally capable of dealing with offenders and victims of crime. Police officers are taught to rely on each other and be sceptical about outsiders, thus the police have a sense of solidarity among the members and in training they are taught to work together and rely upon each other (Foster, 2003). There are similarities between police cultures and the military in that they both developed as male dominated organisations that were based on solidarity among the members and a hierarchy of ranks (Foster, 2003). Reiner (1992) identifies key characteristics of police culture that include solidarity, authority, strength, masculinity and prejudice. These characteristics are often learnt during police training and have been associated with the cultures of policing rather than the individuals that work there (Westmarland, 2008). Sanders and Young (2002) propose that due to the institution of policing being unrepresentative of the population (i.e. mainly white males) this has led to both the development and the sustainability of police cultures.

The police can therefore be viewed as what Michel Foucault described as a discursive field; for Foucault (2002), society is made up of different discursive fields that have

developed their own culture, understandings, language and beliefs (Weedon, 1997). The use of the term discourse was important for Foucault because he rejected the Marxist phrase 'ideology' on the basis that ideology implies an underlying truth, whereas discourse recognises that knowledge stems from power:

> The notion of ideology appears to me to be difficult to make use of [...] it always stands in virtual opposition to something else which is supposed to count as truth. Now I believe that the problem does not consist in drawing the line between that in discourse which falls under the category of scientificity or truth, and that which comes under some other category, but in seeing historically how effects of truth are produced within discourses which in themselves are neither true nor false. (Foucault, 1980: 118)

The institution of policing can therefore be examined as a discursive field; the police cultures themselves represent discursive forms, the beliefs and practices of the institution influence the police officers, and vice versa, the police officers influence the beliefs and practices of the institution. By examining the institution of policing as a discursive field the practices can be understood in relation to the beliefs of the police officers within the field. Bevir (1999) illustrates how Foucault's rejection of objectivity can be applied to studying institutions, whereby individuals are shaped by the social structures in which they live. This thesis recognises that the perceptions of police officers are ultimately shaped around those of the institution. Furthermore, and importantly, the discourse of policing normalises and controls the behaviour of police officers without them being conscious of it, because the discourse is underlying the practices (McNay, 1992). This progresses the analysis from merely a structural perspective, i.e. viewing the institution of policing as patriarchal, to a more comprehensive understanding of the way the police officers talk about young women, the language they use to portray young women and how this relates to their practices.

Rather than viewing the police establishment as an overpowering oppressive structure, the current study views the organisation as a discursive field consisting of networks of power relations, which are continually negotiated and subject to change (Foucault, 1982). So this research explores how the police talk about women, how they describe their experiences and what meanings they attach to these. For example, feminist studies have illustrated how discourses such as the law and the family have defined femininity on the basis of biology and psychology (Heidensohn, 1985). This research investigates how notions of appropriate femininity are produced through police discourse in relation to young women depicted as violent.

Police powers

Power and knowledge

Key to understanding a discursive field, such as policing, is the relationship between power and knowledge, because discursive fields are composed of knowledge and practice. According to Foucault (1980) power stems from knowledge, in other words when individuals adopt beliefs of particular discourses these ideas become normalised through discursive fields (Hall, 2001). The police are a perfect illustration of Foucault's relationship between power and knowledge: members of the public know that the police have the ability to control and punish deviant behaviour, and the police know that their position is powerful because members of the public respect their authority. Therefore knowledge results in power but power also leads to knowledge.

> There can be no possible exercise of power without a certain economy of discourses of truth which operates through and on the basis of this association. We are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth. (Foucault, 1980: 93)

The role of the police is to enforce the law and to maintain order within society, they are put in place by the state to ensure that members of society are law abiding citizens and do not break the state laws (Reiner, 1992). This provides the police with governmental power whereby they can regulate behaviour and police officers are able to punish those that do not conform by use of legal sanctions (Reiner, 1992; Bevir, 1999). The police obtain their power from legislation and according to Sanders and Young (2003) police power is the ability to legally employ coercion. Despite this, the majority of police work does not require coercion, the power they have is the knowledge that they can rightfully arrest, charge, detain and in some cases use force in the presence of criminal activity (Sanders and Young, 2003). Smith and Gray (1983) found that police officers in London perceived the ability to exercise authority to be a meaningful part of their job because it symbolised power (cited in Westmarland, 2001a: 93). This demonstrates that police officers can perceive themselves as powerful because of their authoritative position. In simple terms, institutional police power means that individual police officers are given the legal right to regulate behaviour and enforce legal action (Sanders and Young, 2003), however the power relationship is more complex than this.

Although Foucault (1977) acknowledges that the police are related to the power of the state, he argues that the police have their own power relations. Along with other social institutions there are webs of power relations and it is their networks that the state depends on, the state functions as a *meta-power* only because of the power relations that make up the state (Foucault, 1980: 122). Foucault (1977; 1980) discusses three forms of power; sovereign, governmental and disciplinary, all of which can be applied

to policing. The institution of policing was developed out of sovereign interests to protect the welfare of the state and police officers can exercise governmental power through their ability to arrest and detain suspected offenders. The police as an organisation exercise disciplinary power, a means of surveillance, whereby the presence of the police, whether on foot, in cars or through technological observation (i.e. CCTV), results in members of the public surveying and regulating their own behaviour (Foucault, 1977).

> [A]lthough the police as an institution were certainly organized in the form of a state apparatus, and although this was certainly linked directly to the centre of political sovereignty, the type of power that it exercises, the mechanisms it operates and the elements to which it applies them are specific. It is an apparatus that must be coextensive with the entire social body and not only by the extreme limits that it embraces, but by the minuteness of the details it is concerned with. (Foucault, 1977: 213)

This quote clearly illustrates the point made, in essence the police exercise sovereign power, they were set up by the sovereign state to protect and control. However their power lies in more than traditional physical punishment, the presence of the police exhibits governmental power and this is put in place to encourage disciplinary power (i.e. the attendance of the police at events [such as protests and sporting events] is to ensure individuals regulate their own behaviour).

Loader (1997) mirrors Foucault's understanding of power with his theory of symbolic power to assist with understanding police power. Although police officers are associated with coercive powers that are legitimated by the state, Loader argues that they possess less visible powers. The images of policing whether fact or fiction include symbols of strength, control and authority, shown in the uniform they wear, the restraints that they carry and the technology that they use. These, Loader argues, are

symbols of power, thus the image of policing alone portrays an image of authoritative power.

Power relations

The police as an institution have their own discourse and exercise their own powers, for instance the use of discretion. Furthermore the police are part of a wider network of powers, their discourse is integrated with much other legal discourse (such as the courts, the probation service, the prison, social work etc), and even within the police there are different power relations between colleagues and divisions.

Weedon (1997: 110) provides an example to assist with illustrating Foucault's understanding of discourse and power. The example explains how attacks on an Asian family might be viewed as racially motivated by the victims but police officers view it as an isolated crime, refusing to acknowledge that it could be related to the wider social problem of racism. The police have the legitimate power to not record it as a racial incident[26] but at the same time the Asian community can resist this power by forming vigilante groups. In this scenario it is evident that two different discourses are expressing different meanings about the same incident and the exercising power in one direction can lead to resistance and an exercising of power in another direction.

Policing implies order and protection from the chaos in society, which provides police officers with a powerful relationship with members of the public. In order for police officers to be depicted as powerful by society, there needs to be a perception among members of society that they (i.e. the public) are less powerful. Thus the relationship between the police officers and the public is important for identifying police power

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[26] The incident would need to be recorded under the Crime Recording Standards 2003 (Scotland) but the identification that it is racially motivated would be discretionary.

(Loader, 1997; Sanders and Young, 2003). According to Russell (1938) people that have respect for the law will respect the bodies that uphold the law, thus the power that police officers exercise does not stand independent of the social systems that surround it (Lukes, 1986).

Although an image of a police officer may indicate symbols of power, the power is actually associated with the institution of policing rather than individual officers. This relates to what Russell (1938) calls the 'power of organisations', whereby the organisation or institution itself must acquire power in order for the individuals within the organisation to be perceived as powerful. In this sense it is not individual police officers that have the ability to arrest and charge people and use restraining devices but rather it is the institution for which they work for. Thus, out with the job police officers are not entitled to utilise their authoritative power, it is institutional power granted by the state rather than individual power.

Like other forms of power, police power is relational to those who perceive themselves to be less powerful. Since police forces are hierarchical, there comes with it varying levels of power. Frontline police officers have the ability to make decisions when dealing with members of the public, to the public they are a symbol of authority (Loader, 1997). Thus, they have powers in terms of the decisions they make, given that they can decide who is breaking the law, who should or should not be arrested and how best to handle the offenders. However, their decisions can be overruled by higher ranking officers and therefore it is important to note that frontline police officers are perceived as powerful to those who do not possess the same legal enforcements or

discretion. This reiterates that their power is relational depending on who they are dealing with.

Appreciating that police cultures are based on the self perception of being powerful (having the ability to make arrest decisions and use coercive force) assists with understanding the machismo of policing and the suppression of minority groups (Sanders and Young, 2008; Westmarland, 2008). This section has demonstrated that police culture is an institution of beliefs and practices often kept at a distance from the public. The solidarity, machismo and prejudices that are found in police cultures are rooted in the history and development of policing. Despite legislation, such as the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and Race Relations Act 1976, challenging these prejudices, there is evidence to suggest that discrimination does still exist. Given that this current research focuses on how the police respond to women committing a typically masculine crime, it is essential to establish whether the treatment of women within the police has any bearing on the treatment of women who are dealt with by the police.

Policing: A gendered institution

Introduction of female police officers

A fundamental change in policing was the introduction of female police officers during WWI[27], which occurred due to the financial pressures of war, the lack of resources and pressure by the feminist movements of the time (Emsley, 2003). The first half of the 20th century witnessed large changes in policing with the economical constraints of

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[27] Women had been employed in certain police forces prior to WWI but the labour shortage during the war resulted in a greater need for women (see Brown and Heidensohn, 2000).

both World Wars and the feminist movements. A consequence of conscription during WWI was a shortage of police officers in Britain and it left concerns that there were insufficient numbers of officers to handle crime and disorder (Emsley, 2003). The country was facing financial hardship due to the cost of war and thus recruitment of new officers was not an option. Brown and Heidensohn (2000) argue that despite labour shortages being one reason for the recruitment of women as police officers, a further motive was to regulate women's behaviour whilst the men were at war:

> [W]omen were unsupervised by brothers, fathers and husbands who were away fighting [...]. Women might not only sell sex but give sexual favours away for free. (Brown and Heidensohn, 2000: 47)

The introduction of female police stemmed from both economically need but also as a means to formally control women during the war. The National Union of Women Workers had set up their own policing organisation known as Voluntary Women Patrols (VWP) and in 1916 forty of these women were utilised by the Metropolitan Police. A similar organisation named Women Police Volunteers, later named the Women's Police Service was set up in 1914. These women wore their own uniforms and patrolled the streets to assist with crime prevention (Heidensohn, 2003), however women's involvement in law enforcement was met with hostility from men within the organisation.

Heidensohn (1992) argues that the main reasons for opposition to women joining the police were related to gender roles. On the one hand, it was not perceived as a woman's place to work in policing because it was a job that required strength and courage. Whilst, on the other hand, men felt threatened that women would be able to utilise the same legislative powers as them (Brown and Heidensohn, 2000). In early

policing in Britain women that were employed were deemed by male police officers as either unfeminine or inadequate as a police officer, demonstrating that concerns around gender identities existed right from the start when women entered the police (Brown and Heidensohn, 2000). The perception held was that women were not naturally 'cut out' to be police officers: the role of the police officer exuded strength and authority, and these were not characteristics associated with female gender roles (Westmarland, 2001a). Despite the opposition, police forces began to utilise the Voluntary Women Patrols and the Women's Police Service (WPS) with many police forces developing their own WPS branches by 1918. There was scepticism in both England and Scotland regarding the employment of women, with the underlying perception being that police work was simply not a woman's job (Brown and Heidensohn, 2000). Thus, the women were separated from the male officers, they had their own departments and hierarchies and their main duties were to assist with searching female suspects, interviewing women and assisting women and children that were victims or perceived to be at risk (Heidensohn, 2003). It was believed that female officers could take on the mothering role for girls and young women that were heading down a path of criminality and so their gender was the basis for their role within the police (Brown and Heidensohn, 2000).

As more women joined the police their departments began to grow in size and so they were given the responsibility of handling cases of domestic, sexual and child abuse (Westmarland, 2001a). Female officers were segregated both horizontally and vertically because despite the women being segregated into different departments, these departments were overseen by men. Furthermore, women received less pay than men (Heidensohn, 2003; Walklate, 2004). The 1975 Sex Discrimination Act

resulted in the requirement for more women to be integrated into the police forces in Britain rather than being a separate unit from mainstream policing (Heidensohn, 2003). This integration brought into question the abilities of women, in particular, whether women could perform the same policing tasks as effectively as men (Heidensohn, 2003: 564).

During the 1980s there were some key changes within policing with regards to gender with an increasing focus on women as victims of crime (Walklate, 2004). The police began to pay attention to the seriousness of rape and domestic abuse with the introduction of designated suites for victims of rape and specially trained police officers. In the late 1980s the Metropolitan Police devised the Domestic Violence Unit, specialising in handling crimes of domestic violence. The increasing attention being paid to women as victims and the development of specialised units called for the employment of suitable officers, who were mainly women (Walklate, 2004). Even though the integration of more women into the police force is positive, there exists a problem because once again there appears to be segregation in police work. Walklate (2004: 157) found that women who worked in these departments were devalued by their male colleagues, because their job was not perceived as 'real' police work. This demonstrates that female police officers were being segregated on the basis of their gender from the initial integration into police forces. Heidensohn (1992) found that the women who worked alongside male colleagues constantly had to prove their competence in order to gain acceptance. There was still scepticism among male police officers as to the role women played in policing during the 1980s and 1990s, which, Heidensohn (2003) argues, resulted from traditional patriarchal attitudes, whereby policing was not perceived, by some male officers, to be a place for women.

Negotiating gender in policing

A requirement of police officers is to be physically strong and capable of maintaining authority, which are characteristics associated with masculinity (Rabe-Hemp, 2008). The stereotypical view of police officers being men makes it difficult for women to progress in the police force and women, and ethnic minorities, still find it difficult to be accepted by white male officers that make up the majority of policing in the UK (Reiner, 1992; Foster, 2003; Rabe-Hemp, 2008). The previous section highlighted that typical images of police officers rarely depict them as women (Walklate, 2004). Instead female officers are perceived as the comforters of victims while the men are the crime fighters, thus the early roles of female police officers still impacts on attitudes towards women in today's police culture.

In Scotland 26.8% of police officers are female, compared to 15.3% in 1998 (Scottish Government, 2011b), nonetheless, this increase does not necessarily result in a changing attitude towards women's role in the police. Research carried out by Rabe-Hemp (2008) investigated the difficulty women have of being accepted in the police by their male colleagues and found that they have to negotiate their gender roles from the initial training through to their daily activities as police officers in order to be accepted. Female police officers are still subjected to sexism and harassment if they do not demonstrate the same level of force and authority as men. This indicates that traditional notions of gender roles are evident within some policing organisations. These findings are similar to that of Heidensohn (1992) demonstrating that although there has been a marked improvement in the integration of women into the police, stereotypical attitudes still exist sixteen years on.

In order to understand the basis of these gendered attitudes it is worthwhile referring to research conducted by Prokos and Padavic (2002). They carried out an ethnographic study within a police training academy using participant observation to uncover whether police training could assist with understanding the importance of masculinity in police culture. Their findings highlighted that the academies themselves were structured for men, with many of the trainers themselves only referring to students as men (despite women being in the classes). Female students were treated as outsiders by both the male and female trainers and the training scenarios were based on the officer being a man. For instance, the men were taught how to appropriately search a female suspect but the women were not taught how to search a male suspect. Instructors would divide classes on the basis of gender and race rather than on strength or ability because it was assumed that women were weaker and the men did not want to be paired with women.

The male students did not take domestic violence scenarios seriously and saw women more as sex objects or victims rather than active agents, with students sometimes joking about videos of domestic violence (Prokos and Padavic, 2002: 453). Male students were less respectful towards the female instructors often ignoring what they were saying, demonstrating that they had a lack of respect for women in positions of authority. Students learned quickly that female officers were not taken seriously, women's involvement in the police is as victims not heroines, and derogatory comments about women were overlooked by the instructors. Even out with the classroom women were perceived as subordinate, they were not invited to social activities and gatherings and the women were expected to take on the domestic chores. Female students had two options, if they wanted to be feminine they were to

be weak, if they wanted to be strong they could not be feminine, thus showing how women have to negotiate their gender roles in order to gain respect and acceptance.

A Man's Job?

Men still make up the majority of the police forces in Britain (Martin, 1996; Dick and Jankowicz; Westmarland, 2001a) and despite more women entering into the police they are still under-represented in senior positions and specialised departments such as traffic police and CID (Holdaway and Parker, 1998; Dick and Jankowicz, 2001; Westmarland, 2001a). Holdaway and Parker (1998) found that the wider structures of society transgress into policing institutions. Female officers are constrained more in their employment choices due to having to balance the home with work, particularly if they have children. Furthermore women did not receive the same encouragement to progress in the force as their male colleagues (Holdaway and Parker, 1998). The sexism towards women in the police stems from men's portrayal that women are incapable of the physical demands of policing. However, Martin (1996) argues that this is a disguise to cover up the more important reasoning, which she argues is in relation to power. Martin believes that women find it difficult to gain acceptance and progress in policing because of patriarchal attitudes that place women as inferior to men in all areas of society. By restricting women's opportunities in a male dominated industry it allows men to have control over women to prevent them from threatening the position of men. Dick and Jankowicz (2001) also argue that the police culture itself undermines the role of women, however they suggest it is in relation to power rather than gender. Their research demonstrated that the perception of women changed higher up the ranks and was influenced by the role women play outside of their job (i.e. whether they had children and domestic responsibilities).

Martin's (1996) research illustrated a mirror image of the first half of the twentieth century with The Special Enquiry Unit (specialised unit for sexual and child abuse) being staffed by women and the only male in the unit was their supervisor. This study highlighted that it was not that the male police officers saw abuse as less serious, but rather working in specialised units was devalued because it was mainly women that worked there. Similarly, Coffey and Brown (1992) and Waddington (1999) argue that the integration of women into the police force somehow impacts on the image of policing because they are not as physically strong and assertive. Brown (1998) supports these claims by arguing that the masculine image of policing is undermined when women are in the frame. Thus it can be seen that police women may be perceived as a threat to both the position of men and the reputation of policing.

Westmarland's (2001a) ethnographic study critiques some of these earlier assumptions of women's role in the police. She found that police work involving children was "not regarded as a specifically female domain" (Westmarland, 2001a: 39). The overrepresentation of women in Child Protection Units was a result of women choosing to work in these specialised departments rather than their male colleagues passing work with children on to them. Nevertheless, these more 'caring' specialisms were avoided by male police officers to pursue more masculine specialised roles such as firearms and traffic divisions. Westmarland (2001a: 183) argues that "men in the police use their power as law enforcers to reinforce their own heterosexual identity" by embracing responsibilities perceived as 'real' police work. Thus, policing is argued to be a mechanism of exercising masculinity in divisions where men dominate.

The evidence emphasises that women in the police are subjected to a form of discursive control, particularly from their male colleagues. Martin's (1996) research and Prokos and Padavic's (2002) study demonstrate that informal control mechanisms are being exercised by male police officers to reaffirm the masculine image of policing. The treatment of female police officers reflects that the role of women in the police is deemed as less meaningful as the role of men in police. Holdaway and Parker (1998) argue that a woman's position in the police is affected by wider social ideologies regarding a women's role in society and therefore women find it difficult to progress into specialised departments and promotions. During interviews with female police officers, Martin (1996) found that men stereotyped women as the weaker sex and more suited to domestic roles, which Brown (1998) argues is evidence of gender stereotypes being transferred from the home to place of work. This, Brown (1998) suggests, ultimately impacts on the responsibilities expected of women and the jobs assigned to women in the police.

This section has demonstrated that sex role stereotypes do still exist in some areas of policing despite equal opportunity legislation. Although there are increasingly more women entering the police and gaining promotion, they are still under-represented. Research has shown that the 'cult of masculinity' (Martin, 1996) has upheld the sexist attitudes towards women in policing, which are evident both in training and everyday policing. This allows policing to be examined as a gendered institution; the importance of masculinity is still evident and is practised through institutional norms and values.

> Seeing social institutions as gendered provides a critical perspective for sociology, in which the relevant question becomes not why are women excluded but to what extent have the overall institutional structure, and the character of particular institutional areas, been formed by and through gender? (Acker, 1992: 568)

There is strong evidence to show that traditional patriarchal attitudes are still exercised within policing and towards female police officers; however what remains unclear is whether this affects women who offend. Thus the following discussion examines what role gender plays in police discretion.

Powers of discretion

Discretionary powers

The police as an institution are under state law and police officers are employed to ensure this law is not 'broken' (McBarnet, 1979). If police officers believe that laws have been broken, and have evidence to support this, then they have a duty to the state and in the interest of the public to detain those suspected.

Police officers play an important role in the criminal justice system given that they have discretionary powers to determine what crimes are recorded and who will be arrested (Smith and Visher, 1981). Their responsibility in the criminal justice system provides them with the legislative power to make decisions of how best to enforce the law and protect citizens (Sanders and Young, 2003). When considering the power involved it is essentially at the officer's discretion as to whether a suspect of crime is arrested and this determines the outcome for offenders (Worden, 1989). Grimshaw and Jefferson (1987) suggest that although discretion can be perceived as a powerful tool in controlling people, it too can be problematic for the police officers. Police

officers are given a legal framework to work in however they have to rely on their own instincts and knowledge in order to determine if a crime has been committed and the seriousness of offence. For example, Piliavin and Briar (1964) carried out an ethnographic study that explored police discretion with juvenile offenders. Their study showed that police forces have guidelines in place for arresting juveniles but they are also encouraged to use their own judgement when deciding on what action should be taken.

Although police officers in Scotland have to record all crimes and offences committed under the Crime Recording Standards 2003, it is their own judgement as to whether they decide to arrest somebody. In essence arrest decisions are subjective, police officers must have reasonable suspicion in order to arrest an individual, thus understanding how these decisions are made is crucial for comprehending crime statistics and perceptions on crime (Reiner, 1992). A further dimension to their discretion is prioritising their work due to limitations of resources (Reiner, 1992). Police officers have to make decisions on what incidents to attend to first and prioritise their work load, which is a responsibility they have to learn to balance (Miller et al., 2006).

Police officers have to make a judgement on what they witness and are told but there are several factors that can be taken into account when making arrest decisions. Police discretion rests on many factors including those related to the law, i.e. seriousness of offence and infliction of injury; offender characteristics including race, age, gender and class; and circumstantial factors such as alcohol and/or drug intoxication (Ho, 2003). The police culture and the individual officers' beliefs can also impact on their arrest

decisions, thus many factors need to be taken into account when exploring police discretion (Worden, 1989). Worden (1989) describes the discretion by the police as *extralegal* due the varying aspects of both the offence and the offender that need to be taken into consideration.

Police forces are influenced by legal policies and often the people they target and arrest are as much to do with current policies as actual crime (DeFleur, 1975; Sanders and Young, 2003). Lundman (1979) also argues that organisational practices and beliefs are just as important in the decision making process. It is important to bear in mind that police officers are part of a wide organisational structure and the values of the structure will influence the decisions police officers make (Lundman, 1979). For instance DeFleur (1975) argues that police policies on illicit drugs led to an increasing police focus on drug users. A crackdown on drugs resulted in increasing arrests of people in possession of drugs with pressure from drug enforcement agencies along with public pressure to clean-up the streets of drugs. Similarly, the apparent rise in youth crime stems from policies such as the introduction of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders that results in more young people entering the criminal justice system (Muncie, 2002). Police officers have targets to meet and it is sometimes the case that arrest rates and decisions are a reflection of police targets rather than actual crime rates (Grimshaw and Jefferson, 1987; Maguire, 2002).

Factors influencing arrest decisions

The discretion police hold is based not only on their personal beliefs but on the opinions and values held by police officers on the whole (Waddington, 1999). This will impact the attitudes of the police officers and often the judgments are not always a

reflection of their personal beliefs but an indication of the culture's attitude (Waddington, 1999). Smith and Visher (1981) also suggest that arrest rates reflect society's power inequalities, whereby the police target the powerless and marginalised groups of society, which include young people and ethnic minorities. Police bias may play some role in arrest decisions, and Ho (2003) claims that arrest decisions indicate a combination of the institutional values and the beliefs of individual police officers. This view is supported by Campbell and Johnson (1997) who demonstrated that police officers' own views on what classifies as rape has as much to do with their own opinions as legal definitions. Their findings showed variations in what police officers defined as rape; some associated rape with consent whilst other related rape with force and penetration. The varying perceptions on rape will have an important bearing on police decisions as to whether a crime has actually been committed (Campbell, 1995).

There are various situational factors that can influence arrest decisions, including whether the victim and suspect know each other; whether there were bystanders when the crime took place; and the seriousness of the offence (Smith and Visher, 1981). Fyfe et al. (1997) explored arrest decision in cases of male perpetrated domestic violence and found that use of a weapon increased the likelihood of arrest as well as aggression directed towards the arresting officers. A similar study carried out by Ho (2003) found that both male and female perpetrators are more likely to be arrested if the victim requires hospital treatment and if the victim wants the offender to be arrested. Ho's study showed that 46% of females whose violence resulted in the victim requiring caused hospital treatment were arrested compared to 40% of male

perpetrators. This differs from the previous study where Fyfe et al. found that the seriousness of injury did not influence the arrest decision.

A key finding from Smith and Visher's (1981) research is that police officers are inclined to arrest those that threaten their position of authority, thus hostile suspects are more likely to be arrested and arrests are made when there are onlookers because police officers want to demonstrate their authority in front of the public. This has been supported by other studies that have also shown hostility toward police officers to be an important factor in arrest decision making (see Smith et al., 1984; Klinger, 1994; Worden and Shepard, 1996). However, Klinger (1994) warns that hostility alone will not lead to arrest and other factors including the seriousness of the crime impact on arrest decisions. Furthermore, Klinger (1994) found that it is the suspects that direct their hostility towards the police that are likely to be arrested. Thus, the context in which the hostility is used is important.

Piliavin and Briar (1964) found that the appearance and characteristics of young people were important factors influencing decisions. Juvenile boys were perceived as good or bad depending on any previous encounters with the police, as well as other characteristics including their age, demeanour, appearance and group association (Piliavin and Briar, 1964: 210). Juveniles that were un-cooperative were likely to receive reprimand or arrest, and juveniles that demonstrated a 'tough' image did not receive the same level of leniency as those that appeared to be less of a threat. The study demonstrated the power police officers exercise when on patrol and the future of young people is at the officers' discretion. The severity of the offence came second

to the juvenile's characteristics demonstrating that arrest rates are in some cases a reflection of police discretion rather than actual crimes committed.

Lundman et al. (1978) also carried out an ethnographic study of police officers' treatment of juveniles. Seriousness of offence was a key factor that influenced arrest decisions, with most police encounters with juveniles being for disturbances and anti-social behaviour. If the citizen who complained about the juvenile(s) was present then this resulted in the juvenile being more likely to be arrested. They found that more black juveniles were arrested than white, but put this down to more members of the public complaining about black youths than white youths. Similarly, Smith et al. (1984) propose that although individuals of black origin are more likely to be arrested than whites, this is in relation to the complaints made against black people by the public. Smith et al. highlight that there are more public complaints about black juveniles than white, which goes some way to explain the over-representation in arrest rates. However, it could be argued that institutional racism played a larger role in arrest decision making than Lundman et al. (1978) and Smith et al. (1984) suggest, particularly since the findings of the Macpherson Report (1999).

Stop and search practices of the police have been linked to the discrimination of ethnic minorities with young black men being stopped and searched far more than young white men (Bowling and Phillips, 2003; Narduzzo, 2007). Public concerns regarding the treatment of ethnic minorities, in particular young black men, rose during the 1980s Brixton riots when it was evident police were unfairly targeting black men in their arrests. These concerns led to the introduction of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) 1984, which stated police officers were only to stop and search individuals if

they had reasonable doubt that they were suspects (Bowling and Phillips, 2003). The introduction of this Act was supposed to regulate the use of stop and search, nevertheless, the effectiveness still lay with the discretionary power of the police since it is the frontline police officers that decide whether there is reasonable doubt.

There is widespread literature that explores the relationship between the police and ethnic minorities (see Scraton, 1987; Reiner, 1992 Phillips and Bowling, 2002; Bowling and Phillips, 2003; Narduzzo, 2007) but it is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss race and policing in depth. What is important to note is that 'institutional racism' within some police cultures, along with the discretionary powers allocated to the police by the state, can result in ethnic minorities targeted for stop and search procedures and arrest.

Sealock and Simpson (1998) found that individuals from ethnic minorities, and particularly those living in areas of social deprivation, are likely to be stopped by the police. Similarly, Hearnden and Hough's (2004) report shows that a disproportionate number of black people are targeted by the police: the stop and search rate for black people is five times higher than white people and the arrest rates for black people are three times higher than for white individuals. This supports previous findings from Bowling and Phillips (2003) who suggest that stop and search practices are a consequence of 'racial profiling', whereby ethnicity and crime have been inaccurately stereotyped (see Hall et al., 1978).

The tragic death of 18 year old Stephen Lawrence in 1993 led to an enquiry into the efficiency of the police investigation, which resulted in the 1999 Macpherson Report. This report found evidence of 'institutional racism' and a consequence of this was the

failure of officers to carry out a thorough investigation to detect the killers of Stephen Lawrence. The importance of this report is that it demonstrated that there was underlying racism in police practices that was not the fault of any particular individual but rather a collective failure of institutional practice. It emphasises that discretionary police powers are influenced by norms and values of the organisation in a similar way to how collective patriarchy impacts on the way women are treated internally by the police.

Gendered Discretion

The previous sections have highlighted that police officers have discretionary control on the basis of who they perceive to be offenders and the seriousness of the offence committed. This section explores what role gender plays in police officers' discretionary control. Furthermore, a key factor emphasised throughout the chapter so far has been the gender stereotypes that are still evident within the organisation of policing, thus this section will investigate whether this gendered discourse has any bearing on the treatment of women who offend.

The police have discretion not just in relation to who they believe has committed a crime and how serious an offence is but also in defining what constitutes violent behaviour (Steffensmeier et al., 2006). Despite the important role the police have in the outcome for women that commit crime, there has been little research undertaken that has examined police perceptions of women that they arrest for violence (Horn and Wincup, 1995).

There has been a growth of research conducted to understand arrest decisions and despite there being a lack of research that specifically focuses on young women who

use violence, there have been some relevant studies carried out that investigate gender. Steer (1970) argues that the police are more lenient towards female offenders because they commit less serious crimes and do not perceive them to be as much of a threat as men who offend. This is supported by Horn and Wincup (1995) who argue that traditional stereotypes of femininity impact on how the police treat female offenders. They claim that women who appear to be 'good', in other words women who are remorseful for their crime and bring their children to the police station are more likely to receive sympathy and lenience from police officers. However women that appear to be unfeminine and 'tough' are treated harshly, these women are simply perceived as 'bad'.

> Indeed, my own research suggests that they (police officers) do employ a dichotomy. This is most obvious in beliefs about violent women: although most women are thought to be 'good' (i.e. non-violent), women who are physically violent are thought to be' bad', and 'worse' than men who become violent. (Horn and Wincup, 1995: 17)

Since violence is perceived as a masculine crime, women who come into contact with the police for violent crimes are viewed as worse than other women who offend and more deviant than men who use violence (Horn and Wincup, 1995).

Tchaikovsky (1989) proposes that a woman's appearance and gender conformity can determine whether the police decide to arrest them. For instance women who appear to be conforming to their gender role as a mother may be treated more leniently. Women who do not dress femininely are sometimes subject to harsher treatment from the police. Thus, according to Tchaikovsky (1989), the police believe that there are certain behaviours and dress that are appropriate for women, and if they conform to these they may be less likely to be arrested, patronized and discriminated against.

Additionally, Steer (1970) found that women and young people were more likely to be cautioned by the police than adult males. He suggests that this may be due to the crimes being less serious, but with women he believes that chivalry plays a role in their decisions because women who commit crime, particularly first time offenders, are more inclined to show remorse.

In opposition to the chivalry argument, Visher (1983) found that young women received more severe treatment from the police than older women; however, Visher is vague as to what she means by 'harsher treatment'. Visher argues that police officers want to deter young women from committing any more offences to avoid them entering a life of crime, which can be viewed as an exercising of discretionary controls. The police have certain expectations of women based on their gender role, thus they are harsher on women that go against what they perceive to be acceptable female behaviour. The arrest decisions were based more on the women's personal characteristics such as demeanour, age and race, rather than the crime committed.

> In these data, young, black, or hostile women receive no preferential treatment, whereas older, white women who are calm and deferential toward the police are granted leniency. (Visher, 1983: 23)

There is documented evidence that women who challenge police authority have been on the receiving end of police brutality. There were several incidences of police violence towards women during campaigns such as the suffragette movement (Scraton, 1985), the Greenham protests (Chadwick and Little, 1987), student protests (Sim, 1987) and the Welsh mining strikes (Evans, 1989). More recently, evidence from Westmarland (2001b) demonstrates police violence towards a female who was uncooperative. This raises the issue of whether women who challenge the police are at

greater risk of arrest due to them firstly defying police authority, but also due to their gender role, because ultimately women are challenging a masculine authority.

Although the chivalry-double deviance debate may be evident in police officers' decision making, it is worthwhile pointing out that it may be dependent on the gender of the officer. Westmarland (2001a) notes that research shows that male officers are more lenient towards women suspected of offending than their female colleagues, in a similar way that male magistrates have been accused of being more lenient (Gelsthorpe and Loucks, 1997). It unclear as yet whether the gender of the police officer impacts on responses to young women deemed as violent and consequently this is worthy of further investigation in the current study.

The recognition that gender stereotypes may be influential in arrest decision making raises the issue of patriarchal power. Sealock and Simpson (1998) argue that the police target ethnic minority groups because they are perceived as inferior and a threat to the dominant white class. In this sense arrest decisions are portrayed as a power relation, whereby white male officers want to demonstrate their power by exercising their authority towards ethnic minorities. There are contradictory research findings as to whether chivalry or double deviance impact on arrest decision making, but both of these propositions can be related to patriarchy. On the one hand, Horn and Wincup (1995) propose that police officers view women as "not real criminals" and that woman's offending relates to biological and psychological factors. This traditional positivist view of offending has been shown to neglect women's agency in offending (see Batchelor, 2005), thus dismissing a woman's rationality:

> Male offenders have been credited with the faculty of reasoning, women offenders have not. As with the popular stereotypes of women in society generally women offenders are portrayed as hysterical, irrational and incapable of being fully responsible for her actions and crimes due to her biology and sex. (Davies, 1997: 2)

Alternatively, If women are perceived as doubly deviant by police officers and, as a result, at greater risk of arrest, then this suggests that the police officers are punishing women for not adhering to their gender role. Both of these proposals suggest that women are subjected to discretionary control that stems from patriarchal attitudes: women should not offend and if they do they are either mad or bad. These perceptions of police officers mirror those found in magistrates depictions of women who offend (Heidensohn, 1985; Worrall, 1990; Wilczynsk, 1997). Therefore, similarities can be drawn between the discourse of policing and the discourse of the courts in relation to women who offend.

An additional factor that impacts on arrest decisions is whether police officers perceive young women who offend to be victims, rather than criminals, particularly for crimes of prostitution (see Chadwick and Little, 1987). Phoenix (2002) demonstrates that if the police officer believes that the young woman has made the choice to enter prostitution then they are responsible for their actions. However, if the police officers consider the woman to be a victim (i.e. perceiving young women to be a victim of sexual abuse) then the officers are more inclined to direct the woman to support services. In many cases the young women will be given the opportunity to divert out of prostitution and only if they continued to solicit then the police would arrest. This illustrates that the police officer's own beliefs can determine whether women are directed towards help and support or prosecution, however it also relates to locality

because the treatment of prostitution is often a reflection of a police force's own policy of tolerance and broader political strategies (see Matthews, 2005). Again there are similarities here with the treatment of women in courts; women who are perceived as victims of social disadvantages, such as poverty and abuse, are diverted away from prison (Allen, 1987; Gelsthorpe and Loucks, 1997; Worrall, 2002; Steward, 2006). In contrast to this though, often it is women from low income families that find themselves in prison as a result of fine defaults (Scottish Executive, 2002; SCCCJ[28], 2006; McIvor and Burman, 2011). As with other criminal justice institutions, such as the courts, there continues to be a chivalry versus double deviancy debate, which is a key focus for this current research project.

Discretion does not only apply to suspected offenders but also to victims. For instance Jordan (2004) investigated police responses to women who reported being raped or sexually assaulted and found that the police took several factors into consideration when determining whether they believed the accusation to be true. These factors included previous complaints; the time taken to report the incident; whether the victim was drunk or drugged at the time of the incident; and the woman's appearance (Jordan, 2004). This study demonstrates that police officers rely on their own judgement as to whether a victim is believable and thus police discretion plays a role in both the treatment of victims and offenders. Similar results have been found when carrying out research on rape trials, whereby often the victim appears more on trial for her behaviour than the men who have committed the offence (see Burman, 2009; Ellison and Munro, 2009).

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[28] Scottish Consortium on Crime and Criminal Justice (2006).

The empirical research discussed all emphasise the importance of police discretion, and, particularly, how gender stereotypes can influence police officers' decision making in response to female offending and victimisation..

Summary

This chapter has explored several pivotal focuses for the current research. It commenced by demonstrating how policing can be understood as a discursive field with collective beliefs and practices. These beliefs and practices were then applied to the gendered nature of policing and how patriarchal values play a key role even in modern policing. Importantly the chapter showed how the concept of police power can be comprehended by utilising the work of Michel Foucault and applying this to understand how the police exercise controls. These controls were explored in more depth with relation to police discretion, which highlighted that discretionary controls are employed on the basis of police officers' own judgement on whether an offence has occurred.

There is certainly a lack of knowledge about the role police power, discourse and practice play in responding to young women who use violence. This comprehension is fundamental for understanding how young women are treated at the early stages of the criminal justice system and the possible impact this has at the latter stages. By acknowledging that the police utilise various mechanisms of control in the form of policy and practice it is possible to uncover their responses to young women depicted as violent.

The overall findings suggest that the treatment of women by the criminal justice system is partly decided on the basis of a women's adherence to their gender role. This

has been emphasised in the discourse male police officers use towards female police officers and how police officers respond to both female offenders and victims. The studies discussed in this chapter mirror the treatment of women by other structures of the criminal justice system, which was demonstrated in chapter two, whereby women are seen as doubly deviant if they fail to display feminine characteristics.

Visher's (1983) research was a quantitative study whereas this current thesis delves deeper into the police's responses to female crime, by adopting qualitative interviewing, to understand where their boundaries lie in terms of acceptable gender behaviours and where these perceptions come from. Demeanour of the offender, history of offending, the nature of the offence, seriousness of the offence and the age of offender are all aspects that appear to influence arrest decisions. The studies discussed suggest that discretionary controls are exercised in relation to gender conformity, whereby women who exhibit traits such as remorse, vulnerability and stereotypes of femininity (i.e. they way they dress and communicate) could be treated more leniently. However, women may be more at risk of arrest by not conforming to the traditional norms of femininity. This is certainly an argument that this current research investigates by analysing whether sex role stereotypes have any bearing on arrest decisions of young women depicted as violent.

Chapter 4 - Researching the Police: Processes and Reflections

This chapter provides a detailed reflexive account of the chosen methodology and research processes adopted for this research. The chapter commences with a discussion on the use of feminist methodology for researching a male dominated institution and outlines the rationale for the methods employed. This is followed by a comprehensive account of the fieldwork process that entailed accessing, sampling and interviewing police officers and the ethical considerations involved. The chapter concludes with an outline of the data analysis process.

A feminist approach to a masculine research site

This study draws on feminist methodology in order to uncover the beliefs, experiences and responses of police officers towards women deemed as violent.. There have been substantial debates as to what a feminist methodology comprises of and to what extent feminist methodologies differ from others. It is therefore necessary to confront these debates to demonstrate how a feminist methodology has been utilised in the present study.

There is no singular feminist method, nor are there only certain methods that feminist researchers adopt, but rather a feminist methodology is one which stems from the awareness of women's oppression and the aim is to challenge this subordination (Brunskell, 1998; Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002; Letherby, 2003). Feminists will adopt methods akin to their own epistemological stance but their commonality is their aim to uncover and challenge the subordination of women (Stanley and Wise, 1990; Kelly et al. 1994).

> Feminists have argued that traditional epistemologies, whether intentionally or unintentionally, systematically exclude the possibility that women could be "knowers" or *agents of knowledge*. (Harding, 1987:3 original emphasis)

Early feminist research during the 1970s aimed to promote knowledge about women, by women, for women, often referred to as standpoint feminism (Kelly et al, 1994; Naffine, 1997). Research had been dominated by male scholars researching men and the voices of both women as researchers and participants had been silenced (Harding, 1987). More recently it has been recognised that women's oppression is a complex domain in which more recognition of differences between women themselves and men need to be considered. Therefore to understand the subordination of different divisions of women, feminist approaches appreciate that research ought to uncover the complexities of varying gender relations on the basis of other social divisions such as class, age and ethnicity (Kelly et al, 1994; Naffine, 1997). Feminist research still aims to challenge women's oppression but there is appreciation that to achieve this research needs to understand broader gender relations and to do this, studies ought to explore social phenomenon from the perspective of men and women (Stanley and Wise, 1993).

> Women's accounts cannot provide us with everything we need to know, since we (individually or collectively) do not necessarily 'know' either the extent or the content of the deliberate strategies men and male-dominated institutions use to maintain their power. (Kelly et al, 1994: 33)

Adopting a feminist approach does not limit investigation to women, rather it is an appreciation of gender relations, and, in relation to criminology, aims to understand and highlight the impact of gender relations on crime and justice (Daly and Chesney-

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Lind, 1988; Gelsthorpe ad Morris, 1988; 1990). In order to understand how mechanisms of social control are exercised towards women it is necessary to research the individuals and organisations that contribute to this subordination. This current research focuses on gender relations in policing, a recognised masculine institution, and thus justifies the application of a feminist perspective.

Methodological approach

There are key objectives of feminist approaches that influence the chosen research methodology. Feminist research has been accredited for its contribution towards the use of qualitative methods for gaining a deeper insight and understanding of the lives of women, and men (Maynard, 1998)[29]. Qualitative methods are viewed as "giving voice to otherwise silenced groups (such as women)" (Seale, 2004: 107), a critique of male dominated positivist traditions of social research. This research adopted techniques associated with feminist methodology including awareness of lived experiences, listening and understanding, and allowing participants to voice their own opinions and experiences (Gelsthorpe and Morris, 1988; Ramazanoglu, 1992; Bryman, 2004). The focus was on understanding police officers' perceptions and therefore feminist methodology provides the tools for appreciating their experiences and enabling police officers to discuss their encounters with young women through active interviewing.

This research adopted qualitative interviewing to uncover the beliefs, experiences and responses of police officers towards women deemed as violent. The aim of the research was to interpret the perception of young women by police officers, which

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[29] Feminist research utilises a range of qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods and it is acknowledged that there is no single feminist method (Maynard, 1994).

involved understanding the meanings they attached to their experiences and uncovering the complexities of police discourse. It was therefore deemed most appropriate to use qualitative methods, which provide an opportunity to investigate underlying meaning and assist with gaining a profound understanding of people's experiences (Miller and Glassner, 1997; Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Mason (2002: 4) outlines three key principles of qualitative research; firstly it is interpretive; "it is concerned with how the social world is interpreted, understood, experienced or produced". Secondly, qualitative research is less structured; it relates the data to the context in which it is collected and has a degree of flexibility unlike more fixed methods such as experiments or structured surveys. Finally, Mason (2002) argues that qualitative research aims to produce data that is in depth, and requires content analysis as opposed to statistical analysis. Quantitative methods were considered, however they would not provide an in-depth understanding of how police officers perceive young women deemed as violent (see Seale, 1998; Byrne, 2004).

A further advantage for employing qualitative methods is that they are beneficial for equating power relations between the researcher and participants (Bergen, 1993: 201). A large quantity of social research is carried out with people belonging to what are often described as vulnerable groups such as prisoners, victims of crime (see Jupp, Davies and Francis 2000) and children (see Mauthner, 1997). However, this research was conducted with individuals who may regard themselves as having power over the researcher due to their professional position. Chapter three established that police officers exercise different forms of power and are regarded as powerful on this basis. Acknowledging power is a pivotal aspect of feminist methodology: "hierarchical distinctions between researcher and researched should be broken down"

(Hammersley, 1992: 189). Particular consideration was given to the power relation between the researcher and participants in this current research, allowing participants to speak openly about their experiences and being reflexive during and after the fieldwork was essential. Despite the balance normally weighing towards the researcher, the police may have regarded their authoritative position as more powerful than a student researcher. Therefore it was crucial that the research techniques employed would assist with balancing the power between researcher and interviewee.

There were three forms of qualitative methods considered for this research: participant observation, focus groups and semi-structured interviews. There is a large body of police research that has adopted various ethnographic methods including participant observation (see Holdaway, 1983; Punch, 1993; Young, 1991; Westmarland, 2001a; Marks, 2004), however for this particular research project it was inappropriate for several reasons. Firstly, the focus of the study was young women's violence and the statistics demonstrate that this type of offence is uncommon. It was unrealistic to assume that time spent out on patrol with the police would guarantee situations where young women were using violence, particularly given the time constraints of the research. A further justification for not adopting ethnographic methods is that there were many ethical dilemmas to be taken into account, in particular the presence of a researcher may have influenced police decision making (See Westmarland, 2001b; Marks, 2004). Additional concerns were personal safety, complications with note taking and gaining consent from young women to use their examples of violence in the study. All of the above difficulties led to the decision that an ethnographic approach would not be feasible.

Focus groups were also ruled out as an option due to complications such as time, availability and sampling. It was deemed more appropriate to speak to police officers individually to ensure they did not feel influenced or intimidated by their colleagues. Additionally, ethical dilemmas such as anonymity out with the group would have been difficult to overcome (see Morgan and Krueger, 1993).

Given the limitations of other qualitative methods the decision was made to carry out the research using qualitative interviews. The research employed semi-structured interviews since they are advantageous for acquiring in-depth knowledge, have flexibility in the questions, and allow the interview to be focussed on the topic in hand (Holstein and Gubrium, 1997; Barbour and Schostak, 2005). Qualitative interviewing is more than simply a method to get answers to questions; it is a technique in which interaction assists with generating knowledge about the social world (Holstein and Gubrium, 1997). It was important that perceptions police officers held with regards to female violence were explored in depth, thus qualitative interviewing provided the opportunity to examine the meanings the police officers attached to their experiences (Holstein and Gubrium, 1997; Miller and Glassner, 1997; Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Focussing on listening and appreciating personal issues was important to gain a deeper insight and fully understand the information being conveyed, this enhances the knowledge being produced and also the way in which it is produced. Active interviewing therefore takes account of how information is given and the manner in which interviewees respond, rather than just looking at what has been said (Holstein and Gubrium, 1997; Byrne, 2004).

Semi-structured interviewing

It was essential to have flexibility in the interview so questions could be introduced following participant responses. The semi-structured interview was deemed most appropriate to achieve both these aspects of interviewing. Semi-structured interviews give the opportunity for unanticipated information that may not have been possible in a structured interview (Barbour and Schostak, 2005:42). A further advantage of using a semi-structured interview is that it incorporates more of a conversational style, which enhances the production of knowledge (Holstein and Gubrium, 1997: 114). The interview is flexible since it neither restricts the researcher in the questions or the participant in their answers, the interviewer can change the direction of the interview questions with response to the participant's replies (Byrne, 2004). These points are important for this research because, according to Davies (2000: 86), "the semi structured interview demonstrates an awareness of the subjective nature of knowledge and treats respondents as individuals with valuable knowledge rather than objects". This appreciation for participants as knowledgeable agents rather than objects of study is a key focus for feminist research (Gelsthorpe and Morris, 1988), thus demonstrating that police officers' perceptions and experiences are meaningful and worthy of in depth analysis.

The power relations between the researcher and police officer was of key concern but qualitative interviewing was beneficial in these situations since the respondents were able to respond in their own way and share their experiences (Miller and Glassner, 1997). Enabling participants to answer in their own way reduces the power relations because the researcher is not assuming they (i.e. the researcher) have all the knowledge (Stroh, 2000: 204). The data is reliable not because all the interviewees

provide the same information but because the data comes from personal experience and the way individuals attach meaning to their lives (Holstein and Gubrium, 1997). Critics of interviewing suggest that interviewing simply creates subjective realities about the social world; however the strengths it possesses as a method provides researchers with an understanding of individual experiences and ability to explore the social truths of others (Miller and Glassner, 1997).

Accessing the field

The initial stage of the research was to identify the sample population to contact. The decision was made to access two separate police forces within Scotland to interview police officers from various demographic areas. Mason (2002) suggests that qualitative research ought to generalise beyond the research site to some degree. If only a single police force had been chosen it would have limited the ability to generalise the findings. Two police forces that had violent crime high on their policy agenda were identified as worthy of investigation. Police force A consisted of suburban and rural areas with a more localised night time economy whereas police force B consisted of a lively city centre that hosts many bars, pubs and clubs and residential areas. The research did not aim to conduct a comparative study but rather generate a broad understanding of how police officers from a range of demographics perceive and respond to young women deemed as violent.

Getting the 'foot in the door'

Gaining access to the police can be problematic because there are formal procedures that a researcher has to go through in order to be permitted (Reiner and Newburn, 2008). Duke (2002) argues that government organisations and institutions, such as the

police, can create obstacles for researchers since they do not want to be subjected to scrutiny. Having existing relationships with individuals within organisations can be beneficial for gaining access (Duke, 2002). However, there were no prior connections with the police and the research was not contracted by the police, which resulted in the researcher being classified as what Brown (1996) describes as an "outsider outsider". The position as an outside academic meant that the initial stage of access consisted of considering who the gatekeepers were and determining the most appropriate method for gaining access to Scottish police forces.

The first point of contact was The Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS) whilst also seeking advice from the Scottish Institute for Policing Research (SIPR). SIPR have a working relationship with Scottish police forces and collaborate with the police to carry out efficient research studies for the benefit of policy and practice, thus they are knowledgeable in the correct procedures to follow. On reflection, this was a positive decision since SIPR offered to facilitate the access by presenting the research design at their police liaison meeting. An outline of the study was sent to SIPR who presented it at the meeting (Appendix 1), which consisted of liaison contacts from each of the eight police forces in Scotland. Although there were two preferred police forces, it was beneficial to offer all police forces the chance to participate.

It was accepted that waiting to hear the outcome of the meeting could take some time and this was lengthened by the unfortunate one month postponement of the meeting. This method of accessing police officers came with its drawbacks and advantages; on the down side negotiating with the initial gatekeepers was left to someone else, thus

out with the researcher's control, however, the benefit of having a well known academic in the field facilitating the access made it worthwhile. Police force A and B volunteered to assist in the study and were asked to get in touch to discuss the study in more depth.

This first stage of access took just over two months but it is anticipated that it would have taken significantly longer without the assistance of SIPR; therefore having contacts can successfully benefit research, particularly in relation to more powerful institutions in society (see Duke, 2002). Although the research passed successfully through the first set of gatekeepers, this was just the beginning of the access process.

It was left to the individual force liaison contacts to get in touch to schedule a meeting in order to discuss the research proposal. Fortunately, this occurred relatively quickly after the SIPR/ACPOS meeting with one of the liaison officers offering to set up a meeting between the researcher and representatives from the two police forces. Unforeseen circumstances led to delays in these meetings, which demonstrated the difficulties associated with police research, work commitments had to come first so it was essential to stay flexible and patient despite the eagerness to discuss fieldwork.

A meeting was set up with an Inspector from police force A where the research design was discussed. Copies of the information sheet and consent form were provided by the researcher to demonstrate preparation and efficiency (see Appendix 2 and 3). This meeting was very successful and supported the claim by Reiner and Newburn (2008) that once initial obstacles are overcome the police are willing to help. The Inspector was very keen to get interview dates set up and requested the necessary information to distribute to the possible participants. Unfortunately due to unforeseen

circumstances a face-to-face meeting was not possible with the Chief Inspector from police force B, therefore access was arranged over a telephone conversation. Williams (1989) points out that research with organisations can result in the negotiation procedures being repeated and, as a result, delayed and this was the experience of accessing the police with negotiations taking place over a three month period.

Setting up interviews

Both police forces agreed to inform their officers of the research and set up dates and times for the interviews to go ahead. Due to the nature of police work it was important not to disturb the officers' shifts or the police stations in any way. It was agreed with police force A that the most suitable time to conduct the interviews would be on opportunity days[30]. The interviews were scheduled to be conducted within the police station at pre-arranged times with the assistance of Inspectors within each police station. The individual police station Inspectors gathered a list of police officers that met the researcher's sample criteria and this was passed on to the Inspector at head office, who then forwarded on the details. The police stations co-operated very well and swiftly, and within only a couple of weeks the interview dates along with the volunteered participant's names had been forwarded on. This was an efficient method of setting up the interviews, having a key contact that can arrange the necessary details was very beneficial for both time and efficiency. The drawback was that once again this stage of the access was in the hands of the organisation.

Police force B also offered to recruit participants; the information was passed on to three main police stations in the city centre area and participants that were interested

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[30] Opportunity days are allocated to provide police officers with the chance to participate in police training and get involved in other policing activities.

in volunteering put their name forward. This method of recruiting police officers was more beneficial for the research given that the opportunity to participate was open to all officers rather than just those that were scheduled for an opportunity day. An information sheet was provided to ensure that police officers could make an informed decision as to whether they wanted to participate (see Appendix 2). Once all the participants had been confirmed, they all received an email confirmation along with their own copy of the information sheet and they were given the opportunity to reply with any questions prior to the interview.

Despite some textbooks and research papers pointing out the formal procedures for gaining access to police institution, it was very apparent that access was an ongoing negotiation. This has been highlighted by other researchers when employing an ethnographic approach to police research (see Rowe, 2007), but it was evident that even when formal access was granted at a senior level to carry out interviews, negotiation was ongoing with sub-level gatekeepers.

It is important here to return to the issue of power within social research. As previously noted, the adoption of qualitative feminist methodology aimed to address some of the problematic power relations that can arise in interviewing. However as Hammersley (1995: 109) notes it is not always the researcher that controls the study:

> Indeed, very often it is the people studied who have most of the power, including the power to exclude the researcher from the research site, a power that is occasionally deployed.

The police forces accessed in this current research certainly had the ability to exercise their control of the research sites and participants accessed, and to a large degree this occurred with them recruiting the participants. However, when it came to the actual

interviews this was carried out free from any institutional control; the interview schedule and interviewing techniques were not determined by the police but rather influenced by the researcher's own epistemological stance. The interviews took place in the police stations where the police officers worked and this may have influenced their answers, but it is difficult to assess the impact this had.

Sample

Key criteria were put in place for sampling participants, which was all influenced by the research questions as well. The sample (see Appendix 4) consisted of the following:

- Male and female officers since previous research has suggested that there might be variation in perceptions held by men and women in relation to how they respond to female violence (see Horn and Wincup, 1995).
- Varying length of service to assess changes that have occurred by examining the experiences of long standing police officers as well as those recently out of training.
- Police officers that regularly work on the beat (front line) and are on call to attend incidences of violence. It was important to speak with police officers that would have some personal experience.

Participation in the research was voluntary, so although it would have been beneficial to have a sample that included a balance of male and female officers that have experience in the night time economy and obtain a sample of various career lengths, it was recognized that this would depend very much on who wanted to participate. The sample of respondents from police force A was more restricted due to the necessity of conducting the interviews on specified dates, unfortunately only a handful of officers from each police station were given the opportunity to participate but this was one of the drawbacks of carrying out research within an organisation[31].

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[31] This is a limitation that has been evident in other research projects carried out in institutions (Wiles et al. 2005).

Sixteen police officers were recruited from police force A all of whom were police constables and seventeen police officers from police force B, consisting of thirteen police constables, three police sergeants and one community beat officer. There were ten (29.4%) female police officers, which is representative of the number of female police officers in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2011b). A full breakdown of the participants is displayed in Appendix 4.

A limitation to the sample was that the researcher did not have the opportunity to examine the composition of participants prior to the interviews taking place. As a result the length of service of the sample is not equally distributed according to gender. There were only two out of the ten female police officers that had over five years service, whereas sixteen of the twenty three male police officers had over five years service. Therefore it must be noted that this could have had a bearing on the research findings with long term serving male police officers having different experiences to short term serving female police officers. The small sample size makes it difficult to determine whether this did have any impact (length of service was a variable used in analysis but no differences were found) but it should be highlighted as a drawback to the sampling method.

Data collection

An interview schedule (see Appendix 5) was drawn up prior to the interviews taking place and piloted to ensure the structure flowed well and the questions made sense to the participants. There were two pilot interviews carried out; one with a police officer from another police force and one with a colleague. The aim of the pilot interviews was to run through the interview schedule prior to the fieldwork to ensure the

questions flowed well and were coherent[32]. The pilot interviews were very beneficial because they highlighted some flaws in the way questions were asked and revealed information that was not previously considered. For instance, it became apparent that the way the questions were originally worded meant that the participants assumed the discussion to be about women directing violence towards them. Careful attention was given during the fieldwork to make sure the police officers discussed their experiences of witnessing women using violence as well as occurrences of violence directed towards them personally.

A more practical use of the pilot interviews was that it allowed familiarisation with the new recording equipment that was being employed, which meant that this was not a trivial matter that needed tending to during the actual interviews. The pilot interview carried out with the police officer provided an opportunity to get accustomed to interviewing police officers, especially those wearing uniform. The image of a fully uniformed police officer exudes authoritarian and disciplinary power (see Loader, 1997), which, despite not being anticipated, was intimidating at first. Having the opportunity to conduct a pilot interview assisted with minimising this intimidation.

The interview schedule was a pivotal part of the research because it provided a guided structure and was a safety net for keeping the interview on track. The interview schedule consisted of four main areas of discussion: how violence is defined; the conceptualization of young women who use violence; personal experiences of young women who have used violence; and responding to young women who have used violence. There was no prior knowledge about any of the participants so every interview was approached with the same interview schedule. The topics of discussion

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[32] The data collected was not for analytical purposes and was therefore not included in the final analysis.

were informed by the research questions and the existing literature on policing and young women and these topics were then expanded to account for probing questions and more specific issues relating to each topic. During the initial interviews the interview guide was heavily relied on but as the interview became more comfortable and the topics of discussion became more apparent it was simply there as a reminder of issues that could be discussed in more depth, or areas that had not yet been brought up.

Carrying out the interviews

It was essential to build up good relations with police officers throughout the research[33] and although gate keepers allowed access to officers, individuals themselves could have felt threatened by a researcher or compelled into participating (Marks, 2004). It was important to make the role as an academic researcher clear to clarify that the study was not being carried on behalf of the police since this can lead to lower participation (see Marks, 2004). Unlike the meeting with the senior gatekeepers, it was decided that a more informal approach would be taken by wearing casual clothing. It was important that the participants felt relaxed and the interview was perceived as an informal conversation rather than some form of interrogation.

The interviews took place within police stations across police force areas A and B over a three month period. There were several interviews carried out at each location within one day ranging from two to six interviews. Although it was beneficial to carry out a large number of interviews in a short time frame, the process was often tiring and it was important to have short breaks between each interview. These breaks

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[33] It has to be acknowledged that is difficult to build rapport in a one off interview compared to fieldwork that has ongoing interaction with participants.

allowed the previous interview to be reflected on before preparing for the subsequent interview. The interviews varied in length from thirty minutes to one hour, which was very dependent on how much the participants had to say, the depth they were willing to go into and their duties for that day. All the interviews were recorded using a dictaphone to allow for full attention to be paid to the participant's responses without the distraction of note taking.

The participants were given the opportunity to ask any questions prior to interviews commencing and once all queries were clarified they were asked to sign the consent form (Appendix 3). The participants who raised questions did so in relation to the researcher's academic background and the topic in question. These questions were welcomed because it provided the opportunity to emphasise the researcher's role as a student and explain that the focus was on giving the police the opportunity to voice their opinions and experiences. The researcher was apprehensive as to how receptive the participants would be given my role as a student, nevertheless, the majority of participants saw their role as assisting in the research and thus were very willing to open up and discuss their experiences. There were a small number of participants who appeared to be more reluctant about being interviewed, whether this was because of the student role or just general scepticism about talking to an outsider is unknown.

Practical difficulties presented themselves during the interviews, which unfortunately could not be alleviated. On occasions the interviews were interrupted by other members of staff because there were no notices in place to inform people the interviews were taking place. In one location there was no room allocated for the interviews and this led to one interview being interrupted on three instances and

resulted in the interview being moved to a different room halfway through. Another interruption came in the form of the police radios, which all officers on duty had to have in their possession. Although some participants were able to turn the volume down on the radios, for others it was necessary to have the volume turned up. Fortunately the radios did not interfere with the recordings, however it was distracting at times, and occasionally interviews had to be paused whilst the participants answered the call. These are practical difficulties that arose and as frustrating as they were at the time they were unavoidable and fortunately did not seem to impact on the data.

As with most qualitative research, the quality of the interview was dependent on two key factors, the interviewing skills and the participants' willingness to discuss their own experiences. The skill of the interviewer plays an important role in being able to get participants to open up and elaborate on their responses (Mason, 2002). This is something that developed over time in this fieldwork. Having never interviewed police officers prior to this study made the first few interviews quite intimidating, however, after the initial apprehensions the interview technique reflected a growth in confidence. It became apparent that some police officers would respond openly to more direct questions that were posed to them, so part of the skill involved in interviewing the police was to use judgement on when direct questioning was appropriate. This contradicts guidance by Dexter (1964) who advises researchers to avoid direct questioning and be more conversational. The experience of interviewing police officers has demonstrated that it depends on the respondent and judging who will and will not respond openly to direct questions.

The second key factor relates to the willingness of participants to disclose and discuss personal experiences and opinions. Although the interviews were of varying length, the duration of the interviews did not necessarily reflect the quality of data collected. For example one interview lasted just over one hour and yet a lot of the information was irrelevant to this research and even the participant himself apologised for using the interview as a means to get all his grievances regarding the police force off his chest[34]. Many of the difficulties that occurred in relation to getting police officers to talk relate to their professional integrity. Although all the participants were aware the information disclosed was confidential it was apparent that some police officers held back information to protect their reputation as a police officer and demonstrate great professionalism towards the police force itself and wanted to emphasise how great the police force is and that all officers go 'by the book'. For instance one police officer (POM31) denied that police recording changes had any impact on official statistics despite many of his colleagues highlighting that more people can now be detected and recorded for offences. The quotation below highlights his defence of police statistics which contradicted his earlier statement that *things are always changing as to how things are reported or recorded*.

> POM31: ... *if the statistics show that there's been an increase in the amount of incidents involving females, that it could only have been that, that there has been a rise, as opposed to the way that we record it.*

It was interesting that officers from the same police force would give contradictory responses and admit to areas of their policy and practice that could benefit from improvement. It was accepted that some officers will be more open than others who will only provide information that shows off the professionalism of the force and

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[34] This additional data was stored in NVivo as additional information.

reputation of the officers within it. It was evident that for some police officers their professional integrity limited the information gathered, however for others it was simply a case of them not really wanting to speak with a researcher. Fortunately this happened on only three occasions, where it was obvious from their body language and attitude that they were uninterested and wanted the interview over as quickly as possible. For example I was asked by two police officers within the same station *how long will this take as we want to get to the Pizza Hut buffet early*. In these circumstances it was about making the most of it but it was evident that they were giving short, often one word answers, to avoid a lengthy discussion. This dilemma occurred mainly due to the fact many of the participants were requested to take part by their officer in charge, rather than being interested in the topic or wanting their opinion to be heard. This is a limitation of the sampling being left in the hands of someone else (and raises issues around informed consent, which is discussed in the ethics section of this chapter), nonetheless, overall the interviews in this study generated rich data.

The role of the researcher

A key aspect of a feminist approach is the ability to reflect on the research process, and importantly the impact the researcher has on the data generation. There are several considerations that needed to be taken into account: firstly there was the occupational power relation, student and police officers; secondly, the impact a female researcher has on gathering data from a masculinised occupation; and finally, lack of identification with the participants.

In relation to the first consideration there were initial concerns that the police officers would be reluctant to talk in depth about their experiences to a doctoral student. The police officers could have been apprehensive about revealing information that would have shown themselves or the police force in a negative way. Furthermore, being a student researcher, there was concern that the police officers might not take the interviews seriously. In actual fact there was little response to suggest either of these to be the case. On the whole the police officers responded well and expressed an interest in the topic and appeared willing to assist. There were a couple of police officers who appeared not to take the interviews as seriously and passed comment about the 'student' role. On reflection it may have been beneficial to simply state the role as a researcher, rather than a student, but it did not appear to have a detrimental impact on the research. The outsider role came with benefits and difficulties, on the one hand police officers responded well to being given the opportunity to voice their own experiences and opinions, but on the other hand, they were protective of the police force and in particular did not like to disclose too much about their training practices. This will have had an impact on the data generated on the procedural side of policing, but does not take away from the quality of data collected in regards to their experiences and perceptions.

The second, and probably more influential, factor to be acknowledged was the gender relations during the interviews, which requires greater reflection.

> There is a gap in our knowledge of the way in which criminological researchers have managed the task of interviewing police officers generally, and male police officers in particular, but especially how they have done so from a feminist perspective. (Campbell, 2003: 288)

This study entailed a young woman interviewing men and women within an institution known for their masculine cultures. As Campbell (2003) notes, there is little guidance on interviewing male police officers from a feminist perspective, thus the task of conducting such research came with a degree of ignorance. The experience of this current research shares commonalities with Campbell's own reflections on interviewing male police officers. Building rapport was achieved through methods of dialogue, whereby an appreciation of perceptions and experiences is exhibited without "requiring empathy and acceptance of all that is said" (Campbell, 2003: 2983). In general, rapport was built with the majority of the participants quite easily through this dialogue but on reflection the female participants were quicker to open up and voice their opinions than their male colleagues. However, the male police officers did speak openly about their experiences of dealing with young women deemed as violent and some even acknowledged their own limitations as a male police officer.

A further consideration to be made is in relation to the research topic. The interviews required police officers to disclose their policies, practices and experiences of dealing with young women they deemed as violent to a female researcher. This dilemma is enhanced by the scepticism of police officers towards outsiders (see Brown, 1996) who are questioning their policies and practices, and was demonstrated by the response of some police officers. For instance, within a few minutes of one interview commencing the male police officer wanted to clarify that although the police had been accused of sexism this was not the case. The fact that the police officer felt the need to state this highlighted he sensed the interview was to uncover prejudiced attitudes.

Efforts were made during the interviews to ensure that reactions to the information provided did not appear judgemental but rather one of appreciation and understanding of the complex role a police officer takes on. It is difficult to question anyone about their own beliefs and appear impartial to their responses, however police officers have a duty to protect the professionalism of their organisation and questioning these beliefs and practices is a dilemma difficult to overcome. It is not possible to identify the overall impact this had on the research data, however some reflections can be drawn out. The male police officers were more inclined to apologise for remarks they thought would be deemed as sexist and were careful how they worded their opinions about young women. There was definitely a feeling that they wanted to avoid offending a female researcher and stress how they treat women equally. Their responses may well have been different if they were being interviewed by a man or at least an older woman, similarly though the female participants may have reacted differently to a male interviewer.

Researcher influence is often unavoidable, and there is no way of knowing to what degree this had an impact but it is important to acknowledge that challenging gender relations among a particularly masculine occupation does pose difficulties. It was necessary throughout the interviews not to react to such apologies of sexism and rather encourage the police officers to talk openly and express their opinions freely. On reflection this technique appeared to be successful given the frank opinions expressed by the male police officers. Overall the police officers responded very well to the interview, they spoke openly about their experiences and practices and, despite their loyalty towards the police, they shared in depth information on their experiences

and perceptions of women deemed as violent without questioning the researcher's motives.

A dilemma faced prior, during and after the fieldwork is related to the researcher's own position within the study. From a feminist perspective, research is strengthened when the respondents feel they can identify with the researcher, particularly in an interview (Harding, 1985). Unfortunately there were few similarities between the researcher and participants; the police officers who had been educated in higher education and the female police officers shared characteristics with the researcher but there were only ten female police officers and only three police officers mentioned they had attended university. There is no certainty that the lack of similarity had any bearing on the quality of the data, and it is unlikely that any researcher can identify with every respondent but it is important to acknowledge these issues. Using qualitative interviewing did provide an insight into the police officers experiences but again it was difficult to identify with them given the lack of similar experiences to the ones they described in their role. This made it difficult to challenge some of their responses, but on the other hand the researcher was not confronted with questioning their own practices which has been evident in other feminist research (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002).

A final reflection that has to be made is the researcher bias, which is difficult to remove from any piece of research but necessary to recognise. Despite the theoretical framework being developed during the stages of analysis, the research was designed with certain assumptions regarding the institution of policing, the attitudes of police officers and the topic of female violence. These assumptions will have been influenced

to some degree from studying the relevant literature but also through personal experience. Although the researcher identified with feminist perspectives the police officers were not made aware of this and every attempt was made to ensure research questions appeared objective.

Ethical considerations

This section discusses the ethical decisions made throughout the research from both the procedural and practical aspects of researching the police. Procedural ethics relate to the formal guidelines for carrying out social research (Guillemin and Gillam, 2004) and these guidelines were sought from the British Sociological Association (BSA) and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). Measures to ensure procedural ethics were accounted for were to obtain approval from the School of Applied Social's ethics committee, ensuring all participants signed a consent form and obtaining a confidentiality agreement from the transcriber. The practical ethical considerations are those that arose during the fieldwork and relate to occurrences whereby ethical decisions had to be made to ensure the wellbeing of both the participants and the researcher.

Informed consent

Gaining informed consent is a fundamental ethical practice, it demonstrates that participants have volunteered to take part in research and they understand their role in the study. All the participants were provided with a consent form at the beginning of each interview (Appendix 3) and they were asked to read over the information and sign to verify they wanted to participate. The consent form asked participants to confirm that they had volunteered to participate in the research, and despite them all

agreeing to this, it became apparent this was not always the case. A problem that arose very soon into carrying out the fieldwork was that it became clear that not all the police officers had entirely volunteered, rather they had been asked by their senior members of staff to participate. In the first set of interviews with police force A the researcher was advised one officer that had signed up to participate was no longer able to, then a short while later his senior officer came and informed the researcher that he would be participating. The researcher was unsure whether to go ahead with the interview given that it was clear this police officer did not want to take part. It was made clear to them that they did not have to participate and although they stated they were happy to be interviewed, the slouched body language gave off the distinct impression they were not entirely interested and wanted the interview over as quickly as possible. It was apparent throughout the research that although every participant gave consent it did not necessarily mean that they had volunteered.

This was a dilemma was unforeseen and would be classified as a practical ethical concern. Although it was apparent that some participants had not chosen to volunteer, but rather they had been nominated by their seniors, they did all state before the interview commenced that they wanted to take part and signed the consent form. This predicament highlighted that when researching police officers it is not always possible to get the participants most applicable for the study and instead you have to rely on individuals that have been asked to participate rather than on individuals who have chosen to participate. This was certainly a limitation of leaving the sampling in the hands of gatekeepers; however the research may not have gone ahead at all if this approach had not been taken. It is noteworthy that this dilemma is evident in other studies, not just in relation to policing, and one field where this issue has been

discussed is research with children. For instance Morrow and Richards (1996) and Punch (2002) found that negotiating consent with gatekeepers, such as parents and teachers, can prove problematic because they speak on behalf of the children. Similarly Punch (2007) notes that children can feel pressurised by their siblings to take part in studies. Hence, negotiating with gatekeepers is a problem that occurs in various research studies and raises ethical questions regarding informed consent. In this current research study consent had to be obtained first and foremost through the gatekeepers and then again from each individual participant.

As indicated previously, not all participants wanted to talk at length; although they consented to be interviewed this did not necessarily guarantee that they wanted to discuss their perceptions and experiences in great depth. Wiles et al. (2005: 4.8) note that researchers should be observant and take notice of signs of disinterest:

> It is noted that researchers need to be vigilant to participants' unspoken expressions of a reluctance to continue to participate during data collection, such as an apparent lack of interest or irritation with the data collection.

The three participants who did demonstrate a lack of enthusiasm were asked whether they were happy to continue and were informed that the interview was not mandatory. All three police officers agreed to carry on and the decision was made to continue with the interview. Fortunately in all these cases, despite initial signs of apathy, the participants did contribute satisfactory in the interview albeit not in as much depth as other participants.

The consent given by the participants was to allow information they had given to be used in this research project, however not all the information collected was digitally

recorded. At times participants would continue to discuss the topic after the dictaphone was switched, mainly expressing their interest in the subject matter. There was only one occasion where information was disclosed 'off tape' that was not mentioned while the dictaphone was on[35]. The decision was made to include this data in the research findings as it did not breach their consent. If any of the participants had specifically asked for the information not to be used then this would have been endorsed.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is essential in all social research to avoid any repercussions or harm being caused to the participants. Williams (1989) advises that researchers ought to highly emphasise confidentiality when researching powerful members of society because any possibility of information being leaked will impact on the data generated that could jeopardise the participants or their organisation. Every measure was taken to ensure confidentiality during and after the fieldwork, despite the gatekeepers being aware of who was participating, there was no way of them accessing the information provided by each police officer. The interview transcripts and field notes were headed with pseudonyms, which were utilised throughout the analysis and writing up stages to ensure anonymity. The pseudonyms consist of a PO (police officer) M/F (male /female) and a number to ensure they cannot be easily identified by anyone other than the researcher. All the participants were advised that the responses they provided would be anonymous unless they gave information that would put either themselves or another individual in immediate danger.

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[35] The incident discussed off tape is examined in chapter seven.

During the fieldwork there were attempts made by some gatekeepers and fellow officers to uncover what participants had said. During an interval between interviews the senior officer who had arranged the interviews came and asked how the interviews were going and what had been discussed. The researcher responded politely in a vague manner at first and advised that this information could not be disclosed and fortunately they understood the confidentiality agreement.

The interview data was stored in a password protected computer and locked storage cabinet that only the researcher had access to. The only other individual who had access to the interviews was a transcriber who signed a confidentiality agreement prior to transcription. No names were identified on the tape recordings and each recording was given a pseudonym.

The analytical process

All of the interviews were transcribed from digital recordings prior to analysis. This was beneficial as the transcripts could be revisited for the various stages of analysis and enabled a detailed examination of the data collected (see Silverman, 1993). A key objective for feminist research is for the experiences of the participants to be the key focus, and from this, relate these experiences to the broader theoretical and political debates (Acker et al, 1996). It was imperative that the data analysis reflected an accurate account of the police officers' perceptions and experiences and this involved a two stage process; generating themes and inductive analysis.

Generating themes

The initial phase of the data analysis was to code the interview transcripts into broad categories, which were guided by the main topics discussed during the interviews. This

stage of coding can be regarded as deductive given that the research questions directed the initial coding of the data. In order to organise the data efficiently Nvivo 7 was employed given the advantages it provides. Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) was a beneficial tool for storing and sorting data during the initial stages of analysis due to the ability to manage the data efficiently (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Richards and Richards, 1994; Lewins, 2001; Wickham and Woods, 2005). It enabled the interview transcripts to be coded in a structured manner and each theme was easily grouped together. The general themes were categorised into nodes using Nvivo and then each node was broken down into smaller nodes resulting in a tree node for each category. The main themes at this stage examined definitions, perceptions, experiences and responses towards women depicted as violent. Nvivo was beneficial for retrieving data easily, searching for key concepts and exploring links between gender, length of service and police force. It was anticipated that there might have been variation in responses on the basis of demography, gender and/or length of police service. These three variables were examined throughout the analysis stage but no significant differences were identified. The differences that were recognised have been discussed in the findings in relation to the specific issue. At this stage the data remained very descriptive and it became apparent that continuing to use Nvivo would be limiting in order to progress to actually understanding and contextualising the data on a more theoretical level.

The inductive process

The second stage of analysis can be viewed as far more inductive; the themes chosen to comprehend the findings came from the data itself rather than pre-existing hypotheses. Once the broad analysis had been written up it was apparent that certain

key concepts and themes were running through the interviews, along with some contradictions. At this point Nvivo became difficult to manage, the data became very fragmented, a common problem using CAQDAS (see Bryman, 2004), and the decision was made to revisit all the interviews to establish the key theoretical themes and contradictions running through the interviews. Each interview was summarised into the main arguments (highlighting the contradictions) until it was clear what the important premises were. At this point the analysis was at the "data transformation" stage (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 91) whereby the analysis moved from merely descriptive to more explanatory and it was from here that the theoretical framework took shape.

The data was interpreted from a feminist perspective; examining the ways police officers spoke about women, their policies and practices in relation to women, and their comparisons to men deemed as violent. The difficulty in doing this is that the police officer's own interpretation may very well differ. The police officers are unlikely to perceive their perceptions or responses as mechanisms of control and rather see them as justified explanations. A key focus for qualitative research is to uncover the underlying beliefs and behaviours to demonstrate the impact this has on policy and practice. This study aimed to demonstrate the underlying principles of policing in relation to young women, which are embedded within the institution itself. McNay (1992) argues that the underlying principles of institutions such as policing are so entrenched that the individual members of an institution are unable to identify them. This coincides with the Macpherson report (1999) that demonstrated racism was so deeply rooted within the organisation and practices of policing that it would be

difficult for individual officers to recognise it. Therefore this research helps to identify underlying beliefs from an outside perspective which otherwise may not be visible.

Every effort was made during the interpretation of the data to ensure the voices of the police officers were being portrayed realistically and it was only after the initial stages of descriptive coding that the findings were explained in terms of gendered social control mechanisms. This was the benefit of using an inductive approach to research findings as it assisted to some extent with difficulties in accurate interpretation.

Reflecting on the fieldwork

The fieldwork provided an opportunity to engage with individuals from an area of society that the researcher had no experience of and to develop experience of qualitative research with a professional organisation. On the whole the process was positive, informative and provided an insight into a complex institution structured around power, control and authority. The fieldwork and analysis were not without their challenges, which have been highlighted in the discussions.

The interviews were received with positive feedback from the police officers, some asking to be informed of the findings[36] and others thankful to have been given the opportunity to take part. The data collected was rich in content and even one incident described by the police was later reported by the victim in a national newspaper which gave an ideal opportunity to validate the portrayal by the two officers who were present[37]. The power balances during the interviews cannot be overlooked and despite

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[36] On completion of the thesis a summary report of the findings will be provided to the police forces that took part.
[37] Two police officers described a horrendous incident whereby a teenage girl was violently attacked, stripped naked and set on fire by a group of teenagers (the main culprits being females). A year after the interviews the victim of this attack told her story in a national newspaper and her recollection of the event matched that described by the police officers.

feminist approaches aiming to acknowledge power relations, this is difficult given the complexity of social divisions and their impact on how participants respond. Similarly, during the analysis stage the interpretation of the data may differ from the participant's and even another researcher's interpretation. A method utilised to minimise this was in the inductive analysis, whereby the themes emerged from the data rather than the themes being grouped according to research topics.

Despite the difficulties encountered in relation to power imbalances, data reliability, and interpretation, the findings that follow in the subsequent chapters contribute to understanding the complex gender relations that exist in policing and the impact these have on women who are labelled as violent.

Chapter 5 - Introduction to Findings

The subsequent three chapters present the findings from this current study that explores how police officers perceive and respond to young women depicted as violent. This chapter provides an introduction to the findings; it lays out important points required to interpret the findings accordingly. The chapter commences with an outline of how the findings have been framed using a feminist theoretical framework. To ensure clarity throughout the findings, the section discusses how the police officers interviewed defined 'violence' and the application of the term in the findings chapters.

Development of the theoretical framework

A difficulty that arose from this current research was the development of a theoretical framework. Allowing the framework to evolve from the data can be regarded as beneficial given that the analysis is not being manipulated to fit a pre-existing structure, however taking this inductive approach led to a lengthy and complex process of establishing where the findings would be best suited in the larger fields of criminology, feminism and policing.

In order to examine gendered relations with regards to young women characterised as violent, it was essential to explore the underlying perceptions held by police officers and how these transpired in their responses to situations whereby young women had used violence. It was important to understand how they defined violence, how they portrayed the young women and the decision making processes when arresting young women. It was evident from the analysis that the findings pointed towards very distinct perceptions about violence perpetrated by women and the women themselves. Recurring themes that became apparent from the findings were the issues

of power and control and appropriate gender roles, which were made sense of by adopting a feminist perspective. Feminist perspectives on control assist with explaining perceptions, where they came from and what they symbolise. The analysis showed that the way the police officers talked about women contrasted with how they spoke about men, in other words there was a particular discourse being employed by police officers.

Feminist approaches in criminology assist with understanding how patriarchal structures shape responses to women who offend (Gelsthorpe and Morris, 1988). Although patriarchy is a useful tool to analyse how police officers perceive women, Smart (1981) offers advice that any attempt to explain legal institutions as a system of patriarchy, i.e. a structure that aims to oppress women by reinforcing male dominance, must take care to recognise the legal system as more than a mere patriarchal structure serving to protect the power of men over women. However, the criminal justice system can be viewed "as a mode of production of the existing patriarchal order" (Smart, 1981: 44), because as Smart (ibid) argues, the law not only reflects cultural beliefs but also plays a role in the creation and maintaining of stereotypes, and in this case sex roles.

By viewing the police through a lens of feminism it acknowledges that policing is a culture that embraces norms and values that are fluid rather than fixed. This thesis recognises that the institution of policing is more than a patriarchal structure that is merely dominated by men but rather it has various cultures that incorporate complex gender and power relations. This gives way to understanding how the individual officers themselves regard young women portrayed as violent whilst acknowledging

that their beliefs stem from their involvement in policing discourse as well as other forms of discourse (such as the family and the media).

The findings can be best understood as a combination of gendered stereotyping and a net widening of social control, thus, the decision was made to focus the attention on how the police officers utilise different methods of control when policing young women. Chapter two highlighted how women are controlled in varying spheres of society both publically and privately. However, it has to be acknowledged that within the different arenas, distinct methods of control are utilised. This thesis has identified three forms of social control: institutional, discursive and discretionary, which all employ different mechanisms in the control of women. Smart and Smart (1978) argue that the social control of women can occur in various forms, such as legislative, ideological, public and private so this thesis classifies three distinct yet interrelated methods of control. The three categories identified allow for the examination of how policy, practice and discursive representations can contribute to the social control of young women who offend, providing a more nuanced understanding of how police officers respond to young women perceived as violent.

Institutional control has been identified as a procedural mechanism that leads to the control of women's behaviour. This form of control relates to policies that have resulted in more young women being classified as offenders, such as changes in the way young women are policed. As a consequence of these policies, more young women are being identified as offenders through a net widening effect, and chapter six that follows highlights the effect of this on the number of women being policed and prosecuted.

Discursive control focuses on the way deviant women are represented through cultural beliefs and how these contribute to the regulation to appropriate gendered behaviour. Chapter two showed how media and legal discourses attempt to demonise women who defy gender norms of the basis of the social construction of femininity. These implicit restrictions can have an effect on how institutional and discretionary controls are exercised and thus are necessary to understand the overall social control of women who offend. Chapter seven examines the way police officers depict young women who use violence, how these depictions differ to their portrayal of men that use violence and how this relates to gender stereotyping.

Discretionary control relates to the way in which deviant women are treated differently to men, and other women, in practice. Chapters two and three showed how discretionary practices are evident within the criminal justice system particularly in relation to decision making around sentencing and police discretion. Chapter eight examines the use of police discretion in relation to young women regarded as violent. The chapter assesses what factors police officers take into account when deciding to arrest young and whether the discursive controls have an influence on this.

The findings chapters are structured around these three mechanisms of social control in order to demonstrate how young women are at risk of greater social control and highlight the impact this has on their contact with the criminal justice system.

Defining violence

The concept of violence is complex; it is determined by who is defining it and how their definition is shaped by the discourse in which it is used (Burman, 2004a). Chapter one

outlined that this thesis distinguishes between violent 'crime' and violent 'behaviour' given the limitation of legal definitions; "how one defines violence is one of the most important research decisions that a methodologist will make" (DeKeseredy and Schwartz, 2011: 5). By viewing violence in a broader sense (i.e. not purely physical) it allows for a more thorough analysis of violent behaviour. It was fundamental to establish how the police officers defined violence given that their own understanding of violence will assist with a profound interpretation of their perceptions and practices because ultimately these definitions will influence how they respond to violent behaviour.

According to the police officers interviewed, there is no set definition of violent crime, but rather they rely on their own judgement as to what constitutes violence. All of the police officers agreed that any behaviour that results in physical injury would be categorised as violent, and this ranges from hitting someone to murder. However, the level of violence determines what charge an individual would receive, for instance a common assault charge, a serious assault charge or a homicide charge. This demonstrates that when discussing 'violence' there are a range of behaviours that can be categorised as such although they do not necessarily appear in official statistics as violent 'crime'.

All of the police officers agreed that as long as there is a visible threat of harm then this would be considered violent, for example threatening with a weapon or a fist. This is illustrated in the following quotes:

> POM4: *An assault is basically any attack directed to take physical impact on some person - whether or not injury has actually occurred or not.*

> POF20: *If you sort of stood with a knife and said 'I'm going to stab you' or something, that would be classed as a violent crime.*

So violent behaviour does not always have to result in somebody being injured but rather the intent to cause injury has to be there. Actions such as spitting, hitting, punching and kicking are deemed as violent whether it is resulting from one individual victimising another or two (or more) people physically 'fighting'; these were all described as violent behaviour. Violent offences were discussed in relation to varying actions from verbal and written threats of harm (such as text messaging and online social networking), bullying and physical assaults. Terms such as 'aggression' and 'rowdy behaviour' were used to depict violence, which demonstrates the broad spectrum of actions regarded as violent.

These definitions of what constitutes violence are similar to accounts given by young women who use violence (see Burman, 2004a); it is a broad concept and very much determined by who is defining it and in what context it is being used. For instance Burman (2004a) found that verbal abuse was included in young women's definition of violence, and often perceived as, if not more, harmful as physical assaults, however this was debated among the police officers in the current study.

Verbal abuse was classified by POM29 as *one of those slightly grey areas* whereby categorising it as violent very much depends on the context in which it is used. If the verbal abuse is threatening in nature then it can be perceived as violent, particularly if there are gestures such as a clenched fist or the presence of a weapon. Just over half of the police officers (17) believed that verbal abuse that has a threatening tone to it is regarded as violent behaviour, whereas the other 16 officers associated violence with

physical, or the intention of physical, injury (i.e. throwing a punch), as POM23 expresses:

> *Verbal .I wouldn't class that as violent, I would class that as upsetting, I would class it as a breach of the peace or a threat. Violent behaviour I would say is obviously when you're not just using verbal abuse, but actually using actions to back that up, whether it be with a weapon or by striking out at somebody.*

Although verbal abuse is not perceived to be as serious as physical injury the following extract illustrates that police officers acknowledge the potential harm it can cause.

> POF2: *Verbal abuse, yeah, can obviously be classed as violent, but it wouldn't be seen as serious […] predominantly you would look on more your serious assaults as being more your violent crime and any weapons and aggressors, things that way that's been used. I mean, predominantly on kind of a domestic abuse case, their verbal abuse can be just as impacting and as strongly, just as aggressive because it's more a mental build up. It probably does more damage mentally than what the actual assaults and things do in the likes of domestics.*

Despite verbal abuse not being officially categorised as violent, police officers do recognise that it can lead to violence and it has the potential to cause harm. Furthermore, the context in which the verbal abuse is being used, such as a domestic situation or to threaten someone's life, will have a bearing on how the police perceive it. Ultimately it is the judgement of the police officer that will determine whether an action is dealt with as a violent crime or a breach of the peace, but it is clear that the threat or harm, the intent to injure or actual injury will be classified as violent behaviour. The discretion in relation to defining violence allows police officers to take control of a situation that they deem to be disorderly or dangerous. This demonstrates the power police officers have to define what is and is not appropriate conduct.

It is interesting how police officers depict a broad range of actions as violent when discussing potential 'offenders', yet these behaviour become unclear when a police officer acts in such a way. Westmarland (2001b) identifies that there is a fine line between 'violence' and 'reasonable force' at the hands of police officers and yet many examples of legitimate or reasonable force would be considered violent if carried out by other members of the public. This once again highlights the disciplinary power the police exercise in defining what is categorised as deviant/criminal behaviour.

The acknowledgement that violence can incorporate a broad range of behaviour from verbal abuse to murder further demonstrates the complexity of the term. By recognising these varying depictions of violence the findings chapters can be interpreted from a clearer understanding; many of the incidents discussed during the interviews did not necessarily come under the legal categorisation of 'non-sexual crimes of violence', but are still recognised as violent behaviour.

Chapter 6 - Policing and Institutional Control

Chapter two highlights the complex topic of young women's violence with a vast array of research exploring explanations behind female violence (Batchelor, 2005; Wesley, 2006), depictions of women who use violence (Berrington and Honkatukia, 2002; Jones and Wardle, 2008) and criminal justice responses to women who commit violent offences (Allen, 1997; Worrall, 1990; Alder, 1998; Sharpe, 2009). The media 'myth' that 'liberated' young women are becoming more violent was not supported when examining the official crime statistics in Scotland. Despite slight increases in the number of women with a proven charge for common assault, the number of women with proven charges for violent offences have remained relatively stable since 2001 (McIvor and Burman, 2001; Scottish Government2011a). This raises the question as to why there is an ongoing concern that a growing number of young women are using violence and whether minor forms of violence are being misrepresented as more serious violent acts. Three key suggestions have been put forward to explain the apparent increase in young women's violence; either women are becoming more violent (Brinkworth, 1994; Messerschmidt, 1995); the criminal justice system is more punitive towards women who offend (Alder, 1998; Hedderman, 2004); or/and changes in policy and practice have led to more young women being dealt with by the criminal justice system (Chesney-Lind and Belknap, 2004; Chesney-Lind and Irwin 2008; Zhan et al., 2008; Sharpe, 2009).

This chapter is structured around the concept of 'institutional control' to assess whether changes in police policy and/or practice could assist with explaining the rise in the number of young women being depicted as violent. Steffensmeier et al. (2005),

Pollock and Davis (2006) and Zhan et al. (2008) suggest that apparent increases in females using violence can be attributed to changes in policy and practice such as definitions of violence, and a net widening effect of policing. This issue was also raised by McIvor and Burman (2011) who suggested changes in policing may help to explain the increase in convictions of women over 30. The chapter commences by examining changes in policing practice that could explain higher detection rates of young women using violence. Following this, the discussion moves on to outline police officers' own perceptions of whether an increase in violence by young women has taken place.

The subsequent section considers whether a net widening effect has occurred that could go some way to explaining the apparent rise in female violence. It examines the three main circumstances where women were perceived to be using violence; the night time economy, in the community and in closed settings. The chapter is concluded by taking account of these mechanisms of institutional control to assess whether they have any bearing on the increasing number of young women being charged and imprisoned for violent offences.

Advances in policing

Crime recording standards

> Law enforcement policies that lower the threshold for reporting an assault or for classifying assault as aggravated may create the appearance of a "crime wave" when the underlying behaviour remains relatively stable. (Zhan et al. 2008:7)

Changes in police policies have important implications for official crime statistics, as the quote above demonstrates; behaviour may remain unchanged but the way crimes are defined and recorded could result in increases in the number of crimes

documented by official statistics. In 2003 there were important changes made to the crime recording standards in Scotland; any crime detected by the police now has to be recorded under the new guidelines (HMICS, 2008)[38]. Previous to this there needed to be a complainant for a crime to be recorded, whereas now all crimes have to be recorded, complainant or not. The changes in recording standards were perceived to be a contributing factor to the increase in the number of females charged with violent offences. Four police officers (POM11; POM28; POM30; POF32) commented on how the changes in recording standards have resulted in more people being processed through the criminal justice system and thus could go some way to explaining the rise in the number of recorded crimes committed by young women. POM28 admitted that the police are recording a lot more incidents now and relying less on their discretion and this coincides with what POM11 said:

> *The figures never change very much, you know, there's slight fluctuations throughout the year...to be honest now because of this Crime Recording Standard, we have to record all crimes and offences. If somebody came up and poked you in the face with a finger, that could be classed as assault and I'd have to report it.*

POM30 and POF32 both stated that before the changes in the recording standards were introduced if there was an assault but no one wanted to make a complaint then there was little the police could do. However, they are able to record far more crimes now because they do not rely on a complainant.

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[38] Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland.

Fixed penalty notices

Pollock and Davis (2005) suggest that an alternative explanation for the rise in the number of women being charged and incarcerated for violent offences is an increased awareness of what has, up until recently, been regarded as a hidden crime. Advances in policing can be attributed to this assertion, one of which is the introduction of fixed penalty notices for disorder (PND) introduced under The Antisocial Behaviour etc (Scotland) Act 2004. These are fixed £40 fines for disruptive, threatening and/or antisocial behaviour (Cavanagh, 2009). Although these fines are not intended to be used for violent offences, they can be issued for minor assaults and verbal abuse, which would be categorised as miscellaneous offences (i.e. common assault and breach of the peace). POM28 indicated that the police can take advantage of these PNDs by issuing them on the spot; these incidents are recorded (although it is not a criminal conviction) and allow the police to spend more time on patrol. POM24 also referred to these as a positive means to deal with minor altercations, where beforehand people would have just been given a verbal warning they are now issued with a fine and the incident is recorded:

> *If it was two women fighting on the street and they were fighting because of a specific thing that's happened between them, neither of them was making a complaint, now what you would probably do is give them the fixed penalty fine... In years gone by, invariably you would basically send them on their own different ways.*

These changes in policing are vital to understanding crime rates, because, as Zhan et al. (2008) emphasise, these could be significant explanatory factors for the rise in the number of recorded violent offences.

Closed circuit television

CCTV has been deemed "a tremendous tool for the police" because it enables police officers to detect more crimes through technological surveillance (Donnelly, 2008: 134). The increasing use of CCTV was highlighted as an explanation for changes in crime rates, because it not only increases the awareness of crimes being committed but also the detection of crime. Eight of the police officers (POM3; POM6; POM9; POM12; POM18; POM19; POM26; POF32) commented on the usefulness of CCTV and gave examples of young women being identified as acting violently as a result of digital footage. The passage below from the interview with POM26 demonstrates how CCTV can contribute to an increased awareness of offences:

> POM26: *I think there's more incidences of women fighting, however [pause] without seeing the statistics it always appears that you're always busy. And I think that eh… well, yesterday we'd an example, one woman[...] under the influence of alcohol and drugs, just thought she could get away with just indiscriminately hitting at anybody that passed her in the street and [...] it was caught on video. But that type of thing is probably more [...] we're maybe more aware of it now because we've got CCTV.*
>
> INT: So it's maybe not that it's increased, but you're more aware of it?
>
> POM26: *Yeah. And CCTV is a great tool, but it can add to the statistics. Instead of an individual who may have been slapped by somebody else, which is wrong and it should be recorded as such, it's a crime yes, of assault; however, a few years ago without CCTV they may put that down to a fact of life [...] whereas now we're trying to get the bigger picture or the true picture.*

The increasing use of fixed penalty notices and CCTV can be understood as mechanisms of institutional control; crimes are more detectable, can be dealt with more quickly and are more likely to be recorded. These changes will have a profound effect on all crimes committed and as illustrated with the examples above, young women are being recorded for relatively minor forms of violence, whereas previously

this would have gone either unnoticed or unrecorded. The institution of policing is gaining greater control through advances in police surveillance, recording and penalties, and these findings suggest that young women are coming to the attention of the police as a result of these changes.

This supports the contention by Steffensmeier et al. (2006), who argue, a zero tolerance approach towards violence has led to a net widening effect, which has resulted in more women being arrested for incidences that would have been previously regarded as trivial or at least not serious enough for police involvement. It is therefore vital to acknowledge these changes in policies and the potential impact they have on responses to crime (Steffensmeier et al., 2006).

These findings reflect Foucault's analysis of the police as an institution of control and surveillance whereby they are advancing their control mechanisms to exercise disciplinary power (Foucault, 1977). It is evident that the police utilise their disciplinary power to control the behaviour of others, and although this is not restricted to young women, it may contribute to the number of women being identified as violent.

Perceived prevalence of female violence

The advances in policing could be a contributing factor in the apparent rise in young women being recorded for violent behaviour. However, it was vital to establish from the police officers themselves whether in their experience they had witnessed any changes in the prevalence of young women using violence.

Jamieson et al. (1999) interviewed police officers to investigate their perspectives on young people and offending. They found that police officers believed that there were

more young women committing violent offences and although there are gender differences in rates of offending for crimes, the gap was closing for violent offences (ibid, 40). Despite the police officers in the study by Jamieson et al. suggesting more young women were becoming involved in violent crime, they did not perceive it to be a serious problem.

In the current study twenty of the police officers reported that, in their view, there has been an increase in the number of females using violence. It was stated this increase has resulted from increased alcohol consumption among young women. The other thirteen officers stated they had not witnessed any change in the occurrence during their time in the police force. It is difficult to put a time scale on the changes due to the varying lengths of service, given that some of the officers are witnessing changes over a three year period and others over a twenty year period. For instance POF10 has been in the police service for seven years and states she has observed a change:

> *From when I started I would say there's probably more aggressive females than when I started definitely… I would say there were two or three sort of in the first year, but they've kind of got more and more and more as each year's went past. Some of them are just… they're minor, so what I'd call breaches eh, when they're shouting and swearing and threatening violence. But a lot more of them now are starting to come into… they're actually carrying out assaults.*

Fourteen of the police officers' experiences highlight that they are witnessing more verbal abuse than physical violence (10 males and 4 females). *Breach of peace is generally more common in females than violence* (POM15; he did not regard verbal abuse as violence), whereby their behaviour is classified more as aggressive rather than physically violent (POM12, POF14, POM23, POM27). This corroborates with Jackson's (2006) findings whereby high school teachers have also witnessed more

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verbal aggression from some teenage girls and only occasional physical violence. Interestingly from the four police officers above (POM12, POF14, POM23, POM27) two of them (POM12 and POM23) did not originally define verbal abuse as violence, yet when asked if female violence had changed they stated that had witnessed an increase in verbal abuse.

This reaffirms the importance of understanding how violent behaviour is being defined and often the confusion between aggression and violence. For instance Campbell (1986) tried to demonstrate that young women were more violent than statistics indicated by carrying out self report questionnaires in the UK. The limitation of her research is that there is confusion in the terminology used, the words 'aggression', 'violence', and 'fighting' are all used and yet at no point does Campbell distinguish between them. Therefore, it is difficult to determine whether all incidents were physical or if some were verbal. Pollock and Davis (2005) argue that often the terms 'aggression' and 'violence' are interplayed, so having a clear definition from the outset makes findings easier to interpret and, in relation to this current study, having a broad definition of 'violence', as opposed to 'violent crime', allows a fuller examination of policing.

The police officers' perception that the young women are more verbally abusive, particularly under the influence of alcohol, and likely to be charged with breach of the peace for minor incidents requires further investigation. Table 7 and Table 8 highlight the number of men and women with a proven charge for breach of the peace[39] and drunkenness. Table 7 demonstrates that there has been a decrease in the number of

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[39] It must be noted that breach of the peace statistics cover more than just verbal abuse, the statistics are not broken down in order to identify what proportion of charges relate to verbal abuse.

men and women under the age of 21 with a proven charged since 2001 but an increase for the two other age groups. The percentage of proven breach of the peace charges made up by women has remained relatively stable between 10% and 12% (for women under 21) and 12% and 13% (for all women). This challenges the perception that women are increasingly receiving a breach of the peace order given that the percentage issued to women has remained stable. Nevertheless, it must be noted that a proven charge does not equate police behaviour, in other words not all charges for breach of the police will result in proven charge due to the decision making further down the criminal justice process.

The available statistics for drunkenness are less straight forward. Table 8 shows that since 2001 the number of people with a proven charge for drunkenness has reduced overall by 63.8% for men and 79% for women[40]. It is evident that women make up a very small proportion of proven charges for drunkenness in all age groups. In 2001 women made up 7% of all proven charges of drunkenness, rising to 14% in 2010. One way to interpret these changes is by looking at the use of fixed penalty notices (PND) that can be issued for drunken behaviour. All police forces in Scotland issued PND from 2007 onwards and the statistics show that from 2007-2009 women made up between 11% and 16% of all notices issued (Cavanagh, 2009). Given that there is a reduction in charges for drunkenness, for men and women, since 2007, it would be reasonable to suggest that the change has occurred in relation to the introduction of PNDs.

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[40] The high percentage has resulted from the very small base numbers.

Table 7 - Number of men and women with a proven charge for breach of the peace 2001-2010.

Age and Gender	2001	2002	2003	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	Change
Men										
Under 21	3119	3190	3110	3345	3583	3817	3601	2951	2262	-37%
21 – 30	4201	4228	4484	4783	4575	5331	5303	4794	4316	2.7%
Over 30	4791	4973	5359	6037	6148	6687	6282	6101	5664	18.2%
Total	12111	12391	12953	14166	14306	15835	15186	13846	12242	1.08%
Women										
Under 21	379	323	357	360	408	479	488	418	314	-17%
21 – 30	510	544	552	672	634	677	714	645	573	12.4%
Over 30	772	866	869	936	998	1090	1022	1053	922	19.4%
Total	1661	1733	1778	1923	2040	2246	2224	2116	1809	8.9%

Source: Criminal Proceedings in the Scottish Courts 2001- 2009/2010.

Table 8- Number of men and women with a proven charge for drunkenness 2001-2010.

Age and Gender	2001	2002	2003	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	Total Increase
Men										
Under 21	28	36	26	18	26	20	36	12	14	-86%
21 – 30	79	59	61	44	58	62	45	23	34	-66%
Over 30	238	244	286	196	157	151	122	68	77	-23%
Total	345	339	373	258	241	233	203	104	125	-63.8%
Women										
Under 21	1	4	2	4	1	1	6	4	2	100%
21 – 30	8	4	13	6	7	12	6	7	8	0%
Over 30	17	37	23	40	41	15	20	14	11	-35.3%
Total	26	45	38	50	49	28	32	25	21	-79%

Source: Criminal Proceedings in the Scottish Courts 2001- 2009/2010.

The data highlighted here suggests shows no evidence of an increase in young women receiving proven charges for breach of the peace or drunkenness. In fact, in terms of breach of the peace the number of young women has decreased by 17%. However, the introduction of PNDs needs to be taken into account as a possible explanation for the change in statistics,

The net widening effect

Policing the night time economy

The increasing number of bars and nightclubs with alcohol promotions and late openings was perceived as a contributing factor to more young women using violence. The police officers regarded the main change to be the rise in the binge drinking culture with an increasing number of women being drunk and getting involved in verbal and physical fights. This is illustrated in the extract from POM27:

> *The difference on a Friday and Saturday night, you know, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, is massive, absolutely massive. And the one difference is we now have all these licensed premises [...] and people can get out, there's cheap booze and they can drink, drink, drink, drink, drink. And they drink themselves into insensibility, and it's just a matter of time before it kicks off [...] before you would seldom see women involved in sort of criminal acts [...] and now you will find incidents where they're right in about it. My opinion is now that we have so much more available in terms of drink that's out there.*

The perception that young women are using violence as a result of sociological changes would support the argument put forward by Chesney-Lind (1997), whereby women are entering previously male dominated social domains that open up opportunities to commit crime. This would also support the research findings from Forsyth (2009) that an increased participation in binge drinking will lead to alcohol related violence involving women. It is unsurprising to find that an increase in the number of women consuming large quantities of alcohol is perceived as a main contributory factor to the increase in violence given that there is a correlation between alcohol consumption and violence (Felson, et. al. 2007; Stockwell and Chikritzhs, 2009).

All thirty three of the police officers interviewed said the majority of situations where young women use violence is when they have had too much alcohol to drink. The night

time economy, mainly Friday and Saturday nights in city/town centres, is when many young people participate in alcohol consumption in bars and clubs, and this, according to 19 of the police officers, is one situation where they experience young women using violence as expressed by POM3: *I'd say the majority of the stuff is up the town Friday/Saturday night; too much drink and that's basically it*.

The incidents the police officers described were outside of pubs and clubs and at taxi ranks, whereby the young women had an argument with somebody and this had escalated to physical violence. These incidents were mostly between two females that knew each other (POF2; POM5; POM29), or a couple in a relationship (POM4; POM11; POF14), the police officers perceived the violence to stem from a verbal argument that escalated into physical violence as a result of alcohol. The violence was described as *drunken arguments (POF2) and fights* (POM9; POF10; POM12; POF14; POF20; POM23; POM26; POM31), those categorised as breach of the peace and common assault. On the two occasions where weapons (a knife and a screwdriver) were used the young women were known to the police for previous offences of violence. The experiences discussed by the police officers indicated that the violent behaviour witnessed was verbal and physical fights, rather than violent attacks.

The experiences of the police officers interviewed demonstrated that in the night time economy it appears that the biggest factor in relation to young women's violence is alcohol. It must be stressed that this is also the case for young men and all the police officers agreed that in this setting male perpetrated violence still outnumbers that committed by females (POM1; POM3; POM6; POF8; POM9; POM30). Although the

police officers have had encounters with young women using violence, *it is a bit of a rarity to see females fighting* (POM4).

> POF8: *Obviously male violence towards each other is more common and having fights. Usually, I mean, I've dealt with a few female people fighting with each other, but it's a lot less, I would say maybe a couple of times.*

These findings do to some degree support the media claims that women who binge drink are becoming more violent (Duffy, 2005; Robertson, 2005; Batchelor, 2005: 358), to the extent that alcohol appears to be a key factor in the violent behaviour. However, the findings do not support any claims that the city centres are filled with out of control women (as suggested by media reports), rather there are isolated incidents that occur on an infrequent basis and violence by men is still perceived as the main problem.

The growth in the night time economy could be a contributing factor to the increasing number of women being detected for violent behaviour (although still not comparable to the number of men) due to the various means of security employed. Hobbs et al. (2005) argue that urban regeneration has resulted in the development of night time leisure activities across towns and cities in the UK. Since the 1980s there has been a steady growth in the number of bars, pubs and clubs aimed at attracting young people who are seeking a fun night out consisting of consuming, often, large quantities of alcohol (Hall and Winlow, 2005). There is a growing body of research that has demonstrated the links between alcohol consumption, the night time economy and violence (see Hobbs et al., 2000; Finney, 2004; Hall and Winlow, 2005; Hobbs et al., 2005; Winlow and Hall, 2006; Anderson et al., 2007; Forsyth, 2009), which indicate that the commercialisation of binge drinking and risks it poses to personal safety has

resulted in the night time economy being highly regulated through both public and private security measures. In order to make the night time leisure industry attractive to people it has to be perceived as a safe environment and has led to rising numbers of door stewards, CCTV and police presence (Hobbs, et al., 2005).

The results in this chapter so far have already demonstrated that CCTV allows police officers to detect more crime and increasing police presence during the night time economy will enhance these detection rates. It is not only the role of the police that could be contributing to the identification of crime in the night time economy; private security in the form of door security came across in the interviews as another method of detection.

> POM3: *if something happens within a club, the door staff will either deal with it or, if it's getting out of hand, they are connected by Pub Safe, basically a radio that connects them to us, and some Officers walk about with that and then they'll shout up or our Controller will shout up and say 'look, that's, say, nightclub A looking for assistance, there's an ongoing fight' and then we'll all go there.*

The police officers have radio contact with local bars, pubs and clubs in case of any requirement of police presence, which enhances their ability to detect and record crimes. Door stewards play an additional role whereby they too are employed as a mechanism of control. The increasing participation of young women in the night time economy has resulted in a requirement for more female door stewards to control drunk and disorderly females (Hobbs et al., 2007; O'Brien et al., 2008) suggesting that this is a growing problem that needs to be addressed. It can therefore be argued that on one level the increased participation in the night time economy encourages young women to consume large quantities of alcohol (see Lyons, 2006) that can result in violent behaviour. However, on the other hand, the small numbers of violent offences

committed by women during this time would suggest that something else is going on. Given the increased awareness of women's behaviour in the night time economy through policing surveillance and door stewards, it is plausible to argue that greater controls over women's behaviour has resulted in greater criminalisation.

This explanation is more probable given that the police officers interviewed have also witnessed a rise in the number of young men using violence when under the influence of alcohol. As the following quote from POM29 demonstrates, it is still more common for young men to use violence in these situations than women:

> *I mean lads violence up the town is always a far bigger problem, you know, there's just the… frequent, you know, there won't be a single night where I'm out on the town doing the City Centre detail which is sort of eleven till four in the morning, where there isn't at least one instance where you've either been to directly or helped out at, where it's two guy's fighting. But it's not every night you'll be involved in two lassies fighting.*

Violent incidences involving young women still appear to be in the minority in comparison to men, and of a less serious nature. This would reject Chesney-Lind's (1997) contention that the liberation of women in a previously male dominated location would result in more women committing crime because it would be expected that the police officers would be witnessing a greater increase than they stated. Furthermore, the focus on reducing alcohol related violence results in higher police presence (Hobbs et al., 2005) particularly at weekends. Although social changes may contribute to females acting more violently, institutional controls have to be acknowledged as a fundamental factor when interpreting official crime statistics.

Community policing

The night time economy was not the only alcohol related scenario where some police officers perceived an increase in young women's violence. Four police officers (POM9, POM19, POM21 and POM24) believed the increase in violence to be among younger females, around fourteen to sixteen year olds, rather than those participating in the night time economy. Both POM19 and PM24 work in a more residential area and in their experience it is the younger teenage girls that are being brought to the attention of the police.

> POM19: *In terms of that, in terms of the sort of young kids, like fourteen/fifteen, yeah, I'd certainly say that the young girls... there's certainly more and more coming to our attention that are involved in violence. I wouldn't say as they get older I've experienced anything that, you know, makes me think it's getting a lot worse.*

Their experience will be influenced by the geographical location in which they work given that they do not police the bars and clubs of the night time economy. Thus, it would be difficult for them to comment on any increase in city centres. POM21 and POM24 have witnessed an increase in *groups of girls attacking people* (POM24); they argue there has been a change in the *group mentality* of girls. Five of the police officers from police force B stated that the young women who they have encountered are known to the police for their violence rather then it being isolated incidents as described in the night time economy. POM17, POM18, POF20 and POM24 are all based in a residential location and all discussed violence committed by the same group of teenage girls. This particular group has *ringleaders* (POM18) and are continually in trouble with the police for shoplifting and violence whilst under the influence of alcohol.

POF20: *There's a well known bunch of girls around here that are quite violent and go around and… they do a lot of shoplifting from places and if anyone challenges them, they'll be violent and they'll make threats of violence towards them; and they'll do sort of assaults and robberies, stealing people's mobile phones and stuff like that.*

Likewise POM26 and POM29 both encountered the same two young girls who are known to the police in the city centre for their alcohol fuelled violence. It must be stressed that the police officers drew on particular examples involving young women known to the police and violence by these young women is infrequent. Again alcohol was deemed as the main contributing factor for violent behaviour and the violence witnessed was verbal and physical 'fights' between acquaintances, similar to the experiences of the night time economy. The only difference that was expressed by police officers was that among residential areas they were more likely to know the young women. Statistical data has shown increases in the number of women involved in minor forms of violence, i.e. common assault, (McIvor and Burman, 2011; Scottish Government, 2011a) and there is evidence that in Scotland there is an increasing number of underage girls consuming alcohol (Bradshaw, 2003). Nevertheless, this data should be interpreted with caution; since 1999 there has been increasing political attention directed at youth crime in general (Burman and Batchelor, 2009), and the apparent rise in younger females using violence needs to be contextualised within the broader framework of youth crime.

Crimes committed by young people generated large quantities of political, media and academic attention during the 1990s (Muncie, 1999; Burman and Batchelor, 2009). Anxieties concerned with anti-social behaviour, gangs and rebelling youths have all impacted on the increasing focus towards young people (Croall, 1998; Thompson,

1998; Muncie, 2002). The murder of two year old Jamie Bulger by two ten year old boys in 1993 caused outrage across Britain and the media fuelled public anxieties surrounding young offenders and their involvement in violent crime (Worrall, 2004: 45). Anti-Social Behaviour Orders were introduced in the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act and although these are not specifically aimed at young people, much of the behaviour listed is likely to impact on the younger generation, i.e. drunk and disorderly, loitering, congregating in large groups and underage drinking and smoking (Home Office, 2006). The increasing focus on young people led to the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS) introducing their 2004 Youth Strategy which aimed "to ensure that the specific safety and security needs of young people are considered… and tackle persistent offending" (ACPOS, 2004: 3). The strategy aimed to utilise antisocial behaviour orders to reduce rates of youth crime, which has been deemed as a contemporary social problem (Croall, 1998; Crawford, 2009).

Again, it can be argued that rather than there being a sudden rise in younger females acting out violently, the increase in policing young people has resulted in more detection and thus more recording of these offences. The police have more dispersal powers when it comes to young people, which has led to young people being targeted through increased policing of young people's spaces (Crawford, 2009). This highlights how young people's behaviour is being controlled by increasing police presence and can go some way to show that young women are being caught up in the net widening effect of regulation.

Policing closed settings

Chesney-Lind and Irwin (2008) suggest that girls and young women are increasingly coming into contact with the criminal justice system as a result of a rise in policing of closed settings, including the home and schools. Zhan et al. (2008) supported this by arguing that zero-tolerance approaches to bullying within schools lead to the police becoming involved in school disputes. Furthermore "policies of mandatory arrest for domestic violence…provide parents with another method for attempting to control their unruly daughters" (Zhan, et al. 2008: 7).

Domestic violence is predominantly associated with men as the perpetrators, however, nine of the police officers interviewed gave examples where young women have been violent in the home towards family members. Once again drugs and alcohol were emphasized as playing a key role in the violence. There were seven examples given of young women being physically violent towards their partner (POF10; POM15; POM19; POM23; POF25; POM28; POM31). Only one of these occasions involved a lesbian partnership, the remaining were all violence against male partners. In the case of the lesbian partnership both young women had been drinking in the house, got into an argument and started fighting (POM10). Describing a similar incident POF10 explains how alcohol played a crucial role in the violence she witnessed between a couple:

> *She'd been out drinking, got in a fight with her partner, went home. Her partner had come home, she'd got involved in an argument with him and there was some sort of assault … she'd been pushed backwards and she'd struck her head against the bed … she went next door, grabbed a metal pole, came back and started hitting the guy with the metal pole, to the extent which she broke his collarbone. She also totally clawed his face, he had loads of bits of skin hanging off his face and his arms. She had bit him*

> *kind of all over his body... I don't think she was aware of what she was doing and then the next day when she was sober she was like a totally different woman.*

According to POM23, in his experience, this is predominantly the types of calls that he responds to: couples fighting after having too much to drink and both being physically violent to each other. All of the other examples, except one, had a similar pattern whereby the women had either been drinking or taking drugs, had an argument with their partner and *lashed out* at them. The only example given where this was not the case was a rare occurrence of a woman who had been physically abusing her partner on a regular basis without any alcohol or drug intake (POM28)*.* This is something that was classified as uncommon by the police officer particularly because there had been no violence on her male partner's part. This example from POM28 appears to be an exception to the main motivator for female perpetrated domestic violence, which is retaliation to male perpetrated violence. POM31 described one case where a young woman was charged with attempted murder after stabbing her partner:

> *She's been a victim of abuse from her partner. They're no longer together now, and I think it's a case of that she'd got to such a stage where she'd had enough. And that was the only way that she could resolve it, that she went to such lengths to actually stab her partner, which is a bit of a shame.*

The domestic violence was perceived as being provoked (POM19) after lengthy suffering at the hands of their partner and the majority of the time it is retaliation (POF25). The police officers suggest that the women are *standing up for themselves (*POF14) after prolonged periods of abuse, not just to protect themselves but also to protect their children (POM31). This certainly supports previous research by Dobash

and Dobash (2004), Sommers and Baskin (2004) and Batchelor (2005) that has shown female violence to be in response to victimisation from partners or family members.

All police forces in Scotland operate a pro-charge approach (also commonly referred to as pro-arrest) for domestic abuse, whereby police officers have the ability to arrest anyone who is suspected of committing domestic abuse (HMICS, 1997; Crown Office, 2008). The interviews conducted in this study demonstrated that the pro-charge approach to domestic abuse has resulted in the police being able carry out on the spot arrests if they suspect or witness any level of domestic abuse (POM1; POM6; POM9; POF10; POF14; POM18; POM30; POM31; POF32) as the following two extracts show:

> POF14*: We've got powers that if we hear a disturbance then we have power of entry to go in, you know, and help, you know, deal with that situation.*
>
> POM18: *If it's a domestic… whether it's male or female they will go to the Court the next lawful day.*

A way to interpret the policing of domestic abuse is to analyse the official statistics. Table 9 shows the number of recorded incidents of domestic abuse by police in Scotland from 2001 – 2010. It is evident that over the nine year period there has been a large increase (176.8%) in the number of recorded incidents of domestic abuse perpetrated by women. In addition, in 2001/02 female perpetrators made up 8.9% of all recorded incidents rising to 16.8% in 2009/10.

Table 9 – Number of incidents of domestic abuse recorded by the police in Scotland by sex of perpetrator 2000-2010[41].

	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	Total Increase
Male	32072	32282	36057	37890	39096	41953	42362	45509	42593	32.8%
Female	3114	3475	3946	4895	5313	5913	6764	8001	8620	176.8%
Total	35186	357575	40003	42785	44409	47866	49126	53510	51213	45.5%

Source: Scottish Government. Domestic Abuse Recorded by the Police in Scotland, 2009-10

It is difficult to determine to what extent these statistics reflect a change in policing or a change in women's behaviour, nevertheless, some the increasing focus on domestic abuse in Scotland could be a contributing factor. HMICS' *Hitting Home* report (1997) encouraged police officers to use the power of pro-charge to intervene at the earliest stage of domestic abuse and since 2000 there has been several strategies and legislations introduced in Scotland that place domestic abuse high on the agenda. The Preventing Domestic Abuse - A National Strategy (2000), the Protection from Abuse (Scotland) Act 2001, the Family Law (Scotland) Act 2006 and the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2011 have all (in relation to policing) aimed to increase police officers' awareness of domestic abuse, enhance training on domestic abuse and extend police powers when responding to domestic abuse.

The police officers stated that if they enter a residence and a woman is being violent she is automatically removed[42] from the premises and the crime is recorded. It is not until after the investigation that the police can determine whether she was retaliating to victimisation. In the US mandatory arrests were introduced for domestic abuse offences. Chesney-Lind (2002) argues that this a problem with mandatory arrests for

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[41] Table 4a from Scottish Government (2010)
[42] This was what the police officers stated during the interviews but it must be noted that this may not always be the case.

domestic abuse because women who are using self defence may be mistaken for being the perpetrator, which is misleading in recorded crime statistics. Similarly in the UK Hester (2009) compared arrest data for male and female perpetrators of domestic abuse and found that:

> Women were arrested to a disproportionate degree given the fewer incidents where they were perpetrators. Women were three times more likely to be arrested. (Hester, 2009: 9)

The police officers interviewed in the current study recognised that the majority of the time women were retaliating to, often years of, victimisation at the hands of a partner but the crime still had to be recorded. This corroborates Hester's (2009) findings whereby women often used violence, and in particular weapons, as a form of protection and self defence. Nevertheless, under the pro-charge approach women are still at risk of arrest and will appear in recorded crime statistics.

Three police officers described cases in which teenage girls have been violent to their family. In two of these cases the young women had ran away from home, been returned by the police and became aggressive towards their family because they did not want to be there (POF7; POM9). POF2 had regular calls out to a particular young woman who frequently attacks her mother and sister. POF8 has only ever experienced verbal abuse being directed at family members, but, in agreement with POF2, these girls have underlying problems that result not just in violence towards their family but also towards themselves. Similarly POM23 has found that in the residential area where he works often if young girls have been out drinking they argue with their parents when they return home but this is mainly just verbal arguments. These police officers

witness girls using violence (physical and verbal) within the home and it is therefore worthwhile turning to available data.

The statistics for domestic abuse perpetrated by young people (under the age of 25) are shown in Table 10. There have been large increases for the number of incidents recorded for men and women of all the age groups, but there is a disproportionate increase for the number of young women recorded by the police; young women made up 12% of all young people recorded in 2001 increasing to 21% in 2009/10.

Table 10 - Number of incidents of domestic abuse recorded by the police in Scotland by age and gender of perpetrator 2001-2010.

	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	Total Increase
Male										
<16	8	12	10	14	20	20	30	17	32	300%
16-18	465	427	560	656	733	898	381	944	1045	124.7%
19-21	1667	1577	1841	2122	2442	2844	3060	3324	3129	87.7%
22-25	3121	3168	3731	4085	4659	5206	5378	6080	5859	87.7%
Total	5261	5184	6142	6877	7854	8968	8849	10365	10065	91.3%
Female										
<16	3	1	4	5	5	5	3	10	7	133.3%
16-18	97	147	113	181	214	281	323	369	485	400%
19-21	245	368	267	347	424	543	658	770	945	285.7%
22-25	361	373	347	608	659	752	856	1113	1186	228.5%
Total	706	889	731	1141	1302	1581	1840	2262	2623	271.5%

Source: Scottish Government. Domestic abuse recorded in Scotland 2009 - 2010

These statistics demonstrate that the police are recording more crimes of domestic abuse, and that it is not necessarily the behaviour of young people that is changing. This will be a combination of the zero tolerance approach to domestic abuse highlighted by Zhan et al. (2008), whereby parents are more inclined to contact the police and, also a redefining of offences as expressed by Chesney-Lind (2002: 84):

> Here it appears clear that the relabeling of behaviours that were once categorized as status offences (non criminal offences like "runaway" and

"person in need of supervision") into violent offences cannot be ruled out as an explanation for arrest rate shifts.

Although the quote refers to North America, it appears that, from the interviews with police officers, this may also be applicable in Scotland (however the three examples given would not be enough to conclude this and further research would need to be undertaken). This further demonstrates how institutional controls over the definition of abuse and increasing policing of the offence could contribute to statistics showing an increase in women committing domestic assaults. When examining empirical research that has been carried out with young women known for violence it is clear that their violence is associated with family disputes. Sommers and Baskin (1994), Batchelor (2005) and Wesley (2006) all found that violence was associated with victimisation, from both family members and partners, within the home. By policing domestic settings more vigilantly it is unsurprising to find higher rates of female violence given the contexts in which women use violence. Feld (2009) highlights that young women (particularly teenagers) fight more with family members in comparison to young men and by policing the domestic home young women are more at risk of being identified and charged for violent offences.

There was no suggestion made that female perpetrated violence is increasing from the perspective of the police officers, but rather the awareness of domestic abuse in general has led to better policing of the crime. This supports the argument by Steffensmeier et al. (2006), who state that a police crackdown on domestic abuse has brought more cases to light. Nevertheless, the findings back up the position of Dobash and Dobash (2004) that domestic violence is predominantly still a male phenomenon.

It was highlighted by Pollack and Davis (2005), Steffensmeier et al. (2006) and Zhan et al. (2008) that an important consideration to make when analysing crime trends is the changes in definitions of and approaches towards violent crime. A further closed setting where this argument appears to be appropriate is in schools.

> It is possible that school officials' adoption of zero-tolerance policies toward youth violence may increase the number of youth referred to police for schoolyard tussles that schools previously handled internally (Zhan et al., 2008: 7)

The policing of schools and "school yard tussles" (Feld, 2009: 256) was discussed by police officers during their interviews. Four police officers (POF10, POM11, POM23, and POM21) pointed out that they are being called to more school incidents of violence and that they do not often believe that these incidents require police investigation, as demonstrated in the extracts below:

> POM11: *It's something that I find that if it's happening in the school, the school should be dealing with it. It shouldn't be a police matter.*
>
> POM21: *There have been more than there used to be complaints by school teachers, mothers etc that 'my bairn was beaten up at school today and I want you to do something about it' […] in a lot of circumstances, I don't think the school deals at all well.*

The heightened involvement of police officers in schools has not been isolated to the UK, with similar trends being found in the USA (see Steffensmeier et al., 2005). Zero tolerance approaches towards violence in schools has witnessed more police involvement in such incidents and this further demonstrates how a net widening of policing particularly in closed settings is drawing attention towards more young people. These are all examples of institutional control whereby the police are now

expected to respond to offences once dealt with either privately (domestic abuse) or by parents and teachers.

Summary

Despite the perception from twenty police officers that violence perpetrated by young women is on the increase it is still recognised among the police officers that male violence is far more prevalent. *For every ten calls of a fight ongoing that we go to, you'll maybe find three of them women, for argument's sake, three or four* (POM9). The violence perceived by police officers to be on the increase was mainly verbal abuse and common assault as opposed to more serious violent offences, which would support the evidence that suggests an increase in young women's involvement in miscellaneous violent offences (McIvor and Burman, 2011; Scottish Government, 2011a).

This chapter has demonstrated that by viewing the police as a mechanism of institutional control, it is reasonable to suggest that advances in policing and a net widening of police policies has impacted on the number of incidents of violence being detected and recorded. This would indicate Pollack and Davis' (2005) assertion that women's violence has been concealed is somewhat accurate. It appears that improved methods of detection, a relabeling of violent behaviour and a zero tolerance approach to youth crime and domestic abuse has resulted in young women being detected and disciplined by the police. Thus institutional control can go some way to explaining the fluctuation in crime statistics with regards to young women who use violence.

This finding raises the question as to why the media continues to misrepresent female violence as a growing and worrying problem. According to POM15 *the media goes*

overboard in their coverage of young women using violence and POM4, POM6 and POF8 agree that media reporting neglects to highlight that male violence still outweighs women's violence:

> *You do read about it in the paper and you see it on the news, apparently it is becoming more and more of a growing trend and stuff like that, but I think, it's more newsworthy. So it's the stuff that makes the papers, the stuff that makes the telly and figures about female violence and females carrying weapons and that sort of stuff [...] but it's almost become acceptable that that is how males are going to behave [...]. Whereas it just seems to be more shocking that females would do it, therefore it gets reported more.* (POM4)

Due to the lack of evidence from the police officers that female violence is actually rising, and more likely to be explained by changes in policy and practice, it would be plausible to suggest that the media coverage is exercising a form of discursive oppression over how women behave by damning young women who act against appropriate gender norms (Smart, 1976). The following chapter examines whether these discursive controls are also apparent within the police discourse.

Chapter 7 - Discursive Stereotypes

This research investigates police officers' perception of young women depicted as violent, as these beliefs are imperative to understand the way police officers respond to young women. Furthermore, Smart and Smart (1978) indicate these perceptions are vital to identify the varying ways women are oppressed within a feminist framework of social control:

> The social control of women assumes many forms, it may be internal or external, implicit or explicit, private or public, ideological or repressive. (Smart and Smart, 1978: 2)

The perceptions expressed in media and legal discourses presented in chapter two demonstrated how deviant women are demonised on the basis of socially constructed gender norms. This was represented as a form of informal regulation in an attempt to control the behaviour of young women who resisted feminine conformity (i.e. sexual promiscuity, binge drinking and crime). These regulations can be understood as a mechanism of discursive control; an implicit condemnation stemming from socially constructed stereotypes.

This chapter presents the portrayal of young women by examining how the police officers described women they perceived to be violent. The first section of this chapter explores how the portrayals of young women depicted as violent differ from the depictions of men[43] by examining how the police officers interviewed characterised violence by young women. This section examines the ways the police officers

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[43] It must be noted that comparisons are not like with like due to the relatively small numbers of young women police officers had encountered for violence.

distinguished between men and women who use violence to highlight how violence is stereotyped according to gender roles.

The second section of this chapter explores the seriousness of violence by young women as depicted by police officers. The way police officers perceive a crime will determine what action is taken, whether it is a warning, a fixed penalty notice or an arrest (Worden, 1989; Reiner, 1992). The seriousness of an offence is a key determining factor in arrest decision making, therefore examining how the police officers view the seriousness of violence by young women will assist with understanding their responses.

The final section of this chapter moves on to explore how the police officers characterise young women using violence. Chapter two illustrated that there are several gendered portrayals of women using violence from legal, media and academic discourses and this section contributes to these depictions by examining police officers' interpretations.

The masculinisation of violence

Segal (1990) and Smith (2005) argue that men are taught that violence can be a method to display their masculinity and they dominate areas of social life where violence is acceptable, and in many ways physical fighting among men is viewed as 'normal' (see Hoffman-Bustamante, 1973; Stanko, 1994). This idea that women are not socialised to be violent, but it is normal for men, was mirrored in the interviews with police officers. POF32 suggested that historically men have been warriors and hunters and gatherers whereby they have learnt the skills of violence and thus the ability to know how to fight is *inbred.* However, women have not been bred to fight, suggesting

that they do not know how to. This view was shared by POM5, POM23 and POF25, who believe women are not *programmed* to fight. These views support the argument that men's violence, and in particular the typology of men's violence, is perceived as the norm. It must be stressed that when the police officers were asked to describe women's violence they referred to women fighting, re-emphasising that the incidents were not those classified as serious assaults.

"Cat fighting"

> *Girls will be using their nails, they'll be clawing each other, they'll be pulling each other's hair...Whereas men in general they'll just be throwing punches at each other and trying to kick each other... the stereotypes you've got in your mind with men and women fighting, that is generally true* (POM1).

Research on policing has established that the institution exercises gender stereotypes in the way male police officer talk about their female colleagues and the segregation of women within the police (see Heidensohn, 1992; Martin, 1996; Brown, 1998; Westmarland, 2001a). This study explored whether these stereotypes extended to young women who offend, and in particular police officers' perceptions of young women who are deemed as violent. The interviews with police officers highlighted that stereotyped notions of violence are evident; ten officers specifically used the term 'cat fight' as a typecast of female violence and a further thirteen officers described the attributes of a cat fight (without explicitly naming it), such as hair pulling and scratching. The term catfight has historically been used since 1919 to describe women who are verbally and physically abusive to other women (Tanenbaum, 2002). Douglas (1994, cited in Tanenbaum, 2002: 29) argues that the popularity of the term in the latter half of the twentieth century is a mechanism to belittle women who act out of

their assigned gender roles. The term cat fight degrades women's violence as something that is trivial and enhances the image of male violence which incorporates dominance and strength. So by using the term itself police officers portray women's violence as less serious in comparison to men's use of violence.

The typology of a catfight was portrayed by the police officers as vicious (a term used by twelve police officers) and erratic. The manner in which women fight was distinguished from men's violence as a more unrestrained and spontaneous method of fighting in which they are more likely to use their nails than their fists:

> INT: *What is the violence like among young women that you're seeing?*
>
> POF32: *Hair pulling, scratching, punching, biting, kicking, you name it they'll resort to anything. Whereas a guy won't pull hair and scratch, a guy will punch, they'll probably kick and they may well use a bottle or something else; but women tend to be sort of the scratching, biting, wrestling on the floor.*

Men's violence was described as a *simple scenario* (POM30), whereby they will have a standoff, or 'square go' and throw punches until *somebody goes down* (POF14; POM28; POF32):

> POF14: *Whereas men will maybe go up and have a square go, I've not really come across girls or females having square goes kind of thing, you know, the old fashioned square go. It can be quite sort of nasty, dirty.*

This portrayal by the police officers suggests that women are subordinate to men in the way they use violence; they are unable to control their actions, there is no set choreography and it is less masculine in nature. This represents a patriarchal attitude[44]

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[44] A patriarchal attitude is one which assumes the dominant position of men in society, viewing women as subordinate (see Walby, 1990).

of violence whereby the men are acknowledged for their ability to demonstrate dominance, whereas women are recognised for being more unpredictable.

It can be argued that the masculine culture of policing evident in male officers' treatment of female officers extends to their perception of women deemed as violent. Rabe-Hemp (2008) demonstrated that female officers who did not display masculine traits of strength and authority were not respected as police officers, and the women who did exhibit these traits were more accepted but perceived as "butch" (Rabe-Hemp, 2008: 253). This correlates with the feminist perspective that women are oppressed on the basis that they are perceived as somehow weaker, and the perceptions of young women who use violence from this study reinforce the stereotype as the 'weaker sex' given their inability to 'fight' like men.

 The police officers in this research described women as *hyper* (POM17), *vindictive* (POM19), *out of control* (POF7), and having *moments of madness* (POM4). No such descriptions were ever used when they discussed men's violence, rather it was just taken as a given that men fight with each other and in a more choreographed, predictable way. The police officers stressed that women were *dirty fighters* as though their 'manner' of fighting is what makes it unacceptable. This mirrors the double deviancy perception of women, they are condemned for using violence; one because it is a crime and, two, because it is a masculine trait. However, these findings suggest that they are perceived at another level, because the style of violence is perceived as worse, not because of the injuries inflicted but because of the apparent sporadic nature of it.

"Screaming Banshees"

When the police officers were asked to describe violence used by young women, the police officers suggested that one key difference between men and women is that women *don't know when to stop,* (POM1; POM3; POF7; POM9; POF10; POF14; POF16; POM19; POF20; POM26). The police officers stated that women continue fighting until somebody splits them up, whereas, with men, once someone has won the fight (i.e. the opponent does not retaliate) *that's usually the end of it* (POM9). POF10 believes that a *red mist* descends and women just become intent on fighting with the opposition and POM26 claimed that women become *irrational* when fighting, reiterating the point that the police officers interviewed perceive women to be less in control when fighting. The police officers depicted violence as a mutual fight between people, whereby men are inclined to defeat an opponent and this would explain why men stop. Again this reiterates the choreography of violence of men compared to women being perceived as more chaotic, furthermore it may be the case that when women do fight their intention is not to 'defeat' their opponent.

When asked to describe violence they had witnessed women using, the police officers perceived of it as more vocal than men, and it was more of an indicator if women were going to use physical violence as illustrated in the following extract:

> POM1: *Generally with females they're more vocal, so they would shout from one end of the town to the other and be shouting everything under the planet… I would say that if a guy was actually going to do something, it would be more in the body language. A male that's standing there shouting at another male, he's less likely to do it because he would've done it already.*

This characteristic of female violence was commented on by ten further police officers, who believed women will shout and scream, whereas men will go straight into the physical violence (POM17). It was perceived that there is more name calling (POM11; POF33) and *bitching* (POM28) between women, what POM29 calls *the Jerry Springer effect*[45]. This depiction of young women was one that POM29 used to describe the difference between men and women and the passage below clearly demonstrates what he means:

> INT: *Do you notice a difference in terms of witnessing violence between females and violence between males?*
>
> POM29*: Yeah, I mean, a few of us… have a little phrase, it's called 'the Jerry Springer effect' with lassies that fight. If you can have the chance to sort of see it sort of building up before they actually start physically fighting, you know, there's a lot of verbals, there's a lot of… threats. And then they'll sort of set themselves with their fists up ready to fight and then as they start fighting, they'll both just grab each other's hair, and that's it. And they'll just be swinging each other around, you know, they'll not actually be any punches or kicks thrown or anything like that. It's just literally grab the hair and start like that, and you have to sort of untangle the two of them.*
>
> INT: *So why the Jerry Springer saying?*
>
> POM29: *It's just whenever you're sort of watching Jerry Springer, back when it was on in the day, you know, you'd get these lassies and they'd be, you know, even the really big, well built lassies, you'd think, you know, if they threw a punch they could do some damage, but still just go for the hair straightaway, that's all they seem to do.*

The police officers paint a picture that women scream and shout and attack each other in a sporadic manner, whereas their depiction of men is that they have more of a boxing style of fighting (POM5), that involves a particular choreography (POF32) *with puffed out chests* (POM3; POF32) and punches being thrown until somebody wins. In addition, the quote illustrates that the police officer has a preconceived idea of how

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[45] POM1 also referred to the Jerry Springer Show when referring to young women using violence.

women will 'fight' on the basis of their appearance; i.e. masculine looking women are presumed to fight in a more masculine way.

The irrational female offender is a concept that is continually drawn on by feminist criminologists when explaining the depiction and treatment of women who commit crime (Allen, 1987; Smart, 2008). However, irrationality has been broadly stereotyped as a female trait that has extended to criminology. Traditionally women have been portrayed as more irrational than men and this stereotype was utilised by early criminological theorists such as Freud (1933) and Pollack (1950) who explained female offending as a product of their biological and psychological makeup. More recent empirical research on female violence has demonstrated that the women are far from irrational and their offending is associated with experiences of victimisation and social deprivation (Batchelor, 2005; Wesley, 2006; Zhan et al., 2008). Despite this, the criminal justice system still bases much of their sentencing decisions on psychological factors (Wilczynsk, 1997; Carlen and Worrall, 2004) suggesting that violent offences are perceived as 'normal' for men and women who commit these crimes are either mad or bad.

The perceptions of police officers found in this research indicate that they still hold these stereotypical views of women, explaining their behaviour as irrational and assuming that alcohol leads to women becoming out of control. White and Kowalski (1994) and Dell (1999) argue that by stereotyping female violence as irrational it helps to maintain men's power over women by preserving the image of men as the rational sex. The findings from the police suggest they are upholding stereotypes, thus maintaining patriarchal attitudes whereby men are regarded as more powerful and

logical and women are irrational. Although the police officers made it clear that female violence is a rarity in comparison to men they were easily able to stereotype the violence, which supports findings from Heidensohn (1985) who found magistrates easily stereotyped female offenders despite the relatively small numbers.

This can be viewed as a discursive control of femininity similar to that shown within the media and criminal justice discourses in chapter two. By accepting the way men use violence as the norm, the police officers continue to depict the violence displayed by women as abnormal and this can have detrimental effects on the way women are treated. Heidensohn (1985) and Worrall (2001) have already highlighted how women can face harsher sentencing and penal policies by discursive controls such as these and thus the opinions of police officers play a role in the maintaining of institutional control over women who offend.

All the female officers (and just over half of the male police officers) presented female violence in this way. The literature demonstrated that a cult of masculinity exists in the police (Martin, 1996), which results in gendered stereotypes being applied to women who offend (and women in the police) by male officers. However, this finding suggests that female officers also hold these traditional stereotypes, thus the masculine cultures of policing does not simply apply to male officers. There have been similar results in studies by Worrall (1990) and Hedderman and Gelsthorpe (1997); both of these studies demonstrated that female magistrates held similar, if not harsher perceptions of women who offend compared to male magistrates. The female police officers in the current study do not appear to hold more disapproving opinions than the male officers, but rather their beliefs can be viewed a part of the wider policing

discourse on gender norms. Bowling and Phillips (2003) and Foster (2003) contend that the policing cultures result in shared norms and values of the institution, even if this is not the individual police officers' own views. This emphasises the importance of institutional cultures, and how cultural beliefs are embedded within the everyday discourses of organisations.

Under the liberation hypothesis, it was argued that women who use violence are attempting to compete with men by adopting masculine characteristics (Adler, 1975). This current research illustrates that police officers do not perceive young women as masculine because their typology of female violence differs and they do not exhibit the masculine typology of violence. Men's violence is understood as a form of power and domination, thus fighting allows men to show their strength (Connell, 1995). However the police officers did not view female violence as a method to display power, rather the violence was perceived more as a form of humiliation, not domination. POF33 believes females try to humiliate their opponents and that is why they choose to scratch, pull hair and rip clothes, and this view was also expressed by POF20 and POM21 who considered female violence to be a form of bullying and embarrassment.

It was agreed by all of the police officers that weapons were predominantly used by men and very rarely did they experience women using weapons. POM5 stated that it is unusual to witness women using weapons and POM22 admitted that they are unlikely to stop and search women for weapons because they would feel uncomfortable with it given the rarity of incidences of women using weapons. It was agreed that men are more likely to go out with weapons in their possession and use items such as glass bottles and knives. On occasions when women do use weapons these were described

as items that come to hand (POM27), six police officers mentioned that shoes get used and five police officers referred to handbags as weapons. It came across in the interviews that the use of weapons was gender specific, and also the type of weapons used as expressed in the following extract:

> POM28: *Women have got their weapons… they'll use shoes, they'll use handbags, yeah, they can certainly cause a lot of damage. God forbid you get hit with the back of a stiletto heel! I don't think women use weapons any more than guys. I think men probably do have more… will probably carry a knife more than a woman, but women will make do with what they've got, whether it be their handbag, their shoes… their hairspray [laugh].*

The gendering of weapons along with the typology presented of female violence appears to be presented in relation to women's sex role. Female offending has historically been theorised on the basis of sexuality, pathology and domesticity (Heidensohn, 1985; Worrall, 1990; Smart, 2008) and heavily critiqued by feminist scholars for this portrayal. The data from this research reveals that women's violence is portrayed by police officers as distinct from men's because women rarely use weapons and, if women do use weapons, it is in relation to their constructed gender role (shoes, high heels, and hairspray). Furthermore, the typology is discussed as a tugging of clothes and hair in an effort to deface the attractiveness of their opponent. This clearly shows that the police officers are relating young women's violence to traditional characteristics of femininity, i.e. attractiveness. This strengthens the argument that police officers' portrayal of young women is influenced by patriarchal attitudes and an embodiment of sex role stereotypes.

Seriousness of young women's violence

All the police officers stated that they take female violence just as seriously as male violence, yet men were viewed as being capable of inflicting more harm and serious injuries than women. *They're physically obviously less able than a man* (POF8) was the perception of twelve police officers, the injuries inflicted by women were not perceived to be as serious as when a man 'punches' somebody. The main injuries described from females fighting included scratches, bruising and hair loss, rather than broken bones or serious cuts. Not all the police officers agreed with this though as the passage from POM31 interview illustrates:

> POM31: *I think people have this perception that it's always been that it's a cat fight, scratching and things like that. Believe me, I've seen injuries on a female inflicted by another female and you think 'Jesus you went ten rounds with Mike Tyson' they're just as capable. But again, it goes down to their physical size I think, as to what injuries you're going to get inflicted.*

Despite the police officers gendering the weapons used by women they did not perceive these weapons to be any less dangerous, shoes especially were seen as dangerous with the ability to create puncture wounds from high heels (POM26). The discussion of weapons also revealed that the weapons utilised by women are not items intended to be used as weapons (i.e. shoes and handbags are not bought as weapons). As POF32 stated *you don't tend to get women going out tooled up, you know, they don't tend to have a Stanley knife in their handbag when they go out on a night.*

Three of the police officers (POF2; POM6; POF7) experienced women using weapons in a domestic situation, for example POF10 described an incident where a metal pole was used by a woman in a domestic dispute. Two further police offers (POM6 and POF7) assumed that women would be more inclined to use a weapon in a domestic

dispute but gave no examples of this occurring. These police officers perceived that the weapons are used to compensate for the men being physically stronger.

> POF7: I heard of females, you know, when it's been domestic incidents, females using instruments more in the house. Like a female assaulting her husband with a kettle and things like that, but I think it's just because of the physical strength, you know, I think females know that… well I certainly know I'm not as strong as a guy I work with because he's six foot two and really big built, so you know that you're not as strong as him, so I think that's kind of why females would tend to use a weapon as well.

This clearly highlights that these two police officers (POM6 and POF7), who have no direct experience of women using weapons in this way, easily stereotyped the type of weapons women would be likely to use.

Although all the police officers agreed that it is rare for women to use weapons, and the majority of those interviewed perceive the violence to be of a less serious nature than men's violence, the police routinely gave quite extreme examples of female violence. For instance POM3 perceived female violence to be mainly hair pulling and scratching but when he was asked to give examples of violent incidences, one involved his arrest of a young woman for attacking a door steward with a screwdriver and another was an incident where he had arrested a young woman for hitting a young man with her stiletto shoe. Similarly POM4 stated that with women it's just drunken...just over nothing... pulling hair and slapping but when asked for an example he spoke of a young woman who was threatening members of the public with a knife. A further example would be POF10, who again portrayed female violence as cat fighting but provided an example of a woman hitting her partner with a metal pole and another woman punching a pregnant woman in the stomach.

These examples are far from being trivial 'cat fights', but more serious forms of violence involving dangerous weapons. It is questionable whether these are an accurate reflection of women's violence given that all the police officers' (except one[46]) did not perceive women, to be inflicting serious injuries . Rather it may be more appropriate to state that police officers have come across incidences of serious violence and it is these occurrences that spring to mind when discussing the topic. This would be a plausible explanation as the official statistics and from the police officers' own accounts show that very few women commit serious acts of violence.

The discussions so far have established that the police officers perceived women to be less inclined to use weapons and viewed their violence as more erratic but less harmful. The following passage is from the interview with POM4 and is a good example of how distinctions are made between men and women on the grounds of how serious the violence is:

> POM4: *I mean, if you have two guys fighting in the street the public I think will take it more seriously. People will tend to back off, they'll give them room, they're not going to want to be in that area in case they get dragged into it, that sort of stuff. Whereas if there's two girls fighting in the street, regardless of the kind of levels of violence involved, you'll have guys crowding round, shouting and egging them on and having a laugh and a joke basically because maybe they think that they're not going to injure each other severely and because of that they have a laugh at it basically. They deem it as fun watching them pulling each other's hair and that sort of stuff. So it maybe gathers more of a crowd than two guys fighting, where people tend to scarper.*
>
> INT: *So what about from your perception as a police officer?*
>
> POM4: *It's certainly not more serious… if I was to be honest, I would probably… not take it less seriously, but I would be less worried that somebody was going to get seriously injured… Whereas if two guys were*

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[46] POM6 perceived women's violence to be just as harmful as men's violence, however, he had no experience of women ever using violence.

> *fighting in the street and maybe one person had gotten the upper hand, I think there'd be more chance of that person getting a serious injury.*

This passage emphasises that there is a perception that women are somehow less of a threat and men's violence is seen as more serious. Not only does the police officer acknowledge that it is perceived differently by the public but also that it is viewed differently by the police. Furthermore, POF7 stated that her male colleague perceives women to be less of a threat and when confronted with younger women (teenagers) being violent his attitude is that *they can't really hurt him*. Despite these views it was unsurprising to find that all the other police officers stated that they take violence perpetrated by women as serious. Although the typology of women's violence is being perceived as less severe, it is the duty of police officers to take the incident as serious, as explained by POM29:

> *I think a lot of people, a lot of passers-by, there's less folk I think would be inclined to phone in about a couple of lassies fighting, because they might not see the whole punches being thrown, less chance of like people getting bloody nose and stuff; so it might not be seen as quite a serious. But as an officer, you know, we deal with it all exactly the same because it can still escalate.*

From this quote it is made clear that it is the job of a police officer to ensure that all matters of violence are dealt with as serious, emphasising that police officers have to take all crimes seriously. Similarly, POM13 wanted to state clearly that *the canteen culture doesn't really exist anymore* and gender is not a factor in police perceptions. Nevertheless, the previous discussions in this section have clearly demonstrated that the police do distinguish between the type of violence men and women display. It is evident that a difficulty arises when questioning the role of the police to take crimes seriously because they are very protective not just of their own position within the

police but also of the institution itself, and very determined to be viewed in a positive way. Adopting an observational method could have clarified these inconsistencies, which demonstrates a limitation to the interview method. Nonetheless, despite these contradictory views, overall the police officers did state that they respond to women using violence in the same way that they would respond to men using violence.

The previous passage from POM4 mentioned that women's violence was of some comical value to members of the public, and this was commented on by other police officers who believe parts *of the population will see a cat fight as something which is just funny, not serious* (POM21), however this is not the attitude of the police. Nevertheless POM30 did mention that jokes are made about women fighting among police officers, which is shown in the extract below:

> POM30: *[T]here's still the crack, the laugh about handbags at dawn, right, when you go along to two males fighting and they're slapping each other or something, it's handbags at dawn[47]. And it's referring to the fairer sex having a fight. The truth of the matter is no, it's not. Handbags at dawn is nothing, when you see two women fight, you really have a fight and they are fighting.*

Although this police officer admitted to joking about the way women use violence, it was apparent during the interviews that other police officers did find women's violence, mainly the cat fight style, amusing to some degree, given that eleven of them laughed about it. Seven of the police officers laughed whilst describing women fighting (POF7; POF10; POM17; POF20; POM21; POM28; POM29), which suggests that they do find it comical to some degree, for example POM1 and POM29 comparing the typology of women's violence to the Jerry Springer Show. Four other police officers laughed

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[47] The term 'handbags at dawn' refers to a women's fight. It is a sex stereotype whereby women are portrayed as more likely to draw their handbag as a weapon than a pistol.

when they were describing attempts by young women to attack the police (POM6; POM11; POM19; POM31). Interestingly these four responses were from male officers, therefore they found it amusing when women tried, and failed, to fight with them, which goes back to what POF7 said with regards to her male colleague not feeling threatened by young women. It can be argued that although the police officers believe that they take female violence seriously, and probably do at the time of the incident, when they talk about it there is some amusement.

The discussions in this section provide evidence to suggest that police officers perceive the female 'cat fights' as women less likely to use significant levels of violence. The police officers described the women as 'nippy' and 'bitchy', not perceiving the violence as 'normal fighting' and arguing that the injuries are less severe. However, the more serious violence, such as the use of dangerous weapons, that police officers have witnessed from women were not described using derogatory terms like 'cat fight', and a possible explanation for this is that these crimes emulate characteristics of male violence and are more serious in the injuries inflicted.

The portrayal of female violence demonstrates how men's violence is perceived as more powerful, more controlled and it is behaviour associated with masculinity. This supports previous research (Worrall, 2001) that this depiction is a means of controlling women by reinforcing the traditional stereotypes of men as more dominant. These discursive stereotypes show how women are not equal to men in terms of violence; it is more unpredictable, malicious and importantly not *ladylike* (POF10). The police officers' opinions mirror what is shown in the media and demonstrate how notions of femininity are expressed through police discourse.

Depictions of women who use violence

It is clear that stereotyped notions of gender and violence were depicted by the police officers and this section moves the discussion forward to examine how they categorise the women themselves.

The liberated female

The liberation hypothesis (Adler, 1978) argues that as women have become more liberated within society they have more opportunity to commit crime. This theory proposed that women are entering areas of society that have been predominantly dominated by men and have to compete with men to gain respect and equality. Nine of the police officers interviewed perceive 'liberation' to be a contributing factor in women's violence; *they're taking on this kind of male culture and want to predominantly be like males and acting like males* (POF2). POM19 suggested that some young women are trying to gain the same status as their male peers, thus, if they have witnessed young men acting violently they too may resort to violent behaviour.

This perspective ties in with the sex roles approach (Connell, 1987; Heimer and De Coster, 1999) as, according to the police officers interviewed, women are learning from the social interactions they have with men and adopting these characteristics to fit in with their peer group and POM24 implies this could be a factor:

> *Females are obviously brought up now that they're equal, they should earn the same money, they should do the same things, drink as much etc, etc, and maybe that's it.*

It is perceived that women are more assertive in society now, and are engaging in previously male dominated leisure activities (such as going to pubs and clubs, loitering

in the streets), where violence is often displayed. *I don't know whether society's empowered women that bit more so they're flexing their muscles shall we say* (POM28) was one comment made suggesting that the liberation of women has led to them using violence to demonstrate their independence.

The liberation hypothesis has been heavily criticised due to methodological problems and a lack of empirical evidence (see Smart 1976; Box and Hale, 1983) and also the deterministic relationship between liberation and crime (see Campbell, 1984; Brinkworth, 1994; Messerschmidt, 1995; Chesney-Lind, 1997). Furthermore, Smart (1979) claims that the liberation movement should show a decrease in female crime because women are achieving more in terms of social opportunities and employment. In addition if women's liberation did result in a rise in violent crime then the statistics would reflect a higher percentage of women committing violence. By supporting the liberation hypothesis the police officers are re-emphasising gender distinctions of what is appropriate male and female behaviour.

Violence was also perceived by three female police officers as a method used by young women to stand up for themselves, (POF10, POF32).

> POF10: *I think the younger girls they kind of like being known as aggressive and being able to take care of themselves and not have to rely on a man to stand up for them. They seem to like doing it for themselves.*

In this context the police officers are referring to teenage girls' use of violence when 'hanging out' with their male peers. However, this was also highlighted in relation to domestic violence whereby they have been a victim at the hands of their partner:

> POF14: *...it's more highlighted that maybe females are maybe fighting back and I'm not going to deal with that...you know, maybe it's them that's*

become violent saying 'I'm not taking this on anymore' kind of thing? What else makes them more violent? Maybe just power, maybe that there's no longer a sort of male versus female kind of thing that male are better than females kind of thing, maybe it's 'no I'm just every bit as good as you'.

The proposal that women are using violence as a form of empowerment has received some empirical support. Batchelor (2005) found that violence by young women was a control mechanism for reducing the risk of victimisation, it was a rational response to feelings of insecurity and danger. Similarly Wesley (2006) noted that violence was exercised by young women as a coping strategy to avoid victimisation. Wesley (2006) describes their violence as a "channelling of anger" (Wesley, 2006:321), whereby the abuse and neglect suffered by these women is suppressed for years and their repression of emotions results in violence towards their abusers, or people who trigger the memory of abuse. The violence used by women Wesley (2006) interviewed was often directed at their abusers after years of victimisation but she also found that women would be violent to current partners (who had not been violent to them) in an attempt to prevent the new partners from physically hurting them:

> The narratives of the women I interviewed illustrate that they have a range of motivations for their use of violence. But always at the heart, it is to refuse further victimization. For all of the women, this "pent-up anger," [...], reaches a tipping point. (Wesley, 2006: 325)

This is very different from assuming that young women have suddenly employed violence as a result of liberation. Furthermore, if it was the case that women were fighting back so to speak then this would reject the liberation hypothesis, rather it highlights that women are still suffering from victimisation, which does not suggest that women are emancipated.

In Jamieson et al.'s (1999) study of police perceptions they found that officers believed women were moving away from traditional gender identities: "Femininity seems to be becoming a sort of old fashioned, unattractive thing and now they want it to be macho, you know, macho, swearing, drinking, fighting" (Jamieson et al., 1999: 40). The police officers in their study believed that the media was encouraging young women to dispose of their femininities to achieve 'girl power', equality with men.

> [P]olice officers suggested that violence among girls was becoming more common and attributed this partly to media influences which encouraged girls to behave like and compete with boys. (Jamieson et al., 1999)

There are certainly similarities between this doctoral study and Jamieson et al.'s (1999) findings. Some police officers in the current study perceive women to be acting more like men and abandoning traditional gender norms. The references to empowerment, adopting masculine characteristics and independence highlight how some of the police officers perceive young women who use violence to be going against the norms of femininity. This suggests, once again, that they view violence as masculine behaviour, and women who behave this way must be trying to act like men. This perception can have grave consequences for women who are charged for violent offences. By denying the women agency and viewing the violence as an attempt to compete with men could result in more severe penalties. Studies have already shown that women who appear unfeminine are deemed as doubly deviant and face harsher sentencing (Carlen, 1983; Allen; 1987; Hedderman and Gelsthorpe, 1997).

The wayward female

The second portrayal of young women who use violence was that they are in need of greater social control, particularly from families. Feminist literature has demonstrated

that girls have been subject to stricter regulation particularly within the family (Heidensohn, 1985; Walby, 1990) and this control has led to women's behaviour being scrutinised within wider social structures (such as work, leisure, politics etc). Eight of the police officers in this study perceived the family to be a significant influence on the behaviour of young women. Parents/guardians were viewed as important role models and young women who grow up in environments consisting of crime, drug and alcohol misuse and violence were perceived as being more at risk of developing violent behaviour.

> POM1: *If someone's had a proper upbringing [...] from caring parents and everything like that, then in my opinion, they'd be less likely to be violent. If a child has been brought up with their parents arguing every night, some member of the family getting drunk or anything like that, then yes they would be growing up as more likely to be violent... if they're coming from a violent background or a background where they've been abused, the chances are that they'll grow up with some sort of violence or obviously personal problems that they'll take out through violence.*

This extract shows that a history of violence in the family is perceived as an indicator for future violence and similar accounts were given by seven other police officers (POF2; POM4; POM5; POF10; POM11; POM31; POF32). Young women (and men) that come from families that have a history with the criminal justice system, a lack of respect for the police and who use violence as a means to get what they want were all perceived as influencing violence among young people. Research has shown that women who come into contact with the criminal system have histories of abuse, neglect, and substance misuse, and it is women from these social circumstances that are more inclined to be policed and prosecuted for their crimes (see Sommers and Baskin, 1984; Batchelor, 2005; Wesley, 2006; Zhan et al., 2008).

The passage below from POF32 highlights how family upbringing is perceived as a significant factor and also draws attention to the notion of class based violence.

> *I don't think necessarily you will get, let's say, a female from a well to do family going out having a drink, she gets annoyed, 'so I know what, I'll go and punch you out'. You wouldn't necessarily get that with her. Whereas you may get a girl who comes from a family where there's a lot of deprivation, the only sort of upbringing that she's had is she's pretty much been dragged up. The family are in and out of some sort of involvement in crime. Violence is just a matter of course, it's what they expect. 'When I was naughty I got smacked, now I'm older if I do anything my mum she'll slap me across the face'. It's that kind of mentality, so there's probably a class structure if you like within the violence side of it.*

The issue of class came across as a key characteristic in the perception of police officers; it was families from more deprived areas consisting of high unemployment and lack of resources (in terms of activities for young people) that were viewed as problematic. The police officers spoke about women (and men) coming from *rough areas* (POM3) where there is a mentality that violence is acceptable (POF32) and girls grow up learning that violence can be used to resolve problems, demonstrate power, and get what they want because it is the only life they know. Sealock and Simpson (1998) state that 'lower classes' are subjected to greater regulation, particularly from the police, and as a result there is a higher police presence in certain areas. It could therefore be argued that the police officers' perceptions demonstrate their policing practices, i.e. they stereotype young women who use violence as coming from areas of social deprivation because these are geographical locations that are policed more regularly.

The police officers perceived violence to be a problem associated with drugs, alcohol and unemployment, so when asked to characterise the young women they claimed

that they come from backgrounds where these problems were prevalent (POM23).

POM11 stated unemployed people *sit round either taking drugs or drinking, more*

inclined to fall out over 'who's taken my drugs?' and POF10 perceives people from

socially deprived areas to be *more aggressive than the ones who do work.* It is clear

that the police officers view violence to be a social problem and young women who

are brought up in these environments learn to become more aggressive as illustrated

below:

> POM30: *I mean, there will be areas where it's a case of you'll not see*
> *youngsters hanging about the street because maybe they've got places to*
> *go, they've got other activities after school. Whereas in places like this* (an
> area classified as socially deprived)*, they don't have anything for them.*
> *They hang about the streets and it's tolerated down here, yeah. Because*
> *it's always been like that, they think it's a case of 'well if he gets away with*
> *that, I'm going to get away with that' and it seems a way of life down here*
> *unfortunately... Essentially you are… educated into crime; whether it's*
> *breaking into houses, whether it's breaking into cars, theft, things like that.*
> *It's a way of life for them down here.*

It was stated that the repeat offenders, the ones the police officers come across

regularly (in both police force areas) for aggressive and violent behaviour, are those

that live in deprived villages and housing estates (POF2; POM4; POM5, POM17,

POF20), where violence is more of an everyday occurrence. Whereas the episodes in

city/town centres at the weekends were perceived as more one off incidences caused

by too much alcohol.

> POM4: *I think for the repeat offenders, I think it comes from their*
> *background, their upbringing in terms of I think their parents have maybe*
> *been in trouble earlier on in their lives, or their other siblings, their brothers*
> *mainly have maybe been in trouble. Obviously there's the odd ones from*
> *what you would maybe class as a good background, but that'll just be*
> *they'll maybe get in trouble once or twice, just through alcohol, just from*
> *being an idiot basically.*

The women were considered as having a lack of respect for the police and a mentality that they can deal with problems themselves using aggression (POM1; POM11; POM28; POF32) which was viewed as coming from their families and peers. A further issue discussed by POM5 was that he perceived class to be a contributing factor to the way women use violence:

> *I think you definitely see your every day violence there* [in socially deprived residential areas], *it's not uncommon to see women fighting like men, full blown fist fights and, you know, busted noses, blood coming from everywhere and things like that, because they've been knocking ten lumps out each other. And then you come to the weekend in the town where it's not uncommon to see maybe younger women who have really made an effort to get dolled up for their weekend out, but this is the only time they get out and they've had a fall out with somebody and it's scratch and pulling hair out stuff. That's the only way to define it, it's more prevalent amongst the… I wouldn't even say working classes, the non-working class to be honest with you.*

This quote suggests that there is more violence among women in less affluent areas, where unemployment is a problem and in these situations the violence is more severe. This raises an important point, because if police officers are coming across more violence from women in these areas then it begs the question why they typify female violence as 'cat fights'. Their perceptions of the way women fight and the type of women who use violence appears to be contradictory and an explanation for this can be the production of gender stereotypes through media and policing discourses. The image of young women's violence is very stereotypical, similar to that displayed in the media; it represents women as irrational, out of control and dirty fighters. However in reality, going by the police officers' experiences, women who repeatedly use violence are less likely to conform to these stereotypes. Therefore it can be suggested that

police and media discourses continue to portray women as the subordinate sex and in doing so uphold the dominant position of men.

The police officers' perceptions can also be viewed as classist because they view violence as a social class problem, and although official statistics would show this to be the case, they are more of a reflection of criminal justice practices than actual rates of crime (see Maguire, 2002). The police officers' opinions are influenced by their experiences and therefore the heightened policing in areas of social deprivation will impact on their perception of offenders. These depictions, according to Simpson (1991), would be better understood as power relations between the police and the 'lower classes', because as she notes *power and hierarchy are determined by class* (Simpson, 1991: 128). There is a complex relationship between class and policing; on the one hand the police are often accused of targeting areas of high social deprivation (see Scraton, 1985; Sealock and Simpson, 1998), however, it is also the case that individuals from these areas are more likely to call the police when they have a problem (see Waddington, 1999). Although historically working class populations have been viewed as problematic and in need of greater social control (Scraton, 1985; Croall, 1998), it would be naive to assume a direct causal relation. For instance POM25 pointed out *things like domestic violence it'll not get reported as often by affluent areas.* Nevertheless, it can be argued that the perceptions discussed here are an indication that people from socially deprived areas are more likely to come into contact with the police, thus the police officers' perceptions are a realistic reflection of their experiences.

The troubled female

Chapter two highlighted that female offenders are often categorised as 'mad' or 'bad' (see Horn and Wincup, 1995; Wilczynski, 1997). It is argued that it is not 'normal' for women to use violence as this is associated with masculinity rather than acknowledging women's agency and rationale for using violence (Batchelor, 2005; Wesley, 2006). This section so far has demonstrated how young women have been depicted as bad either because they are trying to emulate the behaviour of men or because that is the way they have been brought up.

The final depiction of women using violence from police officers related to women suffering from mental health issues, which categorises them as 'mad'. Research demonstrates that much of female offending is explained by the psychology of women (Allen, 1987; Wilczynsk, 1997; Hudson, 2002), much more so than in male offending. Studies have shown that a large proportion of incarcerated women suffer from mental health issues, for example statistics for HMP & YOI Cornton Vale show that 80% of the women in this prison have some form of mental health problem (Gunn, 2008). This was a key concern addressed by the Corston Report (2007), which identified the disproportionate number of women in prison suffering from mental health illnesses.

Seven of the police officers in the study believed that often violence by young women stems from mental health problems and they provided examples of such cases. The incidents described by police officers highlighted that these women were not what they classified as 'bad' but rather a danger to themselves and their violence was usually directed at police officers because they did not want to be arrested. These included young women attempting suicide (POF2; POF13; POM19), runaways that

were being taken home (POM3; POF7; POF8) and women who have appeared upset and/or disorientated (POF20; POM21, POM24) as demonstrated in the following passage:

> POM24: *There was a woman who… she had mental health problems and she'd not been taking any medication, and she was wandering the streets naked… she did not want to come with us basically, and started fighting with us and bit me on the arm and bit my colleague as well.*

These women were differentiated from the previous two characterisations, POM19 perceived their violence as a *slightly different thing.* Even in situations where the women were being violent towards other people the police officers recognised that the women were in need of assistance:

> POM30: *A lot of violence, especially with young women are down to mental health issues. I was at a call yesterday at the Job Centre, and just a young girl and she's not a bad person, but she has mental health issues and she kicked off with two of the security guards there.*

The police officers separated women into those that are law breakers (the liberated and the wayward) and those that suffer mental health issues, who are deemed less accountable (see Wilczynski, 1997). Conversely, POM21 disagreed with his colleagues suggesting that violence is no longer solely related to the women's mental health as demonstrated in the quote below:

> *I would've said years ago the majority of aggressive violent females would be somebody who has a mental health issue, depression or some kind of paranoia... These days there's a lot more… it's almost gang related violence with females.*

Yet, when asked to discuss his experiences of women using violence he, POM21, drew on two examples whereby one woman was described as having depression and

another was seen as *mentally unstable.* He spoke in great depth about one serious incident involving a group of teenagers violently attacking a girl and setting her on fire, however what came across in the interview was that this was an isolated event, whereas women suffering from mental health issues were perceived as repeat offenders, known to the police for their violent offences.

The portrayal of these women is very different from the depiction of the liberated and wayward women; the troubled woman is not deemed responsible for her actions, she has suffered physical and or mental abuse. Studies have shown a relation between violence and histories of abuse for instance Wesley (2006) interviewed what she classified as victimised women, homeless women and exotic dancers in order to understand their experiences of violence. She found that nearly half (nine out of twenty) of the exotic dancers and over half (twelve out of twenty) of the homeless women had been either sexually and/or physically abused from a young age. The exotic dancers that used violence justified it as a means of self defence, not just in the sense of being attacked but a defence of the degradation of women. Their past experiences of witnessing and experiencing violence led them to be very defensive in an attempt to avoid being victimised again. Similarly the homeless women, used violence as a coping strategy to avoid victimisation.

Comparable results were found in Batchelor's (2005) study of young women imprisoned for violent crimes. She found young women were twice as likely to self harm in comparison to the overall female prison population. Histories of abuse and neglect and involvement with social services were also evident in the lives of these young women. The difference between the police officers' portrayal and the results

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from Batchelor's study is that the women Batchelor interviewed have reasonable and logical justifications for their violence. The police officers interviewed in the current study portrayed young women as *lashing out* and difficult to control, again the image of the irrational woman. It is understandable that the police officers' perceptions will differ from women's own experiences as the police officers can only provide an opinion on their own perceptions.

The findings from the study in relation to troubled women link back to the notion that women who commit violence are somehow mentally unstable. This image once again demonstrates a form of discursive control by neglecting women's agency and assuming that because violence is a masculine characteristic, women who commit it must be psychologically unbalanced. This relates back to earlier depictions of female criminals by Freud (1933), Deutsch (1944), and Pollack (1950), which continues to oppress women by judging them on their psychology rather than their social actions.

It is apparent that there are three main perceptions of women deemed as violent that came across from police officers: liberated, wayward and troubled. Although each of these depictions differ greatly they all have a common thread, which is that each assumes women who use violence to be acting out with gender norms. It is evident that violence is deemed the norm in men in terms of frequency and typology and this can have negative consequences for women. It appears that women are still, even in today's society, doubly deviant for violence whereas men are just deviant.

Summary

This chapter has provided an analysis of police discourse in relation to how women who use violence are depicted. It is clear that in the police officers' opinion men and

women's violence is distinctively different, with women being perceived as more irrational and erratic. The way men use violence continues to be portrayed as the norm and not only is violence seen as uncharacteristic for women, but also women who use violence are perceived to do so in a more unpredictable manner. The violence described by the police officers related to traditional notions of femininity, for instance weapons being related to female identity (high heel shoes and handbags) and their methods of violence being represented as subordinate to men. These depictions can be viewed as an informal mechanism of control whereby men's violence is normalised and women's violence is sexualised. Although it was clearly stated by police officers that they take any violence seriously it is evident that women's violence, particularly in relation to the 'cat fight', is not perceived as harmful with evidence of stereotypes being applied and laughter during the interviews.

Women were portrayed under three characteristics: liberated, wayward and troubled. There is little evidence from the police officers accounts that young women deemed as violent are in any way liberated particularly due to the experiences of police officers that highlighted women suffering from social deprivation and mental health illnesses. The women were categorised according to traditions with the criminal justice system; women who offend are deemed as mad or bad, thus viewed as abnormal for deviating from the expected gender norms. Violence continues to be located within the realm of masculinity and supporting the argument that women who use violence are doubly deviant. To end, the final findings chapter takes into account these varying depictions to assess what impact these may have on arrest decision making.

Chapter 8 - Discretionary Control

Chapter seven demonstrated how the police officers regarded young women who use violence as acting against appropriate gender norms. Despite the violence displayed by young women being of a less serious nature, (i.e. less likely to inflict severe injuries) the police officers in this study appeared to disapprove more because violence is perceived as a masculine activity. Research on sentencing has demonstrated that gender stereotypes have an important bearing on the punitive sanctions imposed on women (see Heidensohn, 1985) and this chapter aims to assess whether the perceptions held by police officers are reflected in their arrest decisions. Arrest decisions are influenced by police officers' own judgement on whether a crime/offence has been committed and police officers have the legal ability to exercise this discretionary power (Smith and Visher, 1981). The aim of this chapter is to assess whether gender influences these discretionary decisions to determine if young women who use violence are more or less likely to be arrested than men on the basis of gender.

The chapter commences with an examination of how the police officers interviewed are trained to handle violent incidents. This section examines how the police are trained to deal with violent episodes because this training will impact on their arrest techniques and discretion when dealing with young women. Police training in Scotland is provided by the Scottish Police College in Tulliallan and all the police officers interviewed will have received similar training (variation will have occurred depending on when officers joined the police). The importance of this section is to

demonstrate the techniques used to deal with violent occurrences and to highlight the different methods employed when faced with young women displaying violence.

The second section of this chapter explores the different factors that are taken into account when arresting young women. It discusses how severity of offence is prioritised, whilst family responsibilities and available police resources are raised as specifically related to young women. The use of discretion is examined in order to show how arrest decision making is influenced by police officers' own judgements.

Co-operation within the police is demonstrated as playing an important role in arrest decision making (Smith and Visher, 1981; Klinger, 1994; Worden and Shepard, 1996) and this is the focus for the final section of the chapter. Chapter seven illustrated how police officers regarded young women as irrational and unpredictable when acting violently and this chapter explores how this impacts on police officers' responses to young women.

Training to be a 'Fair Cop'

Handling violent situations

Every police officer in Scotland is given Officer Safety Training when they start their training at the Scottish Police College. The training demonstrates self defence techniques, how to restrain offenders and the use of batons and CS (non lethal gas) spray. Police officers are also given scenarios in which somebody is being violent and they have to control the situation using the techniques taught to them. The training encourages police officers to control a violent scenario using their communication

skills but if necessary they are within their rights to use appropriate[48] physical contact to control someone.

Even though all the police officers receive recruitment training, the police officers interviewed believed that the most effective training is when they are out on patrol where they learn from their fellow officers and approach each incident on an individual basis. The police officers are given the tools to protect themselves but ultimately they have to make a judgement on each occasion as to what is the best tactic to adopt. The training does not distinguish between men and women; all of the restraint and hold procedures are the same for everyone. The only difference that was mentioned by all the police officers is that male officers are not allowed to search female suspects.

There were specific suggestions put forward by officers to improve their training which included more training on domestic violence (POF14 and POF25), more guidance to help communicate with young people (POF2, POM18 and POM19) and advanced training when faced with someone using a weapon (POM3). Police officers were asked whether any specific training would be beneficial for dealing with young women who use violence and four police officers made suggestions to improve their training. POF32 and POF33 proposed that the training scenarios should include women as the perpetrators of violence as opposed to it always being men and POF10 also suggested that the male officers in particular could find this beneficial because she believes they are more cautious when handling women.

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[48] This in itself is ambiguous given the complexities of what classifies as appropriate force (see Westmarland, 2001b).

> POF10: *I think we're probably needing better guidelines on how to deal with them because I think a lot of the men are still […] they are still a wee bit scared about thinking 'right, can I actually get a hold of this person to stop them doing what they're doing?'*

POF14 explained that the training they are given at the police college does encourage everyone to handcuff people of different sizes to provide them with examples of handling both men and women. Nevertheless, she suggested that more awareness is required with regards to some differences in handling women, particularly that in many cases young women wear clothing that can be revealing such as short skirts. These issues are not covered in their training but could help officers feel more confident when faced with such a situation. It is interesting that all these suggestions came from female police officers who believe their male colleagues are more hesitant when confronted with arresting young women. It may be that the female police officers might just assume that their male colleagues are more uneasy but this is not actually the case.

The police officers who did not see any requirement for additional training to assist with arresting women defended their position by stating that everyone should be treated the same. This could be taken as the police wanting to appear gender neutral by exercising a system of equality, however, Smart (1981) and Morris (1987) argue that equality does not necessarily result in equity:

> The concept of legal equality is part of a powerful liberal ideology which has appeal because it apparently offers an impartial system of justice and regulation. But treating as equals, persons who are manifestly socially and economically unequal can actually operate to further discriminatory practices whilst perpetuating an ideology of total fairness and impartiality. (Smart, 1981: 43)

Although the official procedure for handling violent incidents is gender neutral and, from the interviews, the training appears to be consistent with this policy, the techniques used by police officers were, in some cases, influenced by the gender of the offender.

Techniques

During the interviews it became clear that some of the police officers do treat women acting violently differently from men. One police officer, POF10, stated that her police division advises them not to put handcuffs on women or children if it is not necessary, *because obviously they're more vulnerable than men.* She was the only police officer to disclose this information and it is not an official procedure but rather one that the police can use at their own discretion.

Thirteen of the police officers admitted that their reaction to women using violence differs from their response to men using violence. Seven male police officers (POM4; POM6; POM12; POM19; POM24; POM26; POM30) stated that they would be more assertive with males particularly when it comes to physically restraining them. These officers perceive themselves to be physically stronger than the young women and want to ensure they do not injure them in any way. The following quotation from POM24 describes a situation where he had to detain a young woman who became physically violent with him and his colleague:

> *If it had been a big burly man we'd of grabbed him, we'd of thrown him on the ground, we'd of handcuffed him and that would've been the end of it. But when you're dealing with a very slight girl who's more upset and being violent because you know she's upset at… not me, at somebody else, you know, it's much more difficult. You're trying to deal with it in a less physical manner.*

Although the majority (twenty one) of police officers interviewed said they treat men and women equally and approach each case on an individual basis, the other twelve police officers suggested that they do deal with women differently. POM30 argues that it could be considered sexist as male officers will be less forthright with women:

> *...it's kind of difficult for a male officer, they'll find that they hesitate before they grab a female for obvious reasons [...] We're allowed to strike people, in certain circumstances or under certain ways, they're called distracters, right. Not punching them in the face, but we can use distracters so we can actually get them into a hold and that's acceptable, right. It's reasonable force. Now, if a guy was struggling with me, I wouldn't think twice of maybe using a distracter and putting him into a hold and bring him down with me. A female struggles with you, you would think twice about slapping her in the face or, you know, give her a tweak with the elbow, it doesn't matter, you would think twice about it; but that's maybe because it's a male/female thing. Well, going back to sexism again, and it's not good to do that, but you've got to be realistic, I'm being honest with you, right.*

This quotation emphasises a key point; the police are trained to treat everybody 'equally' so in his view by being less physical with a woman he is being sexist, yet he demonstrates not sexism but rather equity. The officer is illustrating that he does distinguish between men and women and makes his decisions based on gender differences. This can be viewed as fair and using appropriate force rather than being sexist. The fact that the police officer viewed his actions as 'sexist' suggests that the police training may not assist with recognising difference.

It was not just the physical strength differences that made the male police officers more cautious when arresting women but also the possibility of false allegations of inappropriate behaviour (i.e. placement of their hands). POM4, POM9, POM12 and POM18 admit that although they try to treat everyone the same, at the back of their minds they are concerned that a woman may make a false allegation. This was also

found in research with door stewards whereby the male door stewards prefer female stewards to manage situations involving disruptive women to avoid any accusations of inappropriate handling (O'Brien et al., 2008). In contrast, POF32 stated that she is more assertive with women because, in her opinion, they are less co-operative. She noted that she has witnessed her male colleagues being more apprehensive, as the following passage demonstrates:

> *I think male officers will put up with a lot more with females. And again I think it goes back to that she's a female, if I touch her she'll put in a complaint, she's a dirty fighter; and so I think they probably get away with a wee bit more before enough's enough and then you're getting arrested anyway, regardless of whether you're female or not [...] I do think there is a reticence by male officers to deal with aggressive females.*

There were only two female officers who stated they react differently to women. As already demonstrated POF32 finds herself being more assertive whereas POF10 emphasises appropriate female conduct to get women to co-operate. The following conversation is quite lengthy but stresses the role gender plays:

> POF10: *When a man's being aggressive towards you, you just speak to them; but with a woman it's different, you might make a wee… not a joke, but you might say 'come on, that's not very ladylike eh?' and you're trying to play on the fact that they're women and say 'look, you shouldn't really behave like this when you're a woman'. I don't know why, but I probably would speak to a woman differently. [...] You try and appeal to the fact that women are supposed to not be aggressive and violent but they are! So you fair try and pull at that side of them and say 'look, don't behave like this, you know, it's not really how women should behave'.*
>
> INT: *And whereas you wouldn't be like that with men?*
>
> POF10: *I wouldn't no, I wouldn't say 'oh come on, a big lad like you, you're not supposed to act…' because that's… it's maybe horrible, but that's how you kind of expect guys to fall out and fight. Whereas with women, it's totally different seeing women fighting; your sort of thinking 'God, ladies shouldn't act like that' and you try and calm it down from that point of view. So I probably do speak to them totally differently.*

During the interviews fifteen officers indicated that differences were made on the basis of gender[49], but the different techniques employed related to the size and strength of the young women. In addition, the male police officers exercise appropriate caution when physically handling young women to avoid allegations of inappropriate conduct. This demonstrates that police officers think they react fairly to young women in their arrest techniques however, suggestions were made by four female police officers to improve their training.

> POF10: *think it's harder for them* [referring to her male colleagues). *For me, being a woman, because I know that if I get a woman… I mean, she's unlikely to make an allegation that I've sexually assaulted her…Whereas I think the men are still really wary of that. I think they're maybe thinking 'right, we've got to be careful where we grab her and how we handle her so that she can't make an allegation'. So I think maybe some better guidelines should be brought out on how to deal with them that way.*

The suggestion that the male police officers would find it beneficial to have training on techniques was also proposed by POF14, POF32 and POF33. These four female police officers suggested that more training scenarios involving young women using violence would be advantageous to encourage gender awareness. Although incidents whereby young women are using violence are rare they do occur and necessary training may be required to assist police officers if they are hesitant. It should be noted that none of the male police officers requested for further training so the female police officers might just assume male officers to be more uneasy but this is not actually the case.

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[49] POM17 clearly stated, off tape, that police officers are trained to be loyal to the institution and are unlikely to disclose information if it could damage their own reputation and that of the organisation. During the interview with POM21 it was evident that he was very defensive of policing when asked if he reacted any differently to men and women using violence, he was quick to state that institutional racism and sexism does not exist in the police. Thus it has to be noted that the information the police officers disclosed could be influenced by their loyalty to the police.

Police discretion

Arrest decision making is subjective, it relies not just on the legal framework but police officers' own judgement on determining first and foremost if a crime has been committed and then deciding on the best course of action to take (Reiner, 1992; Miller et al., 2006). There are several factors that have been shown to influence arrest decisions such as demeanour (Worden and Shepard, 1996), hostility towards the police (Smith and Visher, 1981; Klinger, 1994), seriousness of offence (Ho, 2003) and ethnicity (Smith et al., 1984).

Police discretion plays a significant role in deciding which women are processed through the criminal justice system, consequently it is essential to understand what factors the police officers interviewed take into account. Horn and Wincup (1995) suggest that traditional stereotypes of femininity impact on how the police treat female offenders. They argue that women who appear to be "good", in other words women who are remorseful for their crime, those who are genuinely upset and women who bring their children to the police station are more likely to receive sympathy and lenience from police officers. In contrast, women who seem unfeminine and "hard" are treated harshly, these women are simply perceived as 'bad'. Since violence is perceived as a masculine offence, women who come into contact with the police for violent offences are viewed as the 'bad' ones and are more likely to be arrested and charged (Horn and Wincup, 1995).

POF7 states that during initial police training all officers are told how offences should be dealt with but in practice the police use their discretion to decide the best course of action. The police officers were keen to make it clear that they do not base any of their

decisions on gender and all decisions are made by investigating the offence. Nevertheless, one police officer, POM30, did point out that some of his arrest decision making is influenced by gender and he believes that other male officers act similarly:

> *I think, in all honesty, and I'm not saying this is the rule, but I would say looking at it from a common sense point of view, if a guy across the street who is 14 years of age or 15 years of age, curses and swears at me and threatens me, then there's more chance I'll arrest him than I would if it was a 14 or 15 year old female cursing and swearing at me. And that's in all honesty. […] I'd think most officers are like that, you know. Because you look at a woman and you think 'oh for goodness sake' you become a wee bit more soft because you can't believe her, you can't believe that that girl's done that or said that.*

This quotation would imply a degree of 'chivalry'; the police officer admitted to being more lenient on young women simply on the basis of gender. However, given that he was the only police officer to state this, there is a lack of evidence to imply this is the belief of other police officers.

Severity of offence

All the police officers indicated that they consider varying factors in violent offences with the main one being seriousness of offence. When it comes to assault, the infliction of injury is a determining factor as to whether the perpetrator(s) is detained and arrested. The police officers have the option of giving them a warning, a fixed penalty notice (PND), arresting them for breach of the peace or arresting them for assault/serious assault. This is very subjective due to the reliance on the police officers' own judgement on what is classed as serious. For instance, POM1 detained three girls for fighting with each other in the street, the fight involved mainly hair pulling and shouting, but it was not deemed by him to be serious enough to arrest them for assault and so they were all issued with a fixed penalty notice for disorder. Similarly,

POM15 arrested two women for breach of the peace who were fighting with each other, again pulling hair rather than throwing punches. These examples indicate that hair pulling is maybe not deemed as serious as a punch, going back to the issue of female violence being perceived as less serious when carried out in this manner. The £40 fixed penalty notices were perceived as *an asset* to police officers because they can deal with minor altercations on the spot without leaving their patrol (POM1; POM24; POM27; POM28). These can be used as an alternative to detaining someone if the police officers do not believe they will cause any further trouble. Again this relies heavily on the police officers' own judgement and discretion, for example, POM30 stated he would not use a fixed penalty notice for any form of violence no matter how minor. Seriousness of injury alone is not always a determining factor in an arrest as POM5 suggests:

> *If you see two best friends who have had a disagreement at the end of the night about something and they've had a wee bit of a rammy and when the police turn up they stop but one's got a burst nose and one's got a burst lip, but they're best pals, they work, they've never been in bother with the police before, they're going to take a telling. Why should we criminalise them?*

Thus, the presence of a complaint can be as influential as seriousness (POM1; POF2; POM3; POF8; POM14; POM23). If neither party is willing to make a complaint against the other then it is difficult to charge anybody as illustrated by POM3*: if nobody's making a complaint then we're kind of hands are tied, it's like we've not got a statement from anybody.* Furthermore, it is not always in the best interest of the police; *you don't prosecute people unless it's in the interest of justice* (POF8). Additionally, POM5 stated that in some cases they will dissuade someone from making a formal complaint if they do not perceive it as serious enough:

I really can't abide getting calls to people claiming to have been assaulted when they've been pushed, because I just think 'did it really hurt you that much?' I can understand if somebody gets pushed and they trip over something, they smack their head and split heads or something like that, but if somebody's pushed you and that was it, it was a push, why'd you get the police involved for that? But sometimes our hands are tied because if they insist that they want to make a complaint then we take their complaint and deal with it. But I find that quite petty.

POM11 perceived many of the complaints to be trivial and although they have to record every incident not all assaults will lead to prosecution, which he finds frustrating. This stresses the important role discretion plays and these decisions are based on individual judgement. Not only do the police officers have to determine if an assault has taken place and establish the seriousness, but they also have to take into consideration any complaints being made. POM22 highlighted that in some cases police officers will persuade people not to make a complaint if it a minor altercation, which is illustrated in the following quotation:

POM22: *I think if you're in a relationship and you slap someone, maybe it doesn't need to go to court if it's a slap [...]. I think there are definitely… there definitely still are officers who would regard it as 'ocht, there's no harm done, you know, she's venting, she just slapped him, it's fine, we'll just leave it at that', and coach it in such words to the guy, sort of, 'ocht, you're not going to make a complaint pal, are you? That's fine, aye'.*

This demonstrates that the seriousness of the offence is considered as a more influential factor than the presence of the complainant, but as indicated earlier the severity of violence relies on police officers' own interpretation of violence.

Family circumstances

According to POF10 and POM22 the police are less inclined to arrest women if they have children that require supervision because social services would need to be called upon and this is often difficult due to the lack of resources. This would also be the

same scenario if it was a man who primarily cared for the children, but in the majority of cases the woman is the main carer (POF10; POM24). POM17 also states that the concern for children can make a difference to the decision being made, particularly if the mother is the only carer. This finding ties in with research carried out by Horn and Wincup (1995) and Hedderman and Gelsthorpe (1997) who suggest that criminal justice practitioners are more inclined to take into account family circumstances when arresting/sentencing women. This was supported by POM18 and POM23 who took the welfare of the child into consideration when deciding whether or not to arrest women:

> POM18: *You've got a responsibility to the kids making sure well, you know, you can maybe bring them back to the station and arrange for a granny, dad, whatever to come and look after them… but if there's no one that's able to look after them, common sense says that what you're going to do is make an arrangement. You're not going to arrest […] I mean, why would you, it seems madness? I think someone in those circumstances, if they weren't prepared to have a wee bit of compassion…I don't know, call it what you want, but you need to be sensible with this.*

This highlights how the police use their discretion, particularly in relation to family responsibilities. Nevertheless, when it comes to domestic abuse incidents the police officers state they have very little discretion. Under the Domestic Abuse Protocol (Crown Office, 2008), police officers have the ability to take an individual into custody if they witness any form of domestic abuse (POM9) and although the police officers stated that they have to detain the perpetrator, there were indications that just because they have to do it they do not always agree with it.

> POF10: *I think, you see to me domestics are a wee bit unfair because if a woman phones in with a complaint the man automatically gets arrested, or would be detained anyway and brought to the police station. Now quite often you find that the men will make a counter-allegation but the woman isn't detained. I think that's maybe a wee bit unfair and I don't know why a lot of officers do that. For me, if there's an allegation that 'he hit me' and then he says 'well she hit me first', for me I'd detain both or none of them.*

Similarly POF14 and POM22 stated that the pro-charge policy for domestic abuse can be problematic. They had experienced incidents whereby a woman had called the police to arrest her partner for being violent towards her. It later turned out that either the man had not been violent and the woman had *made it up* (POF14) or the man had actually been the victim (POM22).

POM5 stated that in cases of domestic abuse where both parties have used violence then usually the man will be taken away and the woman will be left in the house due to childcare responsibilities:

> *[I]t's just one of these things that the man might have to spend a night in the cells and the female will be allowed to go home because there's a child in the house, be it a young child or an older child or a teenager or something like that.*

This was supported by POM19 who asserted that the standard procedure is to arrest both parties if they are both using violence, however, if children are in the house then the woman would be allowed to stay at home. Even in cases where the woman has been the perpetrator and has to be removed from the premises, it was clear that certain police officers (POM5; POM19; POM30) do not like to separate the mother from the children. This shows that despite police officers having less discretion in domestic violence the role of children can still be a determining factor in arrest decision making.

Resources

Lack of police resources was mentioned as a determining aspect by members of one police division interviewed, whereby the distance they have to travel to access female police cells is problematic. The police officers have to make a fifty mile round trip to

take a female into custody, so would much rather not have to arrest them. If there is a lack of police officers on patrol and it is a busy night then it is sometimes not practical to arrest women. One police officer (POF7 off tape) described an event whereby a fight broke out involving three people (one female) throwing glasses and being physically aggressive. All three should have been arrested, according to POF7, but there were not enough police officers to cover the time the arresting officers would have been away. POF7 stated that she *puts up with more* (in relation to young women being un-co-operative) because it is not always convenient to arrest young women, unless the police are left with no other choice. According to POM12 this is particularly problematic at weekends when there are large numbers of people and every officer is required for patrol:

> *It certainly works for the females...if it is kind of just a common assault or a breach of the peace then you would maybe try and divert them away from going into cells, simply so that you and the other officers are safe on the streets.*

The issue of resources does not only apply to females, POM11 pointed out that on busy nights alcohol fuelled fights are often just dealt with by issuing a warning or fixed penalty notice if no serious injuries are caused. This issue is specific to one division as all the other geographical areas are well resourced to make the necessary arrests, nonetheless, it is an important finding given that it has not been highlighted in any other literature as a significant part of the decision making process.

The availability of social services also plays a role in deciding whether to arrest young women. For instance POF7 described an incident where girl aged fifteen had assaulted her family and social services were not available so there was no further action the

police officers could take. Lack of available social workers also came across as a constraint for police officers when they were dealing with women with children:

> POM23: *[I]t's always difficult to get a hold of somebody (from social services) to come out, just due to funding, due to their restraints to actually find an appropriate adult, you know, to come out and to sit and look after the kids.*

The availability of resources only appeared to have a bearing on arrest decisions for more minor forms of violence (except from the incident described by POF7 off tape[50]) and the police officers made it clear that the seriousness of the offence is the most crucial factor in arrest decision making. Co-operation with the police came across as the second most significant aspect of police decision making, and there is evidence that follows in the subsequent section that shows the consequence this has for young women.

Co-operation and defiance

Arresting somebody is deemed as the last option and the police officers state that they will try to resolve the situation before they detain them. Co-operation with the police was highlighted by officers as an important factor. If the individuals using violence *take a telling* and leave peacefully then there is no need to take the matter any further (POF2; POM5; POM6; POF7; POF14). The police officers also have to consider whether there will be repercussions after they leave, if they suspect the individuals will continue acting violently then they will detain them (POF14, POM15). According to POM4 men are more inclined to listen to police officers and refrain from further violence, whereas women are perceived as less co-operative and, as a result, get

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[50] The incident whereby two men and one woman were being physically violent and throwing glasses at each other was not considered by POF7 as a minor form of violence.

detained by the police. This could therefore have an impact on the arrests of young women as they may be more at risk of being detained as a result of their defiance for something that was originally considered minor. To assess the importance of co-operation, the following section examines female violence directed at police officers before moving on to explore police responses to women demonstrating violence towards other people.

Violence directed at police officers

The police officers were asked for their experiences of young women using violence and seventeen of them (12 male and 5 female officers) had encountered young women directing their violence at police officers. Three police officers had experiences whereby they had been trying to arrest women for other offences, mainly breach of the peace and shoplifting, and the women became violent. For example POM19 was arresting a young woman for breach of the peace, she responded by spitting[51] at him and was arrested for assault. POM28 made it clear that any intentional assault when resisting arrest would result in an *additional charge*. The police officers described instances of young women hitting, kicking, spitting and scratching to get away from being arrested (POM17; POM19; POF25; POM28; POM31). On these occasions most of the young women described had consumed large quantities of alcohol and were *lashing out[52]* at the police officers.

> POM17: *What I've seen is really more like resisting arrest. So you're looking to say 'right, you're drunk, we're going to take you home' they're saying 'no, we're not going to' so you grab hands and it starts going into a struggle. So that's, from my angle, what I've had most experience of.*

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[51] Spitting was classified by the police officers as a violent act
[52] 'Lashing out' was a term used by the police officers (POF2; POM4; POM5; POM9; POM11; POM19; POM23; POF25; POM27; POM30) to describe young women directing violence at them.

POF25 stated that if the women are simply struggling then this would be classed as resisting arrest rather than assault, but if somebody who is being arrested deliberately assaulted (either hitting, kicking or spitting) a police officer then they would be arrested for assault. This is an important point because it shows that violent behaviour (such as kicking and spitting) can be treated differently depending on whether it is resisting arrest or being intentionally violent. This raises the issue of the context in which violent behaviour is being displayed. Official statistics on violence can be misleading given the ambiguity of the situation in which violence is used and it is necessary to highlight that some charges for violent behaviour may actually be a result of resisting arrest. This is consistent with the research carried out by Loucks et al. (2006) who found that a high proportion of the violence offences committed by women were police assaults and resisting arrest.

The police officers also experienced women who were drunk being violent towards police officers to protect their boyfriends. On one of these occasions the police officer responded to a call regarding two males fighting and while he was asking one of the men questions the girlfriend attacked him: *The girlfriend comes in apparently to protect the boyfriend and starts, like, punched me in the throat and punched my colleague in the face* (POM4). Similarly, POM11 was assaulted whilst arresting men he says *the female will suddenly decide her boyfriend isn't going to get arrested and suddenly you've got this clawing banshee jumping on your back [laugh]!* POM28 experienced a young woman hitting him with a handbag and kicking him to get him to let go of her boyfriend who was being arrested. This bears similarities with an incident witnessed by Westmarland (2001b) where a woman was arrested for police involvement in a domestic dispute. The police officers in Westmarland's study stopped

to assist a woman they perceived was being assaulted by her partner. The woman, who was under the influence of alcohol, became verbally aggressive towards the police officers and as a result was arrested. Yet again these examples illustrate the importance of understanding the context in which violence is being used and emphasises how a lack of co-operation by young women puts them at risk of arrest.

POF8 suggests that young women are likely to turn aggressive towards police officers, particularly male police officers, because they (the young women) believe that male officers cannot handle them:

> POF8: *I would say that when they become violent towards police officers a lot of women have an attitude that they shouldn't be touched by police officers and particularly men, and they always bring up the old 'you can't touch me you're a man'.*

Interestingly, POM13 argues that young women are not personally attacking police officers but just anybody who is getting in their way or doing/saying something they do not agree with. Another example provided by POM1 was young women directing violence towards the police officers when the officers were trying to assist them.

> POM1: *We're trying to follow up on their complaint but they don't understand what's going on. We're trying to explain to them what's going on and then, because of the drink, they've ended up kicking off and they've tried to fight with us.*

It is clear there are several different scenarios where young women have been violent toward police officers. This is an important finding because ultimately the young women can be charged for a violent offence for any assault on a police officer, even if the initial police presence was for a separate offence. Hostility towards police officers

has been shown to be an important factor in arrest decision making (Piliavin and Briar, 1964; Klinger, 1994) and it is argued by Visher (1983) that hostility from women is deemed even more unacceptable:

> Indeed any chivalrous attitudes that may benefit female suspects during arrest decisions are nullified in encounters with antagonistic women. [H]ostile female offenders clearly violate appropriate sex-role behaviour, and police officers respond by arresting them. (Visher, 1983: 18)

This raises the question of whether women who do not co-operate with police officers can be at greater risk of arrest on the basis of traditional gender roles. Given that research has shown hostility to be an important factor in arrest decisions this could increase the likelihood of young women being arrested. Research by Tchaikovsky (1989) and Horn and Wincup (1995) indicate that women who display violent behaviour are at greater risk of arrest than men because the women are not conforming to appropriate gender norms. Furthermore, Horn and Hollin (1997) propose that female offenders may be perceived by police officers as more trustworthy than male offenders on the basis of gender stereotypes, whereas this current research suggests otherwise. Young women are viewed as less trustworthy on the basis of lack of co-operation and this perception dismisses that chivalry exits for violent behaviour. Therefore, it is plausible that women are viewed as doubly deviant on the basis that they are not co-operating with the police officers *and* they are displaying defiance of their gender role by using violence.

"Don't Know When to Stop"

The police officers stated that one of the main difficulties they face when dealing with violent situations involving young women is that when women are acting out violently they are less inclined, than men, to know when to stop. The depiction of the irrational

female, which was discussed in chapter seven, continued when police officers discussed their difficulties when trying to control the incidents they are called to.

> POM5: *The one area that I would say the male and females differ is that say in 95% of the time you could probably get two males to separate and go the other way if they're in a fight. It's very, very rare that two females let go of each other... females just won't take a telling. Honestly, it's like this red mist comes down, it's just like they won't take a telling, and they end up getting locked up.*

The different typology of violence was given as an example of how women are more difficult to separate, i.e. they are more likely to be attached to each other whilst grabbing hold of hair and/or clothing (POF7; POF20). However, the main point that came across was that it is more difficult to stop them being violent (verbally and physically) than actually separating them. The police described women as *less controlled* (POM9; POF32), *hyper* (POM17), and *hysterical* (POM31) making it a *nightmare* to deal with them (POM30) and six officers specifically stated they prefer to separate men who are fighting. Fourteen of the police officers said that women were more difficult to *calm down*, even if the violent incident has ended. In contrast, men were seen to co-operate better with the police by stopping fighting when the police arrived and 'calming down' quicker. Women were described by eighteen officers as continually shouting and trying to fight with people even in police presence, *all common sense goes out the window* (POM12) and they *tend to be just in this sort of frenzy* (POF32), whereby they do not listen to the police.

These perceptions of women are all related to alcohol induced violence and suggest that these women were not in control of their actions due to alcohol. This point is made by the police officers who stated that when the women are sober *they become fine* (POF8) and are *like different women* (POF10). This perception that alcohol makes

women less controllable than men can be viewed as a discursive form of control whereby excessive alcohol consumption goes against what is characterised as appropriate femininity (Otto, 1981). This helps to explain why women are perceived as more irrational than men, despite there also being a correlation between alcohol and men's violence, it is still deemed less acceptable for women due to the embedded social construction of femininity within society.

> POM26: *Personally I find it easier to communicate with males in violent situations because they seem to know the score. Experience has told me that when you're speaking to women and particularly young women who have…are maybe under the influence of alcohol predominantly…there seems to be no rationale in their thinking. It's very hard to get through to them; whether it's because they tend not to listen, or…they don't want to be told. But I would find it very hard and I think other colleagues of mine find it hard when you're dealing with girls, because they appear to be irrational now.*

There is clear gender stereotyping being exercised by the police officers here, they continue to portray women as unruly and irrational[53]. This is an example of traditional patriarchal attitudes being exercised whereby men are viewed as rational and in control but women are perceived as the submissive gender who lack self control.

Gendered Responses

A difficulty raised by seven police officers was that women think nothing of *turning on the police* (POM4) and are more likely to become violent with the police than men (POF10; POF16). This was a further reason for preferring to deal with men because women were perceived as more unpredictable (POF32). The main difference emphasised by the police officers was that men who are violent are only likely to turn

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[53] This depiction was particularly in relation to 'drunk' women and despite drunken men also being perceived as unruly women were deemed worse.

their aggression on male officers, whereas women will be aggressive towards any police officer (POF2; POF7; POM12). According to POM4 drunken females will *give abuse to female officers, male officers, it doesn't really matter.* Similarly POF16 states that *a male will maybe think twice about hitting a female police officer; whereas females wouldn't bother if it was a male or a female.* POF7 and POF8 both stated that men who are violent towards women are perceived as more socially unacceptable than women being violent, thus female officers feel less threatened arresting men because there is a smaller risk of them being assaulted. It was mainly female officers that made this distinction and this was their reason for preferring to deal with men, whereas the male police officers' preference for dealing with men was more with regards to women being 'irrational' and harder to 'calm down'.

The police officers were asked whether they noticed any differences in the way young women respond to male and female officers, and vice versa, given that they had varying responses from women. POF8 believed that young women will attempt to manipulate the male officers and will sometimes respond better to them, *they think that if they flutter their eyelashes the men are going to say 'okay, whatever, I'll just let you go!'* This view was supported by POM21 who found that women who *take a shine to him* will calm down quicker. However, other male officers believe young women perceive them as more chivalrous and therefore think they can get away with not fully co-operating. POM24, POM28 and POM30 stated that they find it beneficial to have a female officer present because young women will be more likely to co-operate:

> POM28: *I think that's probably something that when you're dealing with drunk females in particular they know that [men don't hit females] and they can push it that wee bit further! Whereas they won't push it with a female*

officer because they know if she has to step in and has to take it that stage further, she will.

POF10 disagreed with these claims stating that the presence of a female police officer can exacerbate women's aggression because the young women *don't want female officers telling them what to do when they're fighting another female*. Similarly POF25 believes that women view female officers as more of a threat and are therefore less likely to listen to them, whereas women will listen to male officers because they do not want the disapproval of men. The female police officers (POF2, POF10, POF16, POF25, POF32, and POF33) believed that they were in some cases better suited to resolving violent situations involving men because the men are more likely to calm down.

> POF2: *I think women can calm men down a bit better than what males can because there's that kind of testosterone flying about there; and if somebody is angry and there's a male in sight, then they're going to want to kind of square up a bit to them.*

Interestingly the results demonstrate that the police officers disliked dealing with young women acting aggressively and each police officer had gendered ideas of who can best resolve the situations. It is evident that the police officers distinguished between gender interactions; the females perceiving themselves as a threat to other women and better suited to handling aggressive men, whereas the male officers had different experiences of women cooperating with them. The police officers did agree that women were more inclined to become violent with the police and thus more difficult to deal with. The typology of men's violence was perceived as more severe and as having a greater possibility of serious injury and yet the police officers preferred to manage these incidents due to men being viewed as more co-operative. The

perceived lack of co-operation from young women again raises concern as to whether this puts young women at greater risk of arrest than men.

Empirical research with door security in the night time economy has shown similar results. The introduction of female door stewards was partly due to a requirement for increasing control over unruly women (O'Brien et al., 2008) but in addition, it was believed that female door stewards would be able to diffuse violent situations more effectively than male door stewards due to their non-aggressive persona (Hobbs et al., 2007). The interviews with police officers indicated that female police officers believe they are able to diffuse a violent situation involving men more effectively because they are less likely (than male officers) to aggravate a violent situation. Whereas, the female police officers considered their male colleagues as more effective with violent incidences involving women. Research by O'Brien et al. (2008: 167) found similar results whereby "unruly female customers responded better to male bouncers" according to the female door stewards. Thus, despite female door stewards being required to handle violent incidences with women, they (the female door stewards) perceived their strength to be resolving incidents involving men (O'Brien et al., 2008).

Summary

POF32: *I think the problem is with this job is that, you know, with the best will in the world we're all human and we've all got our prejudices, and we do get a lot of diversity training which is good and it makes you aware that, yes you do have prejudices, but obviously you have to leave them at the door when you come to work. But you're still going to react instinctively sometimes, and I think no matter how much you try not to be prejudiced in whatever way, the prejudice is still within you. Yes you need to be aware of it, but sometimes when you react instinctively, being aware of it doesn't stop you reacting, because you've got to react in that moment.*

This quotation from POF32 supports many of the arguments presented in this chapter. The police officers clearly stated that the training they receive is gender neutral and they treat everyone the same regardless of gender. Nevertheless, the evidence presented in this chapter has demonstrated that gender does play a role in their decision making processes. Police officers apply different techniques when arresting women, the male police officers in particular discussed concerns about false accusations, whereas the female police officers stated that they are more assertive than their male colleagues. Returning to the quotation above, police officers may not identify that their actions result from gender prejudices. Thus, while loyalty to the profession of policing may be a contributing factor to police officers not disclosing prejudices, it can also be argued that preconceptions are exercised at a subconscious level.

Arrests for young women using violence have been shown to be in relation to resisting arrest, whereby women have turned aggressive with the police. This finding is important as it questions the context in which violence is used when trying to interpret official statistics. It also highlights how a minor breach of the peace can be up-tariffed to an assault charge if the police officers perceive the young women to be intentionally assaulting a police officer. This demonstrates the crucial role of police discretion in defining violence and the varying ways violent behaviour can be interpreted.

A key debate that was discussed in chapter three was whether police officers were more lenient on women who offend, resulting from chivalry (Steer, 1970; Tchaikovsky, 1989; Horn and Wincup, 1995), or harsher on the basis that women who offend are defying their gender role (Visher, 1983). From the present study, there is a lack of

evidence to suggest that arrest decisions are based solely on gender: the police officers take various factors into account when they decide to arrest. Nonetheless, certain issues such as family responsibility and lack of police resources might have more of bearing when deciding to arrest women than it does when arresting men. In contrast, young women might be more at risk of arrest if they do not co-operate with police officers, particularly given that the police officers stated that men are more likely to listen to the police and take a warning.

To end, this chapter illustrates that police officers use their discretion in defining violence, which ultimately determines their arrest decisions. This discretionary control of what is and is not acceptable behaviour relates not only to the offence being committed but also to who is committing it: given that the police officers were more disapproving of women using violence it suggests that young women could be at greater risk of arrest than men.

Chapter 9 - Drawing Conclusions and Opening Debates

This thesis addressed the apparent 'problem' of young women's violence; an issue that has continually been reported in the British media. Concerns over a growing 'ladette' culture presented as "the dark side of the female revolution" (MacAskill, 2004) has resulted in both public and political concern that young women are becoming more violent (Burman and Batchelor, 2009). Zero tolerance approaches to violence have been adopted in Scotland with several ongoing campaigns to tackle various forms of violent behaviour including domestic abuse and offensive weapons. The political concerns over violence and the media attention on young women presented an opportunity to conduct empirical research in Scotland to assess whether the concerns over young women using violence were justified.

Chapter two of this thesis demonstrated that the increasing concerns over the behaviour of young reported in the media are unsupported by empirical research with young women (Burman et al. 2000). The evidence discussed strongly emphasises the complexities of young women's violence and rejects the suggestions made in the media that women are using violence as a consequence of liberation (Batchelor, 2005; Wesley, 2006). The official statistics examined illustrate that only a very small proportion of violent offences are committed by young women in Scotland and are of less 'serious' nature than men's violence. Despite this, there has been a rise in young women involved in less serious violent offences (Scottish Prison Service, 2010; Scottish Government 2011a). Evidence from North America has demonstrated that changes in criminal justice responses, and in particular policing, is a more plausible explanation for the rising criminalisation of young women (Steffensmeier, 2005; Zhan et al., 2008).

There was a lack of research carried out with police officers in Britain to uncover whether police policies and practices were impacting on the number of young women being identified as violent. This current study embarked on an investigation to uncover police officers' perceptions of and responses to young women depicted as violent to assess their experiences of young women using violence.

This current research faced several challenges before, during and after the fieldwork, which were discussed in chapter four. The interviews with thirty three frontline police officers in Scotland generated rich data and important conclusions can be drawn. Alongside these conclusions, the complexities of the data need to be discussed whilst opening debates for future research. This final chapter draws together the findings and provides a reflective account of the overall research process.

This chapter commences by revisiting the theoretical framework utilised to contribute to the wider debates of gender, crime and justice. This first section reflects on the application of feminist perspectives in relation to the social control of deviant women and places this within the context of policing. The key themes are then discussed in relation to the three mechanisms of social control that were employed to structure the findings chapters. Following this, each of the four main research questions are readdressed using the findings presented in chapter five to eight of this thesis. The four initial research questions were as follows:

- How do police officers define violent crime?
- Have police officers witnessed any changes in the prevalence of violence among young women? If so, what do they attribute this to?
- How do police officer characterise young women who are deemed as violent?
- How do police officers respond to young women's violence?

The subsequent section of this chapter discusses the contribution this thesis makes in an attempt to provide a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between patriarchy, power and policing, reflecting on the study's strengths, limitations and future directions. The chapter is concluded with some final reflections of the research process as a whole.

Returning to the theoretical framework

This current study utilised a feminist criminology framework of patriarchy and social control to demonstrate how the seeming rise of violent females can be understood as a result of increasing gendered social control mechanisms. Feminist perspectives share a common understanding of gender relations, power and control (Daly and Chesney-Lind, 1988) and within criminology these perspectives have been applied to understand women's victimisation, offending behaviour and responses to deviance (Gelsthorpe and Morris, 1988). The thesis adopted a feminist understanding of patriarchy to demonstrate the different levels at which social control is exercised and utilised Foucault's definition of power to reinforce that patriarchy is not a sole overarching fixed structure but is exercised in varying discursive forms (Bartky 1988; Howe, 1994; Ogle and Batton, 2009).

Patriarchy was applied to establish how gender roles shape gendered expectations and to illustrate that women who fail to conform to these are labelled as deviant and regulated through mechanisms of social control. Examples of social control in relation to women's sexuality, leisure and health (Otto, 1981; Smart, 1981; Lyons, 2006) were used to demonstrate how patriarchy is being exercised in an attempt to encourage women to conform to their prescribed gender roles. This was followed by assessing the

varying informal and formal social controls imposed on women who offend, particularly for violence, within legal and media discourses. It was apparent from chapter two that social control was being exercised in varying ways by legal and media discourses and these controls stemmed from traditional stereotypes of appropriate feminine behaviour. Chapter two demonstrated that women who offend, specifically for violent offences, were deemed doubly deviant for defying their femininity (Dell, 1999) and this can result in a more punitive response from criminal justice institutions (Heidensohn, 1985).

Chapter three examined the institution of policing and utilised Michel Foucault's (2002) term 'discursive field' to examine the culture of policing. This chapter demonstrated the importance of power and masculinity that is embedded within the organisational culture. The policing discourse has been shown to discriminate those, mainly ethnic minorities and women who challenge the occupational culture in order to maintain the white masculinised ethos. The empirical research discussed (Martin, 1996; Holdaway and Parker, 1998; Westmarland, 2001a; Rabe-Hemp, 2008) highlighted the varying ways women were portrayed and treated by the organisation during initial training and within specialised units. Women found it difficult to gain acceptance from male colleagues and had to negotiate their gender role in order to achieve recognition (Rabe-Hemp, 2008). Despite equality legislation the discourse of policing remains to be characterised by masculinity and the image of 'crime fighting' (Martin, 1996; Westmarland, 2001a). This was presented as a form of discursive control whereby the beliefs of the institution influenced the practices of the police officer and was demonstrated in the discretionary power police officers exercise towards suspected offenders. This chapter also showed how women who offend are

sometimes perceived as "not real criminals" (Horn and Wincup, 1995) and this can influence police officers' decisions as to whether a woman is arrested and charged. These depictions of women within the police and as offenders indicate that male police officers do not always deem women as equal to men reaffirming the dominant position of masculinity within society.

The key themes that were identified from the literature were power, control and patriarchy and these were applied to interpret the data generated from the interviews with police officers. The second phase of the data analysis utilised the concept of social control to understand the varying ways young women were being controlled in the police officers accounts. This resulted in three interrelated mechanisms of social control being identified: institutional, discursive and discretionary. The institutional control assisted with understanding how changes in police policies have contributed to more young women being detected for violent offences. The discursive control related to how young women who use violence were depicted by the police officers and these discursive controls were discussed in relation to broader issues of patriarchy. The final control mechanism, discretionary, was utilised to show how the police officer's discretionary powers were influenced by gender and this risk this poses to young women deemed as violent. Each of these three controls is discussed throughout the remainder of this chapter in order to address the original research questions.

Revisiting the social problem of young women's violence

The complexities of defining violence

Throughout this thesis the term violence has been problematic due to the ambiguity and interchanging use of the concept. Confronting the challenges of employing such a

phrase was a key aspect of this thesis and it was clear from an early stage that a legal definition of violence was too narrow to approach the research questions. Evidence from domestic violence literature emphasised that assuming violence to be merely an act causing physical harm can belittle the damage caused by other forms of intimidating behaviour, mainly verbal abuse (DeKeseredy, 2000; Dobash and Dobash, 2004). A broader definition was utilised in this thesis to include all forms of assault and verbal abuse, but in order to interpret the research findings accurately it was necessary to obtain the police officers' own definition of violence.

There were opposing views from the police officers as to whether 'violence' was solely physical or physical and verbal harm. This discrepancy is important to note given that police officers' decision making is based on their own judgements and discretion and ultimately influences the penalty that they give to people. Verbal abuse was commented on throughout the interviews with reference to young women. This raises the issue as to whether the apparent rise of 'violent' young women is actually being misrepresented whereby verbal abuse is being categorised on the same level as physical harm. "[T]he more elastic or encompassing the definition of violence, the smaller the gender gap in violence will be" (Steffensmeier et al, 2005:357). Similarly it was noted in the interview data that police officers commonly referred to women's violence as 'fighting'. The imagery of a 'fight' differs from a violent attack and this is problematic if young women are being imprisoned for 'fighting'. This would certainly be worthy of further investigation to uncover the context in which violence is being used by young women who are being criminalised for violent offences.

The police officers described a broad range of behaviours when discussing violent incidents. These ranged from verbal arguments, physical fights and unprovoked attacks. The majority of examples provided by the police officers were what they defined as 'cat fights', whereby young women would scratch, pull hair and verbally abuse each other. This was distinguished from male violence that the police officers associated with punching, kicking and the use of weapons. Recognising these different interpretations of violent behaviours provides a more thorough understanding of what behaviour is being referred to when discussing violence by young women. Furthermore, it highlights the necessity for future research to comprehend what behaviour is actually being referred to rather than taking the term violence for granted.

Prevalence of young women's violence

This thesis commenced with an examination of whether young women were actually becoming more violent as suggested by the media. The study challenged the media's depiction that liberation has resulted in some young women choosing to use violence which has previously been disputed in research with young women (Burman and Batchelor, 2009; Batchelor, 2005). Although there had been evidence that the courts adopted a more punitive attitude towards young women using violence (Carlen, 1983; Hedderman, 2004; Worrall, 1990; McIvor and Burman, 2011), there was a lack of sufficient evidence that examined the issue from the perspective of police officers. This current research identified that police officers play an important role in defining offending behaviour and thus their decisions ultimately impact on whether someone is arrested for an offence. The police are the first point of contact offenders have with the criminal justice system and so necessitated further investigation into whether their

experience could explain the rise in the number of young women being charged and prosecuted for violent crimes.

Ongoing research has shown that there are several possible explanations for the growing number of young women being charged and imprisoned for violent offences and these include: a crackdown on youth crime (Muncie, 2002), a redefining of violent behaviour (Chesney-Lind and Irwin, 2008), a move from welfare to justice practices (Sharpe, 2009) and more punitive sentencing (McIvor and Burman, 2011). This research aimed to uncover what role policing might have had on the number of young women being prosecuted.

This current study found that police officers had experienced an increase in violence among young men and women and despite a perceived rise in female violence the majority of violent incidences are committed by men. It was evident from the police officers' accounts that the majority of violence displayed by young women would be categorised as minor, mainly verbal abuse and minor assaults. Despite some extreme examples of violent incidents being discussed by police officers, these were described as rare and it is uncommon to see young women causing serious assault. Furthermore, the perceived increase in violence was not isolated to young women with the police officers stressing that violence had increase among men and women.

The interviews with the police officers identified that the growing numbers of young men and women being charged for violent offences could be partly explained by mechanisms of institutional control. Changes in police policies and practices, including zero tolerance policies on violence, demographic changes in policing and enhancements in detecting crime all indicated that the rise in the number of young

women being brought to the attention of the criminal justice system stems from changes in policing rather than changes in actual behaviour. The analysis specifically identified that advances in policing (the new crime recording standard, the introduction of fixed penalty notices for deviance and the increasing use of CCTV) could be contributory factors resulting in more young women being detected and recorded for violent offences. Legislative controls have previously been recognised as playing an important part in the social control of women (Sanders, 2009; Scoular and O'Neill, 2007; Smart, 1981), and this current study was able to identify specific institutional controls exhibited by the police officers interviewed.

This current research supports the argument put forward by Zhan et al. (2008) that increasing methods of formal social control have led to girls and young women being brought to the attention of the police and criminal justice institutions. This thesis proposed that changes in police practices have had a net widening impact on the number of young people in general being detected by the police. Increasing policing of the night time economy, communities, schools and private homes were all identified as potential areas where young women were being identified as violent. Violence by young women was predominantly associated with alcohol, the night time economy and youth culture; however, this was also correlated with violence by young men.

Recognising the role of police officers in the net widening of crime detection is crucial to understanding why more young women are being arrested, charged and imprisoned for violent offences. Therefore, this thesis argues that young women have not changed their behaviour; instead changes in policing have resulted in more young women being

identified as violent. Furthermore, the redefining of violent behaviour, particularly in schools and in the home, has led to more young women being considered violent.

Police officers' perceptions of young women depicted as violent

Chapter two of the thesis identified that violent behaviour is characteristically a masculine activity associated with notions of strength, power and control. Violent behaviour, both legitimate (such as in war or sport) and illegitimate (violent crime), has historically been associated with masculinity (Messerschmidt, 1993; Connell, 1995) and women who display such behaviour are damned for acting out with their feminine role (Miller and White, 2004; Jackson, 2006). The media portrayal of women who use violence has been contradictory ranging from women as heroic, to comical, and unfeminine, none of which provide an accurate representation of women who are convicted of violent crimes (Batchelor, 2005; Chesney-Lind and Irwin, 2008).

This research found that young women who are deemed as violent were portrayed differently to men by the police officers. When the police officers were asked to describe female violence, it was perceived as more erratic, less choreographic and more spiteful than men's. The findings from this research showed that the police officers perceived the way men use violence to be the norm in comparison to the way young women use violence. This research identified how violence is considered different on the basis of gender constructions, even the most minor forms of violence committed by women were deemed more malicious by police officers as a result of the social construction of violence. Women's violence was not considered anymore *serious* but it was judged as *worse* than men's on the basis that it did not conform to traditional (masculine) choreographies of violence. This can be viewed as another way

in which women are deemed doubly deviant: violence in itself is a deviant act and the perception that women do not use violence in the 'normal' way makes the violence more unacceptable.

The women were categorised under three main typologies; liberated, wayward and troubled, which is in accord with existing research findings from magistrates' responses to women who offend (Heidensohn, 1985; Worrall, 1990). The findings from this current study demonstrate that the police officers' opinions are based upon traditional sex stereotyping. This thesis has presented these perceptions as a mechanism of discursive control, whereby traditional gender roles are being reinforced in police officers' opinions, whilst being contradictory in their actual experiences of young women acting violently. This discursive control is presented as an exercising of patriarchy whereby women are perceived as inferior to men in their inability to use violence 'properly'. This mirrors the social controls discussed in chapter two and points out that even in the 21st century young women are at greater risk of derogation for not conforming to what are regarded as appropriate gender norms (Schur, 1984).

The interviews conducted did not demonstrate any variation in perceptions on the basis of the police officers' gender, length of service or location which suggests that these beliefs are institutional (Waddington, 1999; Ho, 2003). This reaffirms that patriarchy is not only an exercising of power by men towards women, but can be understood as values held by both men and women in a particular organisation that results in women being oppressed (Ramazanoglu, 1993). Schur (1984) argues these perceptions, which informally aim to control women's behaviour, can have a profound impact on the formal control mechanisms utilised to regulate women who defy norms

of femininity and this current research explored whether there was any relationship between police officers' beliefs and practices.

Police officers' responses to young women deemed as violent

Previous research with criminal justice institutions has provided evidence that women who exhibit masculine characteristics are depicted as unfeminine and at risk of greater formal control from criminal justice agencies (i.e. arrest and prosecution) (Horn and Wincup, 1995; Sharpe, 2009). The present study set out to investigate whether police officers' arrest decision making was influenced by traditional gender stereotypes. There is insufficient evidence from the interviews to suggest that young women who were regarded as violent were treated any harsher or leniently by police officers on the basis of their (the young women's) gender. The police officers emphasised gender neutrality in their decisions and made it clear that the seriousness of the offence was the most important deciding factor. Despite this, the police officers stressed the difference in the responses they received from young women; in particular they viewed young women as less co-operative than young men. This perception of unmanageable women has two consequences; first of all it reinforces the gender stereotypes that women are more irresponsible than men. Secondly, if young women are more resistant towards police authority then they are at greater risk of being arrested than young men. Although the police officers may not consciously treat young women differently from young men, the perceived lack of compliance young women apparently display could result in them receiving harsher responses. Klinger (1994) and Worden and Shepard (1996) have previously shown that hostility towards the police impacts on arrest decision making and this thesis has been able to locate this discretion with particular reference to young women and violence.

The police officers in this study differed on their views on whether male or female officers are able to handle situations involving young women more effectively when the women are uncooperative. The male police officers believed that female police officers are beneficial as young women would be less inclined to *manipulate* female officers. However, the female police officers disagreed and saw their own presence as an aggravating influence on young women's violence. Both the male and female police officers interviewed were in agreement that they prefer to handle situation with men than women, due to the perceived unruly behaviour of women. This suggests that despite apparent gender neutrality in policing, police officers are aware of gender differences when out on patrol. This current study showed how these perceptions mirror the findings of the study conducted with door stewards (O'Brien et al., 2008), proposing that there is a perception among both police officers and door stewards that young women are more difficult to deal with.

This present research has demonstrated that discretionary controls are exercised; police officers take into account various factors to determine whether an arrest or charge is necessary. The police officers' own judgement on what classifies as violent behaviour will impact on their arrest decision making and can be the difference between an individual being issued with a caution, fixed penalty notice, or being arrested for breach of the peace or assault/serious assault. This thesis cannot come to any firm conclusions as to whether feminine and masculine characteristics influence arrest decision, such as those findings from Visher (1983) and Horn and Wincup (1995) and would require future research to explore this further. However, what can be argued is that women are at greater risk of control by means of police discretion due

to the perceived non-conformity to authority, a characteristic that is deemed unfeminine.

Four police officers suggested improvements to their training to assist with restraining young women. All of the proposals made were to encourage gender awareness in their training scenarios by including more women as offenders in the role play. Evidence from the interviews suggested that police officers felt that treating young women differently implied that they were 'sexist'. However, from the examples given by police officers they were not being sexist but instead they were reacting fairly to the young women they were arresting. This highlights the necessity for police officers to recognise the distinction between equity and equality. So, although only four police officers explicitly stated that improvements were required, the interviews implied that more police officers could benefit from gender awareness guidance. These suggestions will be forwarded on to the police forces that took part in the research when the summary report is produced.

Contribution and future directions

This study offered a unique opportunity to interview thirty three frontline police officers in Scotland and generated rich data uncovering the beliefs of a sample of police officers. The research provides an invaluable insight into the experiences and perceptions of police officers to develop a better understanding of how women deemed as violent are regulated through formal and informal control mechanisms.

To date there has been a lack of empirical investigation in the UK into how police officers perceive women who offend and little understanding of the relationship between gender and arrest decision making (exception includes Horn and Wincup,

1995). The thesis was able to identify this gap and contribute to uncovering criminal justice responses to women considered deviant. In addition, the study raised important questions with regards to police perceptions and arrests decisions which necessitate future research in this area. The study complements a growing body of work that aims to demonstrate how the social construction of gender can have negative consequences for women who offend and the bearing this has on criminal justice institutions. It supports previous research that argues changes in definitions, policies and practices are resulting in a myth that violence by young women is on the rise (Burman et al., 2000; Batchelor, 2005; Batchelor, 2009).

The thesis identified different social control mechanisms that can assist with understanding the growing number of young women being convicted for violent offences in Scotland. The findings of this study are concurrent with the work of Zhan et al. (2008) and Sharpe (2009) whereby young women are at greater risk of criminal justice intervention. Furthermore, this current research supports existing literature (Horn and Wincup, 1995; Wilczynski, 1997) that women who offend are categorised as mad or bad with little consideration or appreciation for the logical justification of using violence (Batchelor, 2005). The police officers' accounts can be used in conjunction with previous research with from other criminal justice institutions to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how young women who offend are depicted and responded to in policy and practice.

Front line police officers play a vital role in the criminalisation process and their experiences and perceptions offer an insight into the decision making processes that lead to young women being prosecuted for violent offences. The qualitative interviews

provided an important tool to uncover underlying beliefs about young women who are regarded as violent and the findings demonstrate that traditional gender stereotypes are still significant in shaping police officers' views of young women. The masculinisation of violence by the police officers contributes to our understanding of how 'appropriate' behaviour is gendered and the potential negative impacts this has on the lives of young women.

The research was unable to conclude whether the gendered perceptions had a significant impact of arrest decision making. Nevertheless, it does highlight how arrest techniques differ according to how they perceive women, with male officers being portrayed as more lenient than their female colleagues. A limitation to this study was the ability to determine whether the police officers' claims of how they respond are a true reflection in practice. Therefore, it is suggested that a future direction for research would be to carry out ethnographic fieldwork with police officers on duty to witness how they react to young women who offend and whether these reactions differ to how they respond to young men.

The findings illustrated that there were discrepancies in police officers' accounts of the training they are given to handle violent incidents. It would be beneficial for future research to investigate how police officers are trained, the scenarios they are given and how they respond to the training. This current research demonstrated that some police officers believed it would be beneficial to have more scenarios during their training to assist them to respond accordingly to men and women. Although the police officers stated their training is gender neutral, it is apparent from this current research that in practice gender plays an important role in how they respond to violent

incidents. It is therefore suggested that police training and practice focuses less on being gender impartial and recognises gender differences to develop fair rather than equal policing strategies.

Final reflections

The experience of carrying out research with police officers in Scotland proved to be challenging, rewarding and thought provoking throughout. This research was a unique opportunity to gain a perspective from a profession that has previously been deemed closed off from outsiders. It was a worthwhile research project that demonstrated the willingness of police officers to contribute to academic studies even when they are being questioned about their own beliefs and practices. The openness of the majority of the police officers and their eagerness to share their experiences was unexpected and it is encouraging to know that a positive relationship between academia and policing can be built to produce essential research on crime and justice issues.

This thesis did not commence with any fixed theoretical perspective but rather it allowed the theory to develop from the data. The feminist framework utilised to understand the research findings offered an opportunity to explain police officers' perspectives and also to relate these to the wider issues of power, patriarchy and social control. This study has demonstrated that feminist perspectives have much to offer criminological research in raising awareness of how gender relations and, in particular, how women's subordination continues to be reinforced through different discourses. To overcome these stereotyped, and old fashioned, views of women is no easy task but it is hoped that through research, such as this study has provided,

awareness and knowledge of these gendered issues can contribute to improving policies and practices that currently disadvantage young women depicted as violent.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Research Design Presented by SIPR to ACPOS

<u>Topic: Policing Violence Perpetrated by Young Women in Scotland</u>

My research aims to understand how police officers in Scotland conceptualize and respond to young women (aged under 25) who use violence. The key areas of investigations are as follows:

1) How is violent crime defined by police officers in Scotland?
2) How do police officers conceptualize violence by young women?
3) Discuss police officers' encounters with young women who have used violence.
4) Investigate factors that influence arrest decisions for young women who are violent.
5) Explore whether there are any guidelines in place for dealing with young women who offend.

<u>Background to the Study</u>

This has derived from the increasing attention the media has devoted to the portrayal of some young women as becoming more violent, out of control and in need of intervention. Official statistics do not support the media claims that violent young women are a significant problem in the UK. This study will examine the issue of young women and violence from the perspective of police officers in Scotland.

<u>Method</u>

I would like to carry out approximately 40 individual semi-structured interviews with police officers working on the beat in Scotland. These interviews will be digitally recorded (where consent is obtained) and will last no longer than 1 hour. The data will be collected using digital audio recording to accurately record the information. I will also take brief notes during the interviews for my own record. I would like to start carrying out interviews in March 2009 at the latest.

<u>Topics of discussion</u>

Police officers will be asked to discuss how they define behaviour as violent;; in what contexts young women use violence; whether police officers believe that violence by young women is a growing concern; to uncover what factors influence their decision whether to arrest young women who are violent; and to find out if there are any guidelines in place for dealing with young female offenders.

Sample

I hope to interview police officers that work in both city centre locations and more suburban locations. For example, police force A and police force B. I would like to find out if any of the police forces in Scotland would be interested in participating in this research. I would like to speak with both male and female officers of various ages to get a diverse sample. It would be preferable to speak with officers of varying time served in the force, from new recruits to long standing officers.

Location of interviews

Interviews will be conducted in police stations wherever possible at a time convenient to respondents. Police officers could be interviewed before or after their shift or if they have any free time in between shifts. It would be preferable to conduct several interviews in a day at each location, that way I wouldn't take up too much time of the local stations.

Confidentiality

Personal identity will be kept confidential and although I may use quotations from the interviews, participant's name, department and police force will be not documented in the final thesis. All the information provided will be kept in a secure place and password protected computer.

Dissemination

The information supplied will be written up in the doctoral thesis but no identifying information will be used. The findings may be used for journal articles, conference presentations and to assist with informing future research.

Benefits of Participating

The police officers will be given the chance to share their experiences and voice their opinion on a topical issue. I am happy to provide a summary report of the results to the police forces, which would provide them with independent research findings.

Ethical Approval

I am in the process of applying for full ethical approval from the University of Stirling and this will be sought before any fieldwork is carried out.

Appendix 2 - Information Sheet
<u>Policing Violence Perpetrated by Young Women</u>

- *The Study*

My name is Suzanne Young and I am a PhD research student at the University of Stirling. I am carrying out a piece of research that explores the perceptions and experiences of police officers that have come into contact with young women who use violence. The aim of the research is to understand what experiences police officers have had with young women who are physically violent. I am interesting in finding out how police officers respond to violent incidences committed by young women.

- *Your role*

I would like you to volunteer to take part in an interview. These interviews will be held in the police station at a time that is most suitable for you. The interviews will be tape recorded to give an accurate account of your experiences. The interview is entirely voluntary and you are not obliged to speak of anything you feel uncomfortable with. The topics of discussion are as follows:

- How you define violent behaviour
- How you conceptualize violence by young women
- Your encounters with young women who have used violence
- Factors that influence arrest decisions of young women who have used violence
- Guidelines in place for dealing with offending young women

- *Confidentiality*

Your identity will be kept confidential and although I may use quotations from the interviews, your name, department and police station will be not documented in the final thesis. All the information you provide me with will be kept in a secure place and password protected computer. Only I, my supervisors and a transcriber will have access to the data. The transcriber will be required to sign a confidentiality clause and will not be given your name.

- *How the information will be utilised*

The information you supply will be written up in the doctoral thesis. The findings may be used for journal articles, conference presentations and to assist with informing future research. The transcribed interviews will be archived in the Economic and Social Data Service but will be kept anonymous.

- *Interested in participating?*

Please inform your Chief Inspector if you would like to participate and provide them with a contact telephone number or email address. I will contact you to arrange a suitable date and time for the interview. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me at suzanne.young@stir.ac.uk.

Thank You For Your Interest

Appendix 3 - Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF STIRLING

Policing Violence Perpetrated by Young Women

Research Study Consent Form

This consent form is to ensure that you understand your role in the research and consent to participate. The research is entirely voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time during the interview. You should sign this consent form once you have read and understood the information sheet and been given the opportunity to ask any questions.

A digital recorder will be used for the purpose of recording accurate information, the recording will be kept in a secure location that only the researcher has access to. The recordings will be transcribed by an approved University of Stirling transcriber, who will be required to sign an agreement that they will keep the information confidential. Your name and department will not be disclosed at any stage in the research unless you reveal information that I believe will either put yourself or someone else in imminent danger. The transcribed interviews may be archived by ESDS Qualidata at the end of the research but these will be anonymous.

By signing the form you agree to take part in a digitally recorded interview to discuss your experiences of responding to young women who use violence.

I have read and understood the information sheet ☐

I agree to the interview being recorded ☐

I have been given the opportunity to ask questions ☐

I agree to volunteer to take part and for extracts of ☐

the interview to be used in the write up

I agree to the transcription being archived by ESDS Qualidata ☐

Name..

Police Station..

Date...

Signature...

Appendix 4 - Profile of Participants

Participant Number	Police Force	Gender	Locality	Length of Service (years)
PO1	A	Male	Town	3-5
PO2	A	Female	Town	<3
PO3	A	Male	Town	3-5
PO4	A	Male	Town	<3
PO5	A	Male	Town	6-10
PO6	A	Male	Town	<3
PO7	A	Female	Rural	3-5
PO8	A	Female	Rural	6-10
PO9	A	Male	Rural	21-25
PO10	A	Female	Rural	6-10
PO11	A	Male	Rural	21-25
PO12	A	Male	Rural	11-15
PO13	A	Male	Town	<3
PO14	A	Female	Town	3-5
PO15	A	Male	Town	6-10
PO16	A	Female	Town	<3
PO17	B	Male	Residential	16-20
PO18	B	Male	Residential	16-20
PO19	B	Male	Residential	3-5
PO20	B	Female	Residential	3-5
PO21	B	Male	City Centre	11-15
PO22	B	Male	City Centre	3-5
PO23	B	Male	Residential	6-10
PO24	B	Male	Residential	16-20
PO25	B	Female	Residential	<3
PO26	B	Male	City Centre	16-20
PO27	B	Male	City Centre	16-20
PO28	B	Male	City Centre	16-20
PO29	B	Male	City Centre	<3
PO30	B	Male	City Centre	16-20
PO31	B	Male	Residential	6-10
PO32	B	Female	City Centre	6-10
PO33	B	Female	City Centre	3-5

Appendix 5 - Interview Guide

Research Question: How Do Police Officers Conceptualize and Respond to Violence Perpetrated by Young Women?

1) Policing violent crime
- What behaviours/actions are officially defined as violent?
- Is verbal abuse considered as violent? *Why/ why not? Do you agree with this?*
- What training is provided to assist with policing violent crime? Is training ongoing? *(is it voluntary/compulsory? What does the training involve?)*
- Does your police station/force provide you with any specific training or guidance? (*Can you tell me a little bit about this)*
- Are you given any guidance in your training for dealing with violent crimes involving young women as perpetrators? *(How does this training differ? If not, then why not?)*

2) How do police officers conceptualize violence by young women?
- In what situations are young women using violence?
(Intake of drugs/alcohol?) (Public or private?) *What do you think of these women?*
- Who are young women being violent towards?
(Friend/Family/Strangers/Partners?)
- What level of violence are they displaying? *Is this taken seriously?*
(Serious/Petty? Weapons?)
- Have you noticed any changes in either the occurrence or context in which young women are using violence? *In what ways?*

3) Discuss police officers' encounters with young women who have used violence.
- Tell me about the times that you have encountered violence by young women.
- Why was the woman being violent? Towards who?
- How did you handle the situation? Did you have to use any force? Did the woman co-operate?
- Did you arrest? Why/why not?

4) Investigate factors that influence arrest decisions for young women who are violent.
- What are the main factors you take into account when deciding whether to arrest young women who have been violent? *Can you give any example?*
- Do you have a certain criteria to follow for arresting young women who are violent? If so does this differ from criteria for arresting young men? *Example?*
- Do you think that there is a necessity for any guidance or training for assisting with policing young women who use violence? *What would you benefit from, any suggestions?*

Time for questions.

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