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## Women Working with Criminal Men: The Raised Eyebrow

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# Women Working with Criminal Men: The Raised Eyebrow

by

Emily A. Patrick, B.A.

MSW Clinical Research Paper

Presented to the Faculty of the  
School of Social Work  
St. Catherine University and the University of St. Thomas  
St. Paul, Minnesota  
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Social Work

## Committee Members

Abel Knochel, Ph.D., MSW, LGSW (Chair)  
David Holewinski, MSW, LICSW, CBIS  
Llewellyn (Lew) H. Linde, MSW, J.D.

The Clinical Research Project is a graduation requirement for MSW students at St. Catherine University/University of St. Thomas School of Social Work in St. Paul, Minnesota and is conducted within a nine-month time frame to demonstrate facility with basic social research methods. Students must independently conceptualize a research problem, formulate a research design that is approved by a research committee and the University Institutional Review Board, implement the project, and publicly present the findings of the study. This project is neither a Master's thesis nor a dissertation.

### **Abstract**

The purpose of this research was to learn more about the past experiences of women correctional workers in Minnesota who have worked with male offenders and male co-workers between 1960 and 1989 and whether or not they experienced harassment and discrimination. It was predicted that women who were entering the male dominated field of corrections experienced a great deal of harassment at the hand of male colleagues. The experiences of early women correctional workers may be of interest to women who are considering those fields for their chosen professions. In order to better understand the current experiences of discrimination against women and the harassment they endure, it is important to understand how women experienced this in the past. This study applied the concept of sex role spillover in order to explore the experiences of discrimination and harassment of women correctional workers from male colleagues. Data was collected through research of primary documents from historical archives and analyzed using internal criticism and content analysis. Several themes were identified: workplace minority, refusal to hire, lack of advancement opportunities, unequal standards, exclusion from equal benefits, exclusion from same work, sense of belonging, direct abuse, and reprisal. The findings were consistent with information found within the literature in that common themes were found: no refusal to hire and direct abuse.

## Acknowledgements

There are many people that I am thankful to. This research process has been an experience of struggle and at the same time, an experience of excitement. I am very thankful to my family who has funded and supported my educational pursuits throughout my college years. My family has been very understanding of my time constraints and has allowed me to ignore my chores back at home. They had graciously let me live with them during my education.

I'm not sure what I would have done if I did not have the support of my fellow classmates. Every week, almost every day, my classmates and I would complain and share advice on our research projects (682 as we would call it). I am so very happy to have had such a supportive social network to call upon in my times of struggle and stress.

I would like to thank my research committee, as they have been very helpful in my research. Dr. Knochel was very helpful and I am happy to have had Dr. Knochel as my research chair. Dr. Knochel has spent a great deal of time reading and editing my paper multiple times and providing advice on what to do next. Dr. Knochel also provided much understanding and support for me, as this was a difficult time in my life. David Holewinski provided much insight during my research and has helped me consider new ways of interpreting my findings. Lew Linde brought much wisdom and experience to my research experience. Mr. Linde would provide me with different ways of viewing the information that I collected in the research process. I would always be fascinated with his connections to my research. I was surprised to learn that he new multiple people mentioned in my findings and literature review. Without my research committee I would have been lost and confused through the research process.

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## Introduction

The entrance of women into the male dominated professions within corrections was one of struggle. Occupations within corrections included in this study were police officers, correctional counselors (therapists), prison guards, correctional officers, and probation/parole officers. According to Ireland and Berg (2008), for nearly 30 years, research on women in law enforcement documented the deep-rooted belief that it is man's work. Traditionally, the criminal justice system has been a masculine domain, as criminal law was arranged by male legislators, imposed by male police officers, and interpreted by male judges (Holland, 2008). Throughout history, women have faced substantial opposition to their entry into the corrections field (Belknap, 2001). At the hands of both colleagues and supervisors, women entering employment in the correctional environment are often subject to discrimination, harassment, and ridicule (Belknap, 1991; Jurik, 1985, 1988; Owen, 1985; Pogrebin & Poole, 1997, 1998; Pollock-Byrne, 1986; Savicki, Cooley, & Gjvesvold, 2003; Stohr, Mays, Beck, & Kelley, 1998; Zimmer, 1986). Throughout the paper, terms relating to gender (i.e. women, men) and sex (i.e. female, male) will be used interchangeably.

Entry into the field of corrections was difficult for women. However, once they were accepted, it was understood that they would work exclusively with female offenders. Women faced more opposition once they began working with male offenders. Women parole officers who supervised men probationers and parolees were "received with the raised eyebrow" (Graham, 1960, p. 76) because the accepted practice was for women officers to work with women probationers and parolees.

Little research was found that has examined women probation/parole officers' experiences of working with men probationers/parolees and men probation/parole officers. According to Ireland & Berg (2006), however, woman parole agents report similar experiences of harassment and discrimination to that of women police and police, correctional officers, and probation/parole officers have all historically been male domains.

As the number of women entering the field of corrections rises, data on experiences of women in this field takes on great relevance. DiMarino (2009) the dean of the School of Criminal Justice at Kaplan University stated, "As women represent a growing percentage of the corrections workforce, they demonstrate that it is the skill and individual's contribution, and not the gender, which makes for a successful and valuable corrections professional." The American Correctional Association (2007) reported that women represented 37 percent of adult correctional personnel and 51 percent of juvenile corrections personnel (as cited in DiMarino, 2009). According to Morton (2005), in 1969 12 percent of corrections officers were women (as cited in DiMarino, 2009).

Within the correctional field, social workers are assigned to counseling roles with the title of probation or parole officer (Conrad, 1956). According to Conrad (1956), a social worker's knowledge and skills are necessary components in the preparation of almost every correctional employee. Bhui (2001) also stated that a social work education provides a good comprehension of social deprivation, discrimination, and institutional influences to the occupation. Conrad (1956) also discusses that probation and parole administrators are considering the desirability of positions being filled by individuals with graduate training in social work.



Part of the social work profession is to ensure the social justice of others. This research plays a part in that. There are two social work justice principles that relate to this research topic: human dignity and solidarity.

The St. Thomas School of Social Work (2006) identifies human dignity as "...the ethical foundation of a moral society. The measure of every institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person." When women corrections workers are subjected to harassment and discrimination within their workplace, their dignity is threatened. It is the role of the social worker to work towards the elimination of the discrimination of "any person or group on any basis" (St. Thomas School of Social Work, 2006). The social work justice principle of solidarity is defined by the St. Thomas School of Social Work (2006), "We are one human family, whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences." A woman who is discriminated against is hardly being treated as one of the "human family" (St. Thomas School of Social Work, 2006).

The purpose of this research is to learn more about the past experiences of women correctional workers in Minnesota who have worked with male offenders and male co-workers and whether or not they experienced harassment and discrimination. It is predicted that women who entered the male dominated field of corrections between the 1960's and 1980's experienced a great deal of harassment at the hand of male colleagues. The experiences of early women correctional workers may be of interest to women who are considering those fields for their chosen professions. In order to better understand the current experiences of discrimination against women working in corrections and the

harassment they endure, it is important to understand how women experienced this in the past.

## **Literature Review**

### **Traditional Corrections**

The criminal justice system is regarded as a field of employment that has been dominated by men throughout history (Pogrebin & Poole, 1998). Corrections was traditionally a male-oriented and male-dominated profession that allowed few women to join the ranks (Bowersox, 1981). Probation and parole, a subsection of correctional work, had also customarily been a man's field (Stout, 1973).

### **Women's Entry into Corrections**

Before the 1970s, few women were employed in correctional work (Britton, 2000). In order for women to enter most male dominated occupations, legislative action and legal pressure was needed (Britton, 2000). Employment opportunities arose for women in 1972 when the passage of the amendment to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the extension of Title VII, and the Equal Employment Opportunity Act officially opened the doors to corrections to women wanting to work with male offenders (Belknap, 1995; Britton, 2000; Jurik, 1985; Stohr, Mays, Beck, & Kelley, 1998; Zimmer, 1986; Zupan, 1992).

Several research studies on policing and corrections denoted that their male colleagues did not accept women when they entered the work force (Belknap, 1995; Jurik, 1985; Martin, 1984; Pogrebin & Poole, 1998; Zimmer, 1986; Zupan, 1992). Women in the fields of policing, prison work, and law discovered that attaining the legal

right to participate in those careers was not enough to ensure equality in the work environment (Britton, 2000).

### **Male Territory?**

Men identify male prisons as male “territory” (Bourne & Ekstrand, 1973; McKee & Robertson, 1975). The environment of the prison is identified as a masculinized organization, wherein the characteristics of physical strength and a willingness to use force are valued and believed to be essential skills for the work (Griffin, Armstrong, & Hepburn, 2005). In men’s prisons, training exaggerates the potentially violent nature of the work (Britton, 1997a). The work of policing similarly emphasizes the need for physical strength and the presence of danger. These beliefs about police work are highlighted due to masculine cultural stereotypes (Fielding, 1994; Toch, 1976).

According to Britton (1997b), supervisors, coworkers, and administrators view male officers as being capable of doing their jobs “simply by virtue of being male” (p. 813), deemed as being “real men” (p.813) because of the work they do.

### **Women Invading Male Territory**

Male officers dispute the presence of women, believing that masculinity is a primary work requirement (Britton, 1997a). Crouch (1985) states that the appearance of women in correctional work with male offenders threatened the “occupational self-image [that]...guard work is dangerous and thereby appropriate only for ‘real’ men” (p.540). Holland (2008) further adds that women’s entrance into criminal justice occupations, an environment that was formally a male territory, is perceived as a loss of prestige for male co-workers. According to Griffin et al. (2005), due to women’s entry into correctional organizations, the concept of the “hyper masculine” occupation of prison guard is as a

result nullified (p. 198). However, it is noted that the masculine culture prevails despite official attempts to change it (Brown, 1998).

### **Stereotypes of Women**

**Gender expectations.** In terms of social classifications, sex role and gender stereotypes are among the most potent and persistent (Heidensohn, 1992). These women faced resistance due to questioning of their physical abilities (Griffin et al, 2005). According to Broverman et al. (1972), existing stereotypes portrayed women as being dependent, docile, and incompetent. Women objected to the traditional sex role stereotypes that were applied to them by male officers and found the stereotypes to be inappropriate and demeaning (Pogrebin & Poole, 1998). These stereotypes were also judged as continuing myths that women were inferior compared to men in performing jail work (Pogrebin & Poole, 1998). Positive gender stereotypes that women possess higher levels of empathy, emotionality, and communication skills were often seen by administrators and coworkers as being dangerous and unimportant in men's prisons (Britton, 2000).

**Judgments by gender not work ability.** Women deputies quite often expressed the feeling that they are being judged as members of a gender class and not as individuals (Pogrebin & Poole, 1998). Many women reported feeling that their male colleagues did not regard them as proper officers (Kinsley Lord, 1994). Pope and Pope (1986) stated that many women officers were not treated as fellow officers by men officers, but as inferior women officers because they cannot put aside their view of women's place in society (As cited in Cowburn, 1998). Women's gender based expectations for their

behavior in the workplace is a function of male colleagues perceiving women colleagues as women first and workers second (Gutek & Morasch, 1982).

Popovich (1988) reports that men working in male dominated jobs often are unsure of how to react to a woman who holds an equivalent job (As cited in Brown, 1998). Popovich (1988) also stated that men appeared more comfortable in treating a woman according to her sex role (As cited in Brown, 1998). Critics have long argued that women, due to their gender, lack the necessary characteristics for succeeding in a heavily masculinized occupation (Britton, 2000).

**Issues of safety?** According to Gruder and Cook (1971), men are socialized to believe that women are helpless. Women are believed to be unable to function in dangerous situations (Jurik, 1985). Male prison employees claimed that women would be a security risk if they worked in facilities for men because they would be unable to protect themselves or other employees (Wright & Saylor, 1991). Male officers frequently stated that their reason for reluctance about female officers was a fear that women lack the physical strength required for dangerous and violent situations (Martin, 1989). Men objected to women working in prisons due to perceived mental weakness of women (Jurik, 1985). A male officer in Jurik's (1985) study stated, "This place works on your mind after awhile. Women just can't take that kind of strain. Most of them will crack" (p. 379).

### **Harassment**

Women were hardly prepared for the harassment they received upon entering the field of corrections. According to Britton (1997a) women received little training on how to handle harassment from male inmates, supervisors, and coworkers. Numerous women

entering the traditionally male dominated occupations faced harassment and discrimination (Cowburn, 1998). Wexler and Logan (1983) concluded that the greatest source of stress for women police was due to being women. As a result of being women, these policewomen regularly experienced situations of being “ignored, harassed, watched, gossiped about and viewed as sexual objects” (p. 52). Women on a routine basis would experience discrimination, exclusion, and hostility from their male coworkers and supervisors (Pogrebin & Poole, 1998). Women’s experiences of being harassed may include being denied, dismissed, and ignored by other male colleagues due to a difference in the perception of what constitutes sexism (Cowburn, 1998). According to Cowburn (1998), women face the reality of having to endure constant sexism and harassment from male coworkers in order to simply do their work.

### **Women’s Entry into Probation/Parole**

Acceptance of women into the field of probation and parole was not accomplished overnight. According to Graham (1960), many state parole boards/courts still did not hire women probation and parole officers. Only a few probation and parole boards hired women to work with men. Until 1970, a majority of state agencies did not permit officers to supervise clients of the opposite sex (Schoonmaker, 1975). The mixing of caseloads by sex significantly increased the number of women employed in probation and parole work (Schoonmaker, 1975).

### **Probation and Parole in Minnesota**

Stout (1973) contacted probation and parole agencies from each of the United States. Stout (1973) received a response from T. F. Telander, chairman of the Minnesota Adult Corrections Commission, explaining the status of women at the agency. Telander

said that women were on occasion supervising juveniles and misdemeanants (Stout, 1973). Telander added “the division of adult corrections in this state would be hesitant about using female for the supervision of adults on parole (Stout, 1973). According to the information that had been provided to Stout (1973), women had gained the opportunity to be probation officers for juvenile offenders but had yet to gain access to adult probation/parole.

### **Sexual Discrimination and Harassment in Minnesota in 1960’s-1980’s**

**Definitions of harassment and discrimination.** Information was located that put into context how sexual discrimination and harassment were defined in the state of Minnesota between the 1960’s and 1980’s. Located in a document authored by Minnesota Corrections Department (1980, April 8):

Under Title VII of Civil Rights Act of 1964, employers are responsible for maintaining a working atmosphere free of discrimination including, but not limited to, discriminatory insult, intimidation and other forms of harassment based on individual’s race, sex, national origin, religion, age, or veteran’s status.

One other such definition of sexual harassment was created by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and was utilized by the Minnesota Council on the Economic Status of Women (1982):

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical harassment when: (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment; (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect

of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment (p. 1).

**Refusal to work with women.** There was an issue with men refusing to work with women. Several quotes were found by Brown III a journalist for Good Government Magazine. "A man won't report to a woman" (Brown III, 1971). There was this belief that men would rather leave their jobs than take direction from a woman. "Men will quit rather than work for a woman" (Brown III, 1971).

**Women's emotions and work performance.** Sexual discrimination and harassment within employment in Minnesota was presented as a "game of semantics" which "often played with a woman's personality" (Brown III, 1971). Brown (1971) stated that a public belief was that "women are temperamentally unfit for management responsibility" or that "women are too emotional". According to Brown III (1971) men thought that women were supposed to be subservient and obedient. If a woman was seen giving orders or placed in command, she would be referred to as "domineering" (Brown III, 1971). There were discrepancies in desirable leadership qualities between men and women. Female managers were found to be "pushy, ruthless, and domineering" (Brown III, 1971). However, if a male manager would act in a similar manner he would be considered as a "go-getter" or a "take charge guy". (Brown III, 1971). "Women are simply unacceptable in high-pressure management, as supervisors" (Brown III, 1971).

**No upward mobility.** Harassment seems to rarely motivate a woman to pursue advancement. "Sexual harassment effectively keeps women in their place. It keeps them from obtaining any real power in the work setting" (Minnesota Council on the Economic Status of Women, 1982, p. 5). According to a study conducted by the Minnesota Council



on the Economic Status of Women (1982), due to harassment experiences, women feared seeking recognition or advancement, pursuing non-traditional careers, or pursuing an activity in which they felt vulnerable, and they tended to lower their expectations. Victims of harassment were “likely to suffer” due to lower self-esteem and self-confidence, both of which were needed for advancement in the workforce (Minnesota Council on the Economic Status of Women, 1982, p. 8).

**Fears of losing work and further harassment.** Feelings of hopelessness and a lack of control over one’s situation occurred.

If a woman does nothing about the harassment, it simply continues. If she does do something, she is likely to be fired or further harassed. There is nothing the victim can do change their behavior, since it is all based on power, not sex. Title VII suits take years and are expensive, these women are in jobs where they can’t afford an attorney (Minnesota Council on the Economic Status of Women, 1982, p. 3).

Women who experienced harassment seemed to lose their jobs often.

The most obvious effect of sexual harassment is the victim’s job loss. About half of victims ‘voluntarily’ leave their jobs when the harassment becomes intolerable and when they perceive no effective recourse. Many others are fired in reprisal when they refuse to tolerate or submit to sexual demands, or for reporting the harassment. Still others are fired when the harassment results in deteriorating work performance or attendance (Minnesota Council on the Economic Status of Women, 1982, p. 8).

The alternative was not to report the harassment.

**Coping with harassment.** Some women had to cope with the abuse and try to keep living their lives. Frequently women, experienced stress and stress related injuries (Minnesota Council on the Economic Status of Women, 1982).

I tried everything, ignoring it, going along and laughing, being as aggressive as they were – nothing worked, and management did nothing. It has emotional effect, even now when I'm not employed there... Comments about my body, their sexual ability, I was the brunt of every dirty joke. It made me feel worthless, incapable, replaceable. I'm a single mother. This was my first job I had where I earned more than minimum wage (Minnesota Council on the Economic Status of Women, 1982, p. 3).

According to the Minnesota Council on the Economic Status of Women (1982), harassed women frequently would remain in their current job placement due to being unable to prove their cases, unable to pay for legal services, or unable to find new jobs.

**Taking the victim seriously.** The victims of sexual harassment and discrimination had a difficult time being taken seriously when they would report the abuse. "The advice I was given was that 'boys will be boys'. I was not taken seriously. 'No' didn't mean anything to them." (Minnesota Council on the Economic Status of Women, 1982, p. 6). Due to difficulty with finding people who would listen to them, women's job performance would suffer. "I was becoming dysfunctional and finding excuses to get out of my job and avoid my co-workers. Nobody was listening to me. It was MY problem... It was all MY responsibility" (Minnesota Council on the Economic Status of Women, 1982, p. 7). The higher-ups would lessen the issue and tell the victim to deal with it. "I've gone to the company... the company's attitude is that you've got to

take a joke, you've got to be able to go along" (Minnesota Council on the Economic Status of Women, 1982, p. 8). The victim's concerns seemed to be often put aside without much importance placed upon their word or experience. There were issues with public attitudes and myths about sexual harassment.

It's a form of sexual assault, and has much in common with rape. Public attitudes are laden with myths and misconceptions, especially the overriding myth that women ask for it, it's not serious, it doesn't happen, it only happens to certain kinds of women... (Minnesota Council on the Economic Status of Women, 1982, p. 3).

According to a review of the literature the following themes were found, women entered the correctional field, this conflicted with female gender expectations, harassment and discrimination would occur. This study will examine women's experiences of discrimination and harassment as they entered correctional work in Minnesota and as they began to work with male clients. Did women entering a career in the correctional field in Minnesota experience considerable discrimination and harassment? What was the nature of the discrimination and harassment faced?

### **Conceptual Framework**

A conceptual framework serves as a guide for the research process. The conceptual framework used for this study was sex role spillover theory. This study applied the concept of sex role spillover in order to explore the experiences of discrimination and harassment of women correctional workers from male colleagues. Sex role spillover, according to Gutek (1985), is "the carryover into the workplace of gender-based expectations about behavior" (p. 149). People associate the work role with

that of the sex role expectations of the numerically dominant gender in an occupation, especially if the numerically dominant gender also occupies high status positions (Gutek, 1985). A major principle of this theory is that men and women convey their pre-existing beliefs and gender-based expectations for behavior in the workplace (Pina, Gannon, & Saunders, 2009). These beliefs and expectations occurred even without being applicable to the work (Pina, Gannon, & Saunders, 2009). Sex role spillover theory assisted in the understanding of discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace of probation/parole agencies, correctional facilities, and police departments.

Women in male dominated occupations experience sex role spillover. This spillover is related to the high percentage of men in the work environment (Gutek, 1985). In male dominated occupations, the male sex role spills over into general work requirements, resulting in the belief that people in men's jobs are required to act like men in order to be thought of as good workers (Gutek, 1985). When a woman is employed in a traditionally male setting, she is thought of as being a woman in a man's job (Gutek, 1985). The numerically dominant men expect a nontraditional employed woman to act according to their primary notions of her sex role, which is not consistent with the work role expectations (Gutek, 1985).

This theory is consistent with findings in the literature. Popovich (1988) reports that men working in male dominated jobs often are unsure of how to react to a woman who holds an equivalent job (As cited in Brown, 1998). According to Pope and Pope (1986), any women officers were not treated as fellow officers by male officers, but as inferior women officers because the male officers could not put aside their view of women's place in society (As cited in Cowburn, 1998).

The woman is a numerical rarity within male dominated occupations (Gutek, 1985). A woman is especially visible in the “male organization;” she may feel pressure to conform to others’ expectations, feel the need to perform better than everyone else, and feel socially isolated (Gutek, 1985). The individual of the numerically gender minority is considered a role deviate and it is this deviating characteristic that makes gender more visible (Gutek & Cohen, 1987). Women are treated differently when they are the numerical minority. According to the literature, women officers objected to the traditional sex role stereotypes that were applied to them by male officers and found the stereotypes to be inappropriate and demeaning (Pogrebin & Poole, 1998). Women are aware that their differential treatment is because they are women (Gutek, 1985). In addition, women deputies quite often express the feeling that they are being judged as members of a gender class and not as individuals (Pogrebin & Poole, 1998).

According to sex role spillover theory, stereotyping affects the way that sexual harassment incidents are perceived by women employees (Borgida & Burgess, 1997). Women who are employed in nontraditional occupations are less likely to be considered as victims of harassment (Borgida & Burgess, 1997). According to the literature, the greatest source of stress for women police developed due to being women (Wexler & Logan, 1983). Women who were employed within nontraditional work underwent negative consequences of sexual harassment; experiences varied from talking about this incident to being fired from a job for refusing to accept being sexually harassed (Gutek & Morasch, 1982).

This study applied the concept of sex role spillover in order to explore the experiences of discrimination and harassment of women correctional workers from male

colleagues. Sex role spillover theory supported the assumption that women working within the field of corrections experienced much harassment and discrimination. This assumption led to the search for discrimination and harassment case files or related documents.

### **Method**

This study analyzed primary records from historical archives to explore the experiences of discrimination and harassment of women correctional workers, by their male colleagues, when they first began work with male clients. There was minimal need for the protection of human subjects. Internal criticism and content analysis were utilized in the data analysis process.

### **Sample**

The sample for this study was primary documents from the Minnesota History Center in Saint Paul, Minnesota detailing experiences of women correctional workers from Minnesota who began working with male clients in the 1960's through late 1980's. Data was collected through research of primary documents from the archival collection at the Minnesota History Center located in Saint Paul Minnesota. This sample was selected due to my interest in experiences of discrimination and harassment at the hands of male colleagues. This sample was also selected due to this study's hypothesis that women correctional workers who began work with male clients experienced significant harassment from male colleagues. The sample utilized for this study was small (10 documents). More documents would have been located if not due to time constraints.

This study originally set out to explore the experiences of discrimination and harassment of women probation/parole officers from male colleagues when they first

began work with male clients. The sample of historical documents was adjusted to include other women working within the correctional field, as there was a lack of evidence of women probation/parole officers within historical documentation available to me for this study. The types of harassment researched were sexual and verbal harassment. Documents were sampled by searching for themes of discriminatory practices, harassment or discrimination reports, case studies, and affirmative action plans.

Before starting the research process, the online catalog and on-site catalogs of the Minnesota History Center archives were browsed. Archival sources of interest included Minnesota Department of Corrections Statistical reports 1958-1986; Minnesota Department of Corrections Community Services Division agency history record; Minnesota Department of Human Rights Records 1947-2010, Minnesota State Board of Parole agency history record; and Probation and Parole in Minnesota records. The decision was made to also search for documents from the Minnesota Corrections Department and the Human Rights Department.

According to Monet et al (2011), documents that are produced for purposes other than research are of variable quality when used for research purposes. There is little knowledge of the limitations of documents or the conditions under which the data was collected (Monet et al., 2011). Researchers need to investigate the quality of available data whenever possible in order to discover possible deficiencies in the data (Monet et al., 2011). The researcher made sure to take data mainly from case files and reports from the Minnesota Correction Department or the Minnesota Human Rights Department in order to maintain credibility in the findings.

Internal criticism was used to assess the meaning of statements found in the historical documents (Berg, 2009). The researcher assessed what the document possibly meant and what was being said. The researcher read through documents multiple times in order to assess whether the information was relevant to study and whether the information could be used. According to Berg (2009) the mission of internal criticism is questioning what the words within the document mean. Multiple documents were read and many of them were not used due to not finding any mention of discrimination or harassment related terms (i.e. discriminated against, harassed, bothered, made uncomfortable).

### **Protection of Human Subjects**

There was minimal need for the protection of human subjects as there were not any participants within this study. The study was exempted from review by the IRB at St. Catharine University. All historical documents were part of public record and so privacy procedures needed were minimal. Informed consent was not necessary to seek out due to the data being part of public record. Names of the victims of harassment and discrimination found within archival documents have been changed or not mentioned to protect their privacy.

### **Data Collection**

Minnesota History Center librarians were consulted and made aware of research intentions. Data found within the documents was sorted and categorized into various themes. The archival sources were photocopied and placed within a binder separated according to what archival box they were taken from. Notes were written on these photocopied documents.



## **Data Analysis**

Berg (2009) states that content analysis allows the researcher to find patterns within and among sources. The documents were read multiple times and additional found themes were highlighted and color-coded. The highlighted information was then typed into Word documents and sorted according to the document's author. The information was then sorted according to general themes (i.e. job opportunity) and then information within the broad themes was sorted according to more precise themes (i.e. refusal to hire and lack of advancement opportunity). Finally, the information was organized in a loose chronological order (i.e. reprisal happens after the harassment was reported).

Additional historical sources were located through further research of the Minnesota History Center's archives in order to explain themes that arose and in historical sources that were located. The categorized data was then compared to background literature for better understanding of themes, as analysis of historical research is profoundly grounded in data and the background literature (Berg, 2009).

## **Findings**

This study explored the experiences of discrimination and harassment of women working within the Minnesota Corrections Department from male colleagues in the 1960's to 1980's when they first began work with male clients. Did women entering a career in the correctional field in Minnesota experience considerable discrimination and harassment? What was the nature of the discrimination and harassment faced? Information was found detailing the sexual discrimination and harassment experiences of women working within the Minnesota Department of Corrections between 1960 and

1989. Several themes were identified and detailed the different types of harassment and discrimination experienced by women corrections workers in Minnesota between 1960 and 1989.

### **Women in Corrections in Minnesota: A Workplace Minority**

According to the Task Force on Police and Community Relations (n.d.), personnel records from the Minneapolis Police Department showed that there was “a serious underutilization of women and minorities” (p. 4). To see a visual of the number of women employed by the Minneapolis Police Department, look to Table 1. While there was an increase of women employed between 1970 and 1972 (from 5.4% of the total police force in 1970 to 6.7% of the total police force in 1972), this increase was only noted in the increase of women in clerical positions.

#### *Minneapolis Police Department Employees*

Year	Total Employees	Total Women Employees	Women in Clerical Positions	Women Police Matrons	Women in Special Investigations	Women Policewomen
1970	874	51	43	3	2	3
1971	809	39	33	1	2	3
1972	947	63	56	2	2	3

(City of Minneapolis, 1972, May)

On October 15, 1970 a survey of the Saint Paul Police Department was completed. According to a Special Study Committee on the Civil Service-Subcommittee on Women (1971), at the time there were 496 employees in the police department: 447 male and 49 female. Out of the 49 female employees (11.0% of the St. Paul police force), 46 of them were in clerical positions, meaning that there were only 3 police women out of 496 employees (Special Study Committee on the Civil Service-Subcommittee on Women, 1971, February).

Within corrections in Minnesota in 1984, 26.3% of the employees were women and 11.76 % were female managers (Human Rights Department, 1984, July). Women at the time comprised 50.99% of Minnesota's population (Human Rights Department, 1984, July).

### **Sexual Discrimination and Harassment within Minnesota Corrections**

**Refusal to hire.** "There is no vacancy for women" (Minnesota Corrections Department, 1982, June 10). There are recorded instances within Minnesota in which women were refused employment in corrections due to their sex. The City of Stillwater was charged with having sexually discriminatory hiring policies for police officers on August 20, 1981 (Minnesota Department of Human Rights, 1987, September 15, p. 2). A woman candidate was denied a position as a police officer even though she was "top ranking candidate out of seventy applicants" (Minnesota Department of Human Rights, 1987, September 15, p. 2). According to the Minnesota Department of Human Rights (1987, September 15), Mayor Junker of Stillwater refused to appoint her to this position and the city council support this action with a 3-2 vote and evidence supports the charge that she was not selected for the position based upon her sex. "The Human Rights Act forbids employers from refusing to hire people because of their sex" (Minnesota Department of Human Rights, 1987, September 15, p. 2).

**Lack of advancement opportunities.** According to the Special Study Committee on the Civil Service-Subcommittee on Women (1971, February) in St. Paul there were no promotional examinations offered to policewomen. "Once a policewoman, always a policewoman" (Special Study Committee on the Civil Service-Subcommittee on

Women, 1971, February, p. 20). There was however a promotional examination available to policemen.

In approximately 1980-1982 a woman prison guard was denied a promotion by the Minnesota Department of Corrections based upon her sex (“Prison Told”, n.d.). The prison had failed to provide an explanation as to why being a part of the male sex was seen as a “good faith occupational qualification” for the promotion (“Prison Told”, n.d.). “Neither inmate privacy nor equal pay considerations justified the prison’s practice of denying promotion to female guards to higher levels correctional officer positions” (“Prison Told”, n.d.).

The Minnesota Department of Human Rights (1987, September 15) had determined that women guards at the Stillwater, Lino Lakes, and St. Cloud correctional facilities were prevented from the same opportunity for transfer or advancement that their male guard counterparts enjoyed. The Minnesota Department of Human Rights also found that certain counselor positions were restricted to only males; women had been removed from positions in which they were already working with male inmates (Minnesota Department of Human Rights, 1982, March 4, p. 2).

**Unequal standards.** There were unequal hiring standards for hiring of women policewomen in St. Paul, Minnesota. The Special Study Committee on the Civil Service-Subcommittee on Women (1971, February) found discrepancies between hiring requirements and pay rates between policemen and policewomen. Before the year 1969, women were required to have a college degree to apply for the position of policewoman, with a beginning bi-weekly salary of \$367 (The Special Study Committee on the Civil Service-Subcommittee on Women, 1971, February). Comparably, a policeman’s

requirements were a high school graduation or G.E.D and he had a similar beginning salary (The Special Study Committee on the Civil Service-Subcommittee on Women, 1971, February). In 1969, the requirements for becoming a policewoman were revised to be the same as that of policeman, but the pay for a policewoman was decreased to a bi-weekly salary of \$339.50 (The Special Study Committee on the Civil Service-Subcommittee on Women, 1971, February).

**Exclusion from equal benefits.** Women police officers in St. Paul, Minnesota were excluded from having the same work benefits of their male coworkers. All employees in the Saint Paul Police Department were required to have a pension plan (Special Study Committee on the Civil Service-Subcommittee on Women, 1971, February, p. 19).

The corporation shall pay pension and relief payments with the following schedules: To the widow of any pensioned member; the widow of any member who dies while in service of the Police Department; or to the widow of any member who has served for 20 years and retires before the age of 50 years (Special Study Committee on the Civil Service-Subcommittee on Women, 1971, February, p. 19).

However, even though the pension plan was a requirement of both patrolmen and policewomen, husbands of policewomen would not be eligible for benefits though their wives may: die in service, or serve for 20 years and retire before the age of 50 (Special Study Committee on the Civil Service-Subcommittee on Women, 1971, February, p. 19). According to the Special Study Committee on the Civil Service-Subcommittee on Women (1971, February) at the time there were only three policewomen employed and

they had a combined service record of 44 years, yet due to their sex, their beneficiaries were excluded from the same benefits.

**Exclusion from same work.** Women were excluded from certain jobs that were deemed to be male only work. According to the Minnesota Department of Human Rights (1982) women from Stillwater, Lino Lakes, and St. Cloud Correctional Facilities were excluded from correctional counselor positions that involved patrolling the living areas of male inmates at these facilities. These women had been working and patrolling these areas until Jack Young, Commissioner of Corrections, issued a memo restricting the position to males as it was deemed that the presence of women invaded the prisoner's privacy (Minnesota Department of Human Rights, 1982, March 4, p. 2). Due to this restriction of these counselor jobs to males, some women were removed from counselor positions they had previously been working (Minnesota Department of Human Rights, 1982, March 4, p. 2).

**Sense of belonging.** There was a lack of a welcoming environment for women. The Department of Corrections Affirmative Action Committee members indicated that after a new single sex policy was established, female counselors had been constantly questioned and harassed (Minnesota Corrections Department, 1980, March 24). The single sex policy (same policy mentioned in the previous section) banned women from entering the men inmates living areas, claiming concerns over inmate privacy. New women employees were asked, "Where do you think they're going to find a place for you?" and similar remarks were made toward the existing female employees (Minnesota Corrections Department, 1980, March 24).

**Direct abuse.** Charges were filed against the Minnesota Corrections Department stating that male employees had subjected women employees from Stillwater, Lino Lakes, and St. Cloud Correctional Facilities to verbal abuse and physical assaults because of their sex. (Minnesota Department of Human Rights, 1982, March 4). According to the Minnesota Department of Human Rights (1982, March 4) these women were also subjected to sexual harassment.

**Reprisal.** According to the Minnesota Department of Human Rights (1982, March 4) the Minnesota Corrections Department had been charged with taking reprisal against women from Stillwater, Lino Lakes, and St. Cloud Correctional Facilities who were opposed to discriminatory policies and practices. “The Minnesota Human Rights Act prohibits employers from taking action against employees because they have opposed a discriminatory practice” (Minnesota Department of Human Rights, 1982, March 4, p. 2).

### **Discussion**

The purpose of this research was to learn more about the past experiences of women correctional workers in Minnesota who have worked with male offenders and whether or not they experienced harassment and discrimination from male coworkers. The findings were consistent with information found within the literature. This section reviews how this study’s findings compared to literature regarding refusal to hire and direct abuse. Implications for practice, policy, and future research are also discussed.

#### **Refusal to Hire**

In this study, women were excluded from certain jobs as those were deemed to be male only work. This was stated starkly in the records: “There is no vacancy for women”

(Minnesota Corrections Department, 1982, June 10). Being a male was seen as a “good faith occupational qualification” for promotion (“Prison Told”, n.d.). “Neither inmate privacy nor equal pay considerations justified the prison’s practice of denying promotion to female guards to higher levels correctional officer positions” (“Prison Told”, n.d.). In addition, a woman candidate was denied a position as a police officer even though she was “top ranking candidate out of seventy applicants” (Minnesota Department of Human Rights, 1987, September 15, p. 2). Crouch (1985) states that the appearance of women in correctional work with male offenders threatened the “occupational self-image” that “guard work is dangerous and thereby appropriate only for ‘real’ men” (p.540). In male dominated occupations, the male sex role spills over into general work requirements, resulting in the belief that people in “men’s jobs” are required to “act like men” in order to be thought of as good workers (Gutek, 1985).

### **Direct Abuse**

Women were subjected to multiple kinds of harassment. Women correctional employees from Stillwater, Lino Lakes, and St. Cloud Correctional Facilities were subjected to verbal abuse, physical assaults, and sexual harassment from male employees (Minnesota Department of Human Rights, 1982, March 4). Women were subjected to constant questioning of whether they belonged within the work setting and were subjected to harassment as well (Minnesota Corrections Department, 1980, March 24). According to Cowburn (1998), women within corrections faced the reality of having to endure constant sexism and harassment from male coworkers in order to simply do their work. Women on a routine basis would experience discrimination, exclusion, and



hostility from their male coworkers and supervisors in the correctional field (Pogrebin & Poole, 1998).

### **Implications for Practice**

It is also important to better understand the barriers facing women pursuing a career in a male dominated field. Social workers need to advocate for women who have been victimized. Individual therapy could be helpful to women who have faced harassment and discrimination. The formation of support groups could also be beneficial to women who have experienced harassment. These support groups could show these women that they are not alone in their struggles with harassment. It is hoped that research into women's experiences of harassment in the work place would provide support to the formation of therapeutic resources for these women.

### **Implications for Policy**

Sexual harassment and discrimination are still problems for women who work in the correctional field. According to Britton (1997a) women receive little training on how to handle harassment from male inmates, supervisors, and coworkers. More funding needs to be provided for creating awareness and creating support groups for women who have been harassed. Harassment and discrimination policies also need to be better enforced due to some women who choose not to report their harassment experiences. Perhaps more protections need to be put in place for women who fear reprisal for reporting their harassment.

Future research on the sexual harassment of women from corrections and other occupations may help in the promotion of changes to government policies. It is hoped that more research into the topic of sexual harassment and discrimination towards women

could change the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). The hoped change would be to include regulations to further prohibit sexual harassment and discrimination, as these appear to be missing from the policy.

### **Implications for Research**

Further research is necessary to build understanding of the experiences of women who have been victimized within their work environment and also to chronicle the problem. Research also needs to be completed involving interviews with women correctional workers from the 1960's to the 1980's and current women correctional employees because their voices appear to be missing from the record; no direct quotes were found from the sample in this research and the reports on their discrimination and harassment were written by men.. Interviews should be done with women from other occupations as well to be able to generalize the findings to the public.

For future records research, a study of the 1990's through 2010's, would be beneficial as past data could be compared to more modern times. Due to time constraints, not all of the available historical resources from the 1960s through the 1980s were explored. The following sources at the Minnesota History Center in St. Paul held potential: annual report collection of the Ramsey County, MN, Community Corrections Department and predecessor offices 1908-present, location # HV9481.R2C713; Bureau of Women and Children correspondence, location # 115.H.18.2F; Employ Relations Department, location # 120.C.2.6F; Human Rights Department, annual/biennial reports 1956-1992, location # 111.J.3.1B; Human Rights Department, background files 1947-circa 1982, location # 127.L.13.3B; Human Rights Department, background files 1947-

circa 1982, location # 127.L.13.2F; litigation files 1974-1992, location # 116.F.15.4F; and New Directions (Chrysalis), location # HV1447.M5C578.

### **Strengths**

The sampling of historical archive documents for this study was a strength. The strengths of using available data included nonreactivity and inaccessible subjects.

**Nonreactivity.** One of the benefits of utilizing available data is that it is nonreactive (Monet, Sullivan, & Dejong, 2011). The researcher was able to locate past experiences of harassment without the difficulty of interviewee reactivity. According to Monet et al (2011), the producers of documents normally do not anticipate a researcher analyzing the documents at a later date. Unlike experiments or surveys, the participants are not aware of being studied (Monet et al., 2011). The research was also simple to carry out as there was limited concern of any potential harm as all documents were part of public record.

**Inaccessible subjects.** This study looked into the harassment experiences of women probation/parole officers from the 1970's. While these people may still be living, they would be difficult to locate. Documents can survive longer than the people who created them, when they are properly cared for (Monet et al., 2011). Documents were far easier to access than making attempts to contact individuals for interviews.

### **Limitations**

There were a couple limitations during the research process: time constraints, sample size and sampling bias.

**Time constraints and sample size.** The sample utilized for this study was small (10 documents). Due to time constraints, less time was spent searching the archives than

what would have been preferred, as there were more boxes of documents that had been selected to search through. The population was shifted from women probation/parole officers to include all women working within the Minnesota Department of Corrections. If more time was available, evidence of there being women probation and parole officers may have been located. No evidence was found in the archival records that women probation and parole officers worked in Minnesota.

**Sampling bias.** The researcher may have made errors or bad decisions during the sampling process that can result in misleading results from biased samples (Monet et al., 2011). According to Monet et al (2011), bias may have snuck into otherwise objective data during the sampling process. No safeguards were put in place to catch potential sampling bias.

### **Conclusion**

Social workers are seen as advocates for justice and equality for all people. One can hardly stand aside and merely observe when a population of people is being degraded or is experiencing emotional pain. Social work is a profession that was built upon the backs of women. Even though the field of corrections was/still is dominated by men, it is important to advocate for women attempting to succeed in that field. Social work is an occupation defined by social justice. As long as women are still discriminated against and harassed solely because of their sex, then our work is not finished yet.

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