Policewomen's perceptions of occupational culture in the changing policing environment of England and Wales: a study in liminality.

Abstract

Liminality is the transitional phase of a rite of passage when individuals no longer hold to their traditions but have yet to transition to a new status. Utilising cultural characterisations reported by a sample of policewomen (N=127) from England and Wales a Hierarchical Cluster Analysis revealed empirical demonstration of a traditional pre-liminal condition, a transforming post-liminal state and a liminal betwixt and between period, which are associated with different discriminatory experiences and policing styles. Women as potential liminal workers may offer a way to nudge movement towards the post-liminal incorporation of a more academically oriented professional police culture.

Introduction

This paper examines policewomen's experiences in the current changing climate occurring within policing in England and Wales. The authors employ the concept of liminality as an explanatory device to give a more nuanced reading of the discernible shifts in not only the policing mission to address 21st century problems (Brown and Silvestri, 2019) but also from training to the formal education of officers (Rogers and Gravelle, 2019). Liminal environments are those which are changing from one which is often a traditional condition (X) to another, usually reformed condition (Y) (Bamber, Allen-Collinson and McCormack, 2017). The in-between liminal position can be fraught with anxiety or pessimism about what is perceived to be lost or, alternatively, engendered with optimism, excitement and enthusiasm about embracing the new. We have previously characterised policing in England and Wales as being in a state of flux as it seeks to accommodate the challenges of multi-culturalism, novel types of crime, and respond to newly introduced graduate entry requirements (Brown et al, 2019). In our earlier paper policewomen reported characterisation of their cultural working environment as being relatively unreformed (or what the authors are now calling a pre-liminal traditional condition), in a transitional (liminal) position and those that are in a more progressive (post-liminal) state of change. The current paper further develops the analysis to flesh out this state of flux. Hierarchical Cluster Analysis (HCA) is adopted here to bring together the police officer respondents into groupings that approximate to these three conditions and chart their experiences within each. In advance of this, the

following section considers briefly the changing environment within which this analysis takes place.

The changing environment

Constructed in Victorian times, Sir Robert Peel's 'principles' became central to the model of Anglo-American policing. The principles were seminal to guiding the training of officers and imbuing the police mission to preserve order, protect property, prevent and detect crime (Loader, 2016). Recourse to the Peelian principles are quintessential to rank and file officers' sense of their individual professionalism (Lumsden, 2017), which preserves both internal solidarity and the external policing mandate (Manning, 1977). Traditional aims were to be achieved by a disciplined, uniformed corps of men, trained largely by learning under the supervision of a tutor constable and organised by a hierarchical leadership system of command and control. The norms of full-time employment, lifelong engagement, linear progression, exacerbated by long hours and shift working, was such that organisationally, police work mapped onto a version of assertive masculinity (Langan et al, 2019). This model persevered throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries.

Loader (2016) argues that assumptions about policing's efficiency and effectiveness began to crumble in the 1970s. During the 1980s and 1990s, in parallel with other U.K. public sector organisations, the police service was subjected to wide-ranging changes in structures and management processes, as part of New Public Management regimes (Savage, 2007). In 1992, Sir Patrick Sheehy was commissioned to undertake a review of police roles and responsibilities (Sheehy, 1993) and its publication resulted in a re-statement of its traditional values and Peelian principles. Latterly, however Peel's principles have come under scrutiny, not only because their provenance has been disputed (Emsley, 2014) but also re-evaluation has judged them to be deficient and insufficient to meet the challenges of modern policing (Loader, 2016; Innes, 2020). Loader (2016) argues they are too vague to truly guide action, fail to respond to modern social and economic inequalities and have no legal force or demonstrable regulatory framing. Innes (2020:147) moots that Peelian principles are a form of 'magical' thinking, i.e. they are narratives that do not conform to empirical reality. As such, they stand in the way of clearer thinking and better practice.

Over time, the police service has not been immune to changing models of work moving towards greater diversity of the workforce, more flexible working arrangements and sideways

career development (Tempest and Starkey, 2004). Sex discrimination legislation in 1975 saw the removal of the separate policewomen's departments and integration of women officers. This heralded new part-time working initiatives and career breaks, disrupting the tradition of full-time, continuous working (Tuffin and Baladi, 2001). By the 2000s, largely as a result of a number of operational failures and scandals and the realities of terrorism and radicalisation, the police service itself was critical of the adequacy of its officers in being able to deal with new management and tasking demands. Rigid career structures and lack of diversity were increasingly being criticised for preserving the masculine ideal as the norm (Heidensohn, 1992; Silvestri, 2018; Langan et al, 2019). Sir Ronnie Flanagan's review of policing commented on new functions for police: "the role of the police service has expanded and the range of issues it manages has diversified. As public expectations have grown and policy priorities have multiplied, the service now not only takes responsibility for its 'traditional' functions, but also for many new ones, which require different skills and different ways of working" (Flanagan, 2008:4). Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary steadily advocated an uplift in quality and standards of training through a series of reports (1999; 2002) culminating in the Neyroud Review recommending graduate level entry (Neyroud, 2011). The Winsor report (Winsor, 2012) re-visited unfinished business from Sheehy (Loader, 2016) by re-examining pay and conditions.

The need to set standards in professional development, including codes of practice and regulations and to ensure consistency across the 43 forces in England and Wales, saw the establishment of the College of Policing in 2012. Since then the College has been working to implement and extend Neyroud's recommendations. In 2015, the College published its *Leadership Review,* emphasising that fundamental change was required at the structural and cultural levels of police organisations to ensure that twenty-first century policing was fit for purpose. The review made a series of recommendations to recast policing as a profession rather than a craft, promoting the idea of evidence-based policing (EBP) to underpin practice (College of Policing, 2015). The Police Education Qualifications Framework (PEQF) followed which created three pathways into graduate education; an apprentice degree, a pre degree conversion course and a pre-entry police degree (Hough and Stanko, 2019). Rogers and Gravelle (2019:6) explain this movement from craft to profession as reflecting a shift from an absence of anything intellectual connecting learnt routines with practice to "improving routines by the application of a deep, abstract understanding of the objectives and causal processes involved." The separation from craft by means of graduate education and

EBP has been considered a key driver to academically oriented professionalization (Hunter and May 2019) and is critical to the PEQF project (Williams, Norman and Rowe, 2019). The apprenticeship degrees which came on stream in 2019 are likely to be the most popular route (Wood, 2019). There has been criticism of the apprenticeship degree curriculum as being too police influenced and representing merely a shift of traditional police training to university campuses (Brown, 2018).

Re-iterating the earlier Flanagan conclusion, that policing was about new tasks as well as its traditional ones, the 2025 vision for policing set out by the National Police Chiefs Council and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners re-emphasised the Peelian British Policing Model, whilst acknowledging that increasingly diverse and complex communities within which police work, necessitate "a more sophisticated response" to problems such as child sexual exploitation, domestic abuse, cybercrime or new threats from human trafficking or terrorism"(Flanagan, 2008: 2). The need also to adapt to the rapidly evolving electronic communications environment and on-line offending requiring new skill sets was set out by the Home Affairs Select Committee (2018).

Since their inception in 1915, the influence of women police officers was to introduce an ethic of care and concern into policing for vulnerable women and children, effectively extending the police mandate (Heidensohn, 1992; Langan et al, 2019). This mandate was consolidated with the introduction of community policing promoted during the 1990s, stressing communication, familiarity, and trust building and encouraged multi-agency partnerships to tackle complex social problems (Miller1999). Rabe-Hemp (2008) argued that women may be better suited to such tasks because of their feminine abilities and skills. Miller (1999) more strongly suggested community policing legitimizes feminine characteristics in police work, by giving officers a way to do gender, both by men and women, in more socially acceptable ways.

Metcalfe (2017) notes that receptivity to the changing mandate and preparedness in switching from training to higher education of officers is proceeding at differential rates, with forces variably dealing with three identified inhibiting factors: cultural fragmentation, complacency and defensiveness. One of the reasons given for the iterative nature of police reform is the enduring potency of the police occupational culture and its capacity to resist change (Brown, 2007; Gundhus, 2012; Metcalfe, 2017; Dubord and Griffiths, 2019). It was established in

Brown et al (2019) that some forces had more progressive working cultures, whilst others were resistant to change. Resistant tendencies are described as still being embedded in masculinist ideals (Fielding, 2013; Reiner 1986, 2010) suited to policing as craft-based on-the-job training (Rogers and Gravelle, 2019) and maintaining modes of reactive policing practice (Gundhus, 2012). Progressive tendencies are trying to respond to the demands of more discerning citizens and the changing patterns of crime (Loader 2014), as well as embracing digital technologies (Brown and Silvestri, 2019) and adopting evidence based practice (Lumsden, 2017; Fleming and Wingrove 2017) to remodel policing.

Liminality and occupational culture
Liminality is a concept derived from anthropology in which there is a separation from an existing pre-liminal condition, a liminal transitional period into a new post-liminal stage which marks the incorporation of the new state (Bamber, Allen-Collinson and McCormack, 2017). The liminal stage is characterised as being *betwixt and between* and is the point in change where new ways of being are imagined. As such it can be either negative (painful, unsettling and disruptive) or positive (encouraging productivity and creativity) or both (Tempest and Starkey, 2004). Ybema, Beech and Ellis (2011) suggest that there is a transitory liminal stage which may be time-limited and shifting (explained by saying the stage is marked by not being the old identity X, but not yet being Y, the new identity). Alternatively, it is theorised that there may be a state of permanent liminality in which there is an oscillation, i.e. being both X and Y. Liminality has been invoked to explain an individual's change journey (e.g. Johns, 2018 in the context of the re-construction of ex-prisoners' identities) and also organisational change (e.g. Tempest and Starkey, 2004 who looked at the broadcasting industry). It is suggested that liminality provides helpful insights into the ways in which the change agenda within policing organisations can be conceived within characterisations of the police occupational culture.

The concept of culture also derives from anthropology and looks at patterns of values and beliefs and how these influence actions. Johnson and Scholes (2002) suggest that "taken – for-granted" assumptions handed down over time, are institutionalised to promote or constrain what are deemed appropriate behaviours. The potency of the police culture to adapt or frustrate change has been well documented (Punch, 2003; Loader, 2016; Dubord and Griffiths, 2019; Hunter and May, 2019, Langan et al, 2019). It is also evident that continual change creates conditions of uncertainty and job insecurity (Brough, Brown and Biggs,

2016). Fleming (2020:165) observed a degree of cynicism amongst some officers who greeted the introduction of evidence based policing as the current 'fad' registering their weariness of new ideas.

The traditional pre-liminal occupational cultural space has been described as, amongst other things, racist, sexist and homophobic deriving from its overtly masculinised ethos (Reiner, 1986; 2010). Others describe its blame culture leading to distrust, fear of admonishment, lack of acknowledgement of failure and punishment for mistakes which restrain experimentation and innovation (Metcalfe, 2017; Fleming, 2019). Academic influences have been an intrusion. Police officers, inherently suspicious and cynical towards 'outsiders' (Fleming and Rhodes, 2017), often accuse academic researchers as being 'out of touch' with the realities of front-line policing, stuck in their 'ivory towers' and not speaking their language manifesting in what MacDonald called 'a dialogue of the deaf' (see Bradley and Nixon, 2009). Ideal workers in this space, typified as male, old, school thief catchers (Tong, 2009) are intuitive problem-solvers operating on hunches with an instinctive ability to detect lies. Sausdal (2018:112) refers to this as the "policeman's nose": i.e. "a well-developed, embodied sense of where criminals might be [and] a habitual way of explaining the limitations of the information technologies and analyses that were otherwise available to them." He goes on to suggest that some police officers have a sense of nostalgia, based on "a romanticised pretence" (Sausdal 2018: 177), which is a sentimentalised version what it is to be a "real" cop. Individual rank and file police officers have a common sense understanding of what it means to be professional which serves to reinforce their reading of traditional values and informal practices. In working environments seeking to preserve this model of professionalism one might expect resistance to change. Barriers to reform according to Metcalfe (2017) can be found in the cultural idiosyncrasies not only between the 43 forces in England and Wales, but also internal divisions between rank and file and managing officers (Reuss-Ianni,2011) as well as between civilian staff and warranted/sworn officers (Fleming, 2019); complacent reverence for the Peelian principles to legitimate the superiority of the British model of policing (Innes, 2020) as well as defensive reactions to protect reputations in the face of criticism - all of which conspire to compromise the ability to recognise and learn from mistakes and instead engender suspicion and limit reflection. In such a space we expect women are most likely to suffer harassment and discrimination and be treated as 'other,' with their role as "liminars" (potential change agents) being somewhat fragile.

Liminality provides opportunities to transcend existing structures and disrupts the "taken for grantedness" of the working culture (Tempest and Starkey, 2004:509). They go on to explain that the "dark side" of being in a liminal space threatens the established social order. The liminal worker is thus "the symbolic manifestation" of the destructive aspects of restructuring (p523). In the light of which Bamber, Allen-Collinson and McCormack (2017) describe feelings of 'disposability' i.e. a sense of being 'surplus to requirement' in the new regime, which may result in counter reactions of an exaggerated emphasis of that which is perceived as being lost e.g. attributes of masculinity (Loftus, 2009). Liminality may be permanent i.e. maintaining aspects of the traditional culture whilst having new arrangements imposed (i.e. a condition of being both X and Y). On the other hand, Hunter and May (2019) found, from their interviews with graduate probationers police officers, a state of neutrality equating to transitory liminality (i.e. a condition of not X but not yet Y), whereby ideas of EBP were rarely discussed in their respective forces, but neither were they actively disparaged. In both cases one might expect moderate levels of discriminatory experiences for women officers, as the models of professionalism are in tension with a wish to preserve tradition, whilst embracing the new.

Incorporation of re-designed structures and ways of working and cementing new cultural traditions characterise the post-liminal change where there is a consolidation of innovative practices and opportunities for new learning. Tempest and Starkey (2004) suggest there is an absorption capacity for learning to be translated from individuals to organisations. Bamber, Allen-Collinson and McCormack (2017) argue that crossing into this state is typically beneficial, so we would expect this to be the most positive space for women. But the literature is somewhat unclear about thresholds and when there is a discernible cross over. To assist us we offer a speculative model that describes two dimensions of the current cycles of change creating a conceptual map of the liminal spaces in which women find themselves as follows:

FIGURE ONE ABOUT HERE

From this model we predict that cultural characterisations of a traditional mandate and operating from a craft base professionalism (condition X) will be typified by endorsement of classic adjectival descriptors such as anti-intellectual, macho, racist, sexist and homophobic as described by Reiner (1986; 2010) and represent the unreformed pre-liminal space. Here, women will experience more separation from notions of a masculinised ideal worker and thus

be subjected to greater exclusionary behaviours by the male majority expressed as "othering" by Langan et al (2019).

The transformed post-liminal space (condition Y) should be described as an open, learning organisation and pro-intellectual, as identified by Metcalfe (2017). Here, women should experience not only less discriminatory behaviours but the space should also offer a better fit with the new tasking demands, an appreciation of evidenced based practice and the adoption of more feminised attributes contributing to policing.

There are two potential liminal *betwixt and between* spaces. Hunter and May's (2019) neutral position aptly describes a transitory liminal state (not X but not yet Y). Here, there would be some diminishing of the adverse cultural characteristics, but not yet an embedding of reformed ones. In the permanent liminal state one might expect some movement towards the new professional ideal and the presence of the reformed cultural characterisations, but also the retention of traditional markers such as cynicism and suspicion (as described by Loftus, 2009) (i.e. a condition of both X and Y). In this space we might find some re-enforcement of masculinity and punitive behaviours towards those seen to threaten a masculine ideal, i.e. women officers.

Method

The research for this paper draws on a subset of empirical data previously reported in Brown et al (2019). In brief, two on-line surveys were administered: the first to a national conference of senior women from all 43 police forces in England and Wales (both warranted officers and support staff) and a second, to a workshop for senior policewomen from one large Metropolitan Police force (total N=186). For this research we selected only the serving policewomen (N=127). It is acknowledged that this is an opportunity sample and appreciate it does not reflect the rank distribution of officers in England and Wales. However, it is argued given the difficulties of obtaining probability samples from such a hard to reach population, our data offers the basis for further exploratory insights that will hopefully build on our previous analyses.

Sample details:

Most respondents were white, married and given the sampling strategy, most held supervisory rank[1] or at least had a supervisory role and had on average over twenty years of service. About two thirds held a first degree and approximately a third, a masters' degree.

TABLE ONE ABOUT HERE

Measures

We focus on a limited number of the questions asked in the original survey (for a fuller account see Brown et al 2019). Here the questions pertaining to police culture, a list of 17 descriptors were used. Macho, racist, sexist, homophobic cynical, unforgiving, anti-academic and suspicious were indicative of 'old' culture; and caring, inclusive, professional, progressive, open, effective and a learning organisation, of 'new' culture. Respondents were asked to score on a 5-point Likert scale of strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (5) whether they felt the adjective was currently an accurate description of the police service (in this analysis the scoring was reversed to make the higher score indicative of greater agreement). A Hierarchical Cluster Analysis (HCA), available in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was undertaken. HCA is a statistical procedure that classifies cases into groups that are relatively homogeneous within themselves and relatively heterogeneous between themselves (Yim and Ramdeen, 2015). Basically, HCA combines respondents into homogeneous clusters by merging them in a series of sequential steps. Step one starts with an array of all cases and subsequent steps combine similar cases until every case is grouped in a single cluster. SPSS produces a visual output, a dendrogram, which displays the clusters. SPSS generates a new variable of cluster membership. Thereafter, descriptive statistics of the variables employed in the HCA can be analysed to see how the clusters differ.

Other questions in the present analysis included whether respondents had been subjected to or witnessed, sexualised joking and banter. Additionally, the questionnaire asked about other potential discriminatory behaviour including gender task stereotyping, differential responses of men and women to promotion, not being given credit for work done, bullying by someone

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[1] 6 constables attending the national senior women's conference were included in the sample because they were experienced officers (having served for over 10 years) and held roles such as their force's protection officer or a staff association representative involving considerable responsibility and autonomy.

senior and attitudes to male and female parents and childcare commitments. Responses were either yes (1) or no (2) as to whether the respondent had recently observed these behaviours.

Finally, we asked, "If you had to give marks out of ten with 1 being the lowest score and 10 the highest, how important you think the following characteristics are when performing in a senior position". We then asked how they thought male colleagues would rate the same attributes. Attributes include operational credibility, personal commitment, command authority, working long hours and utilising research evidence to inform decisions.

Results

The HCA grouped our policewomen respondents into three meaningful clusters in terms of how they scored the police service on the list of supplied adjectives. The dendrogram is shown in figure two.

FIGURE TWO ABOUT HERE

The mean scores were calculated on the provided adjectives for each of the three clusters.

FIGURE THREE ABOUT HERE

Respondents grouped into cluster one averaged highest endorsement (highlighted by grey dots) of progressive, effective, efficient caring, professional, open, and inclusive and police as a learning organisation, approximating to the descriptors predicted to characterise the *post-liminal* state. Cluster three respondents were those who gave greatest endorsement to cynical, suspicious, macho unforgiving, sexist and anti-academic (and marked by black dots) indicative of the traditional *pre-liminal state*. The remaining respondents were grouped into cluster two. They scored mid-way between respondents appearing in clusters one and three respectively. The line representing their scores (marked by the open dot) shown in figure two, clearly indicates they are betwixt the scores of the other two clusters. This betwixt state approximates to a *liminal state*. But which, transitory or permanent? In order to characterise the adjectives that typified cluster two respondents, those reflecting a liminal state, Bonferonni tests were used (for details apply to corresponding author). This is a statistical procedure which indicates whether there are statistically significant differences between any two groups (i.e. between clusters 1 and 2, clusters 1 and 3 and between clusters 2 and 3). By way of example respondents in clusters one (post-liminal) and cluster two (liminal) gave a similar non statistically significant high scores to 'effective' and these scores were

statistically significantly different to the lower endorsement given by respondents in cluster three (pre-liminal). Similarly respondents in clusters two (liminal) and cluster three (pre-liminal) both gave high endorsement of 'suspicious' that were statistically different to the lower score given by respondents in cluster one (post-liminal). We applied this logic to the remaining adjectives. We interpreted these results as indicating cluster two as being in a state of both X and Y and thus permanent liminality. The adjectives can be mapped onto the model indicated by the strength of the aggregate endorsements.

FIGURE FOUR ABOUT HERE

These various positions can be fleshed out by comments from officers in the different clusters by reference to their open-ended answer to the question: how has the police service changed?

Respondents in Cluster three (approximating to the pre-liminal state) noted :

> We are still a long way from equality, inclusion, and parity. This is in part, because we have not yet transitioned into a 21st Century organisation.

> We have to change but the reality is we don't really embrace it, there is cynicism instead of engagement and positivity about change. In terms of sexism, yes there have been improvements made but when you a look at genuine representation the reality is, it is poor. We still operate to a blame culture too much, with less emphasis on learning from our mistakes and supporting individuals to become better at their job …I still strongly believe there remains a culture of a boys' club in some areas of the business, with an approach that means a robust decisive female is hard work whereas a male counterpart would be commended, or if a male provides some clear feedback he is heralded as a champion whereas the word 'emotional' or 'irrational' is applied to female colleagues...frustrating.

> …the [old] culture still dominates - there is a lot of resistance to change and people looking after their own interests, forgetting they are there to serve the public.

> The Command and Culture is not always fit for purpose (in fact it is only fit for purpose in a critical live incident) and it has no place in innovation - it stifles creativity and proactivity.

> Whilst there has been a recognition of the need to move away from previous regime of 'fiddling the figures' nothing has come in to fill the void, it is a conscious move, but no clear strategy about what next! This way of thinking is still strong in many individuals within the organisation and many of the leaders… talk of reform - but stays the same.

The comments are reminiscent of the occupational culture described by Reiner (1986; 2010). They are indicative of the supremacy of the "boys' club" where women are denigrated and a sense that there is not much movement away from 'old' traditions.

Respondents in cluster two (approximating to permanent liminality) said:

> Difficult one as there has been some changes ... in the way the officers are deployed... NOT all negative as the positive effect from this is that officers have become more effective.

> Generally,… better. There have been good cultural changes towards people from different backgrounds and we better embrace diversity but there is still room to improve.

> Sexism, racism and homophobia has certainly decreased albeit it's still an issue… More progressive as an organisation.

> Not all the changes have added to the effectiveness or efficiency of the force. Every police force has dealt with the need for change differently - Some with positive results and others with negative ones. I can't help but feel we would have been better equipped if we had dealt with the issues at a national rather than regional level - sharing experiences with other forces and learning from the mistakes of others. The changes and the way they were handled have led to a force low on moral and struggling to cope with demand.

There is evidence from these comments of both aspects of a new identity for the organisation in terms of diversity but also references to these not having gone far enough. There is also some anxieties about the changes and not necessarily believing they are for the better.

Respondents in cluster one (approximating to post-liminality) said:

> It's very different. More inclusive. More a culture of learning and not finger pointing. More open.

> The move to learning from mistakes rather than the previous "blame culture" is positive. We are working towards having a more professional and valued workforce allowing officers more in the way of decisions making, this is a change that is ongoing, but I believe it will in the longer term be a benefit.   It feels more supportive than in previous years despite the increase in demands and reduction in resources.

> Information technology has improved greatly, and we are far more joined up as a nation. Partnership working has improved and in Wales there is legislation to support this. Cross border working and pooling of resources regionally is providing a better service for some aspects of policing. NPCC [National Police Chiefs Council] level officers far more approachable and open to learning from others.

> The nature of the work requires the police to work outside of traditional crime and the focus is on safeguarding and vulnerability - this is a good thing

Interestingly few respondents indicated that they thought the current changes to be fads or fashion. Comments reflecting the positive direction of change are associated with a lack of funding and proper time for reflection or evaluation as the following observations illustrate:

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> Rushing through changes without properly looking at previous mistakes or comprehensive consultation with relevant stakeholders

> The ideas behind the service changing are great however there are simply not enough resources to effectively police and keep people safe.

Whilst there is mention of new technologies driving up efficiencies, EBP is only mentioned indirectly in terms of more systematic resource allocation by way of a threat, risk harm model. There was little mention of graduate education. Nonetheless, the comments were generally positive and indicated beneficial change.

The comments did not support the neutrality reported by Hunter and May (2019). This, together with the results shown in figure three, support our suggestion that the police service is in a state of permanent rather than transitory liminality.

About half our respondents had childcare responsibilities (evenly distributed across the three clusters). Carers in cluster one were most satisfied with in-house support (93%) with least satisfaction being expressed by women in Cluster three (20%). These were statistical significantly different (Chi-square 7.35 $p<.05$).

Overall, career supporting programmes such as mentoring and taster days were equally likely to be available with only job shadowing statistically significantly distinguishing between the three groups (Cluster one, 66%; Cluster two, 38%; and Cluster three, 54%) (Chi square 6.6 $p<.03$).

An additional set of analyses examined the experiences of officers in the three clusters to potentially harassing and discriminatory exposure (see table two). Having your ideas accepted only if voiced by a male colleague, being bullied, attitudes towards parenting and men claiming credit for work done by women statistically significantly distinguished experiences of respondents in the different clusters as did experiences of sexual harassment either as a target or witness.

TABLE TWO ABOUT HERE

By and large policewomen in cluster three experienced the most and women in cluster one, the least adverse effects. There is some marginal evidence of the re-assertion of masculinity by respondents in cluster two approximating to the liminal state.

Respondents were asked about attributes they thought important when performing in a senior position. The participants were then asked how they thought male colleagues would rate the same attributes. Table 3 shows that when women scored themselves on integrity, being fair, having a 'can do' approach, emotional intelligence and use of evidence to inform decision making, all were rated higher compared to how they thought men would rate these attributes. In contrast, they thought men would rate operational credibility, command authority, corporate loyalty, working long hours, physical presence and presenteeism (going to work when you felt ill or on leave) more highly. These items are statistically significantly different.

TABLE THREE ABOUT HERE

The potential for women to be liminal workers is demonstrated by the higher ratings of the importance of Emotional Intelligence (EI) and their use of research to inform decision-making. Women are also less likely to endorse styles of working characteristics of the traditional culture such as long hours, use of command authority and coming to work if on leave or feeling unwell, all of which they believe their male colleagues still value.

When comparing the self-ratings across the three clusters there were none that were statistically significantly different, implying a consistency of approach under all conditions of liminality.

When rating as they perceived male colleagues might – the results were as follows:

- Cluster one women rated integrity highest (8.9) compared to Cluster two (8.5) and Cluster three women (7.8) (ANOVA F (3.1 p<.01);

- Cluster one women rated being fair highest (7.9) compared to Cluster two (7.3) and Cluster three (6.5) (ANOVA F 5.1 p<001);

- Cluster one women rated Emotional Intelligence highest (6.1) compared to Cluster two (6.1) and Cluster three women (4.7) (ANOVA F 5.5 p<.001)

- Cluster one women rated presenteeism lowest (6.7) compared to Cluster two (7.6) and Cluster three women (8.1) (ANOVA F 4.8 p<001)

FIGURE FIVE ABOUT HERE

This shows a progressive increasing association between women's perceptions of men rating integrity, fairness and EI as important, moving from pre-liminal to post-liminal states and a diminution of presenteeism.

Discussion

Our findings suggest that the concept of liminality has some traction in describing a more nuanced state of flux currently besetting the police service in England and Wales. There are at least three different co-occurring versions of police occupational culture identified by our policewomen respondents that can be mapped onto our proposed conceptual model of liminal spaces with implications for their treatment. The literature squarely establishes that there is a school of police thought that espouses traditions of policing which are enmeshed in individual officers' sense of their craft knowledge accrued through experience in Denmark (Sausdal, 2018), Sweden (Gundhus, 2012) as well as the UK (Lumsden, 2017; Fleming and Rhodes, 2018). Such a view of police occupational culture has its own common sense meaning of what it is to be professional with its commitment to a Peelian service ideal and, as Lumsden (2017) suggests, only a moderate level of support for regulation. Lumsden argues that this is associated with a cynical attitude towards academic models of professionalization, which are seen as being imposed on the police service and are to be resisted. The darker side of this rendition of police culture is that it eschews those who are "other" than white, male and heterosexual (Reiner, 1986; 2010; Langan, 2019). It feeds into the magical thinking described by Innes (2020) which sees the police mission as crime fighting rather than (social) welfare (Loader, 2014). It is argued here that this reading locates the occupational culture in a conceptual pre-liminal space defined by reference to an historical traditional Peelian model (Williams, Norman and Rowe, 2019) in which policing craft was learnt through on the job learning. Moreover, some elements of policing as craft are still taught in accordance to male normative practice such as driving or self-defence. Rantatalo and Lindberg (2018) found women to be outsiders to these professional norms, whereas male officers 'naturally take their place' in such activities because they are male coded. In the present study one grouping of our policewomen respondents characterised their current lived experience consistent with the pre-liminal state and, as such, are more likely to suffer discriminatory and harassing experiences. Their perception of the attributes they thought their male colleagues deemed important were consistent with the aggressive form of masculinity identified by Langan and her colleagues (2019).

More recently there has been an appreciation that the pattern of crime is changing with opportunities being afforded by cyber space and the dark web for fraud, sexual offending and terrorism requiring new skills and better technology (Home Affairs Select Committee, 2018). In addition, there has been a recognition that police have a responsibility towards the vulnerable (National Police Chief's Council/ Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, 2018). This understanding represents a manifestation of an ethic of care said to be in keeping a more feminine style of policing (Rabe-Hemp, 2006) and incorporated within community policing models. Stimulated by the need for maternity leave, the Service also broke with its traditions of uninterrupted service by introducing career breaks and part time working (Silvestri, 2018). These are examples of disruptions, motivated by the needs of women that challenge traditional ways of working. In parallel, the police service has for some time recognised the need for a skills uplift and has progressively moved towards a higher education pathway into policing culminating in the establishment of the Police Educational Qualifications Framework as instrumental in creating a profession of policing (Williams, Norman and Rowe, 2019). These authors note the importance of EBP as a critical component of the PEQF in the development of the police as a learning organisation and the establishing of reflective practice. Cluster three from the HCA had a profile which highly rated caring, being a learning organisation, open and progressive with a low average rating of adverse characteristics. This is indicative of an emerging new post-liminal identity. However, this is more likely to be a partial or anticipatory state. This is because as explained earlier, the new graduate entry schemes are in their infancy. Hough and Stanko (2019) are of the view that there remains some uncertainty about the rate of development of the policing evidence base, which in turn creates uncertainty about the extent to which front line police officers can be transformed into autonomous evidenced based professionals. The influence of graduates (as potential liminars) is limited. Williams, Norman and Rowe (2019) found some instances where academic learning was utilised, but that overall knowledge application was unsystematic. They concluded a general lack of willingness by the occupational culture to accept evidence-based knowledge. Hunter and May (2019) did find amongst chief officers a mainly positive view of research but also reported the presence of barriers inhibiting mainstream engagement because there was no "wholesale" conversion across the ranks for the potential benefits of EBP for policing. Fewer senior officers are drawn to the idea of evidence to inform practice and felt that the 'buy in' across forces and senior management was not there (Fleming and Wingrove 2017). Brown and Silvestri (2019) previously reported that women may be more sympathetic towards EBP and the present study does suggest that

women rate EBP as more important than they believe their male colleagues do. Drawing on notions of the ethic of care, their leanings towards EBP and their disruptive capacities in terms of breaking with traditional patterns of work (long hours, full-time working), women have the potential for being liminal workers. Yet even in this more optimal environment, a third of respondents report that their ideas are only accepted when voiced by a man and that men often take credit for work they have done (Brown et al, 2019).

The liminal state was associated with cluster two respondents. Their most highly endorsed characterisations were not only mid-way between but were also 'betwixt' or across the other two groups. In other words, they were indicative of not only having aspects of the pre-liminal but also the post-liminal states i.e. a permanent state of liminality of being both X and Y. There was some evidence of the re-assertion of masculinity amongst this group in that they were the most likely to witness sexualised joking and banter and 7 out of 10 complained of gendered stereotypical tasking. This differed from findings by Rantatalo and Lindberg (2018) when examining Swedish police officer students . They found a state which could be characterised as transitory (i.e. neither X nor Y) as their respondents felt neither fully in the educational setting nor in the professional police one. They argued that this is a case of 'non-belonging' (aligning with Hunter and May's neutrality), rather than a double positioning (i.e. being both X and Y that were found). This may reflect the relative inexperience of young student officers and their lack of exposure to police culture whereas in the present study the women officers had relatively lengthy police careers and were possibly able to assert where the traditional culture had changed (or not) from their career experience.

Conclusion

The study reported here remains an exploratory analysis as we are working with a subset of women officers and excluded insights from male officers. It is perceptions that are reflected here rather than reflections of objective indicators of change. Our findings are also indicative of the viewpoint of mostly senior officers and not the rank and file. Finally, our respondents were established police officers who were reflecting on change by comparing their present experiences with those of the past. We were not looking at the new intake of student officers who might be in the transitory liminal state reported by Rantatalo and Lindberg (2018). Nonetheless, the authors believe the results generate plausible hypotheses to be confirmed by further analysis. The liminal worker is capable of upsetting normative orders and of

transcending institutional boundaries (Tempest and Starkey, 2004:509). Women, as 'other', in the police occupational working environment have the potential to be such liminal workers, more attuned to EBP, principles of fairness, vesting greater importance into EI and disrupting traditional models of command as well as creating disruptions in the traditional models of career progression described by Silvestri (2018). To the police service, such liminality provides the opportunity for breaking with existing organisational structures and dislocating their taken-for-grantedness. Women senior officers are then well placed to promote the needed cultural changes suggested by Metcalfe (2017) by their engaging and empowering style, based less on command and control principles and more on EI.

Whilst there is discernible movement, women's comments reveal that more work needs to be done for the destination of a truly reformed culture to be reached. As a first task it would be helpful to understand the "nostalgia" Sausdal (2018) identifies. Sausdal's analysis of Danish detectives urges that it is too simplistic to dismiss this as a cultural impediment to change. Instead, he proposes that it is a reaction to the perceived imposition of managerial doctrines and academicized professionalization hampering officers from being "real" police officers by becoming more academically evidenced based, technocratic, technological and analytical and less action oriented. These officers preferred to work with intelligence they had some personal investment in contrasted to what they perceived as the disempowering conditions of the generalised and distance knowledge generated by computer analytics and the academic literature. They felt forced to negate their traditions and histories: a reaction that could be construed as the 'disposability' identified by Bamber, Allen-Collinson and McCormack (2017) effectively removing their own interpretation of professionalism. By recognising this as a genuine loss, as Fleming and Rhodes (2018) suggest, instead of pitching experiential craft-based knowledge and academic knowledge against each other there should be a recognition of the value of each. At the individual level, there needs to be a greater sense of empowerment that knowledge can be fed upwards; having a willing line manager who will listen and acknowledge that knowledge brought to policing makes a contribution; and having access to senior decision makers by parting with the convention hierarchal structures (Williams, Norman and Rowe 2019). In addition, Tempest and Starkey (2004) propose that if organisations are to change from traditional hierarchies where reward accrues by moving up 'the greasy pole' they should instead develop structures where one's professional reputation is the "passport" to reward. This can be done by providing richer portfolios of work experience, rather than the silo mentality which Metcalfe (2017) suggests characterises

policing. Additionally, a community of practice should be created that can make sense of the contemporary challenges facing the police. Miller (1999) previously argued that women's knowledge and experiences as women should be incorporated into community policing. There is some indicative evidence from Charman (2018), who undertook a longitudinal study of police officers (both graduate and non-graduate) entry into policing, that this is happening to some extent. She says (personal email communication 2/12/2019):

> Officers appear increasingly likely to acknowledge the changing role of police officers and the importance of communication as their most important skill. The male officers that I interviewed did not feel that they had to persist with the 'fighting crime' narrative. So that could suggest an increasing move towards/acceptance of the 'softer' skills which have previously been associated with the more 'nurturing' side of policing - the feminisation thesis.

Given the tensions that exist between officers' own common sense appropriation of what it is to be professional and the academicized professionalism being promoted by the College of Policing through the PEQF, Hunter, May and Hough (2017) propose that there should be greater clarity about what model of professionalism is being promoted. Hough and Stanko (2019) concluded that the College of Policing has yet to articulate clearly the desired model of professionalization. They concur with Lumsden's (2017) portrayal of the continued existence of a common-sense professional identity informing officers about day to day routines and which they see as under threat. They suggest this should move towards a knowledge base professionalism within a regulatory framework, integrating theory with practice and recognising craft skill alongside academic knowledge.

If the police service is unable to surmount the cultural barriers which inhibit change it may well find itself in the state of limbo described by Bamber, Allen-Collinson and McCormack, (2017) in which it remains hopelessly trapped, neither recognisably its traditional model of British policing nor acquiring its new identity as the profession of policing.

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