

Perceptions of Gender Role and Police Work: A Comparison of Women Police's Views
in Taiwan and the United Arab Emirates

Doris C. Chu
Department of Criminology, Sociology, and Geography
Arkansas State University
P.O. Box 2003
State University, AR 72467, U.S.A
Phone: 870-972-3276
Fax: 870-972-3694
Email: dchu@astate.edu

Abstract

During the past several decades, research on female officers has proliferated. Nevertheless, studies comparing how women police perceive gender role and police work between metropolitan cities in the global context do not seem to exist. Analyzing data gathered from 372 female officers (278 from Dubai and 94 from Taipei), this study compares female officers' attitudes toward gender role and police work in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates and Taipei, Taiwan. The findings indicated that female officers in Dubai significantly differed from their colleagues in Taipei in several attitudinal dimensions. Compared to their colleagues in Taipei, women police in Dubai had a higher appraisal of women in policing in terms of perceived women's suitability, capability, and effectiveness as police officers. Policewomen in Dubai were more likely to support women being assigned to specialized duties, such as handling cases involving female victims and offenders; they demonstrated higher levels of confidence in and greater satisfaction with their work in comparison with their counterparts in Taipei. With regard to perceived fair treatment by male colleagues, there is no significant difference between female officers in both cities. Policy implications and suggestions for future research are discussed.

Keywords: female officers; Dubai police; women police in Dubai; female officers in Taiwan; Taiwan police; gender role; the United Arab Emirates

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Doris Chu

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**Women in Policing:
(Dubai, UAE)**

- The first group of 17 policewomen joined the police force in 1977.
- Currently, there are more than 1,400 policewomen in Dubai nowadays.

Background

- United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.) has been in the leading position among Arab countries on its gender equality performance (Global Gender Gap Index, 2010).
- In recent year, the UAE government has focused on closing gender gap and provided opportunities for females to pursue higher educations and career advancement (Al-Oraimi, 2012).

Research Purposes

- This study aims to compare policewomen's perceptions of gender integration in policing in Dubai, UAE and Taipei, Taiwan.
- It also explores the motivation for females to join the police force and the preferred role and career expectations of women in policing between these two metropolitan cities.

**Method: Survey and In-depth Interview
(Dubai)**

- Three hundred questionnaires were randomly distributed to female police officers in Dubai in November 2011.
- Two hundred seventy eight questionnaires were completed and returned, resulting in an approximately 93% response rate.
- In-depth interviews were conducted with 14 female officers (with different ranks) between November 19 and 27, 2011.



Method: Survey (Taipei)

- One hundred and five questionnaires were distributed to female police officers at TPD between June and July, 2011.
- Ninety four questionnaires were completed and returned, resulting in an approximately 90% response rate.



Table 1: Characteristics of Respondents

	Dubai	Taipei
Age	Mean=30 (sd=6.3)	Mean=33 (sd=9.8)
Rank		
Officer	146 (55.3%)	68 (73.1%)
Sergeant	103 (39.0%)	9 (9.7%)
Lieutenant or above	15 (5.7%)	16 (17.1%)
Total	264 (100.0%)	93 (100.0%)
Marital Status		
Married	162 (58.5%)	32 (34.8%)
Not Married	115 (41.5%)	60 (65.2%)
Total	277 (100.0%)	92 (100.0%)

Methodology

Dependent Variables

-Attitudinal Measures-

- Assessment of Women in Policing: appropriateness, efficacy, and physical capacity
- Preferred Role in Policing: equal assignment; specialized assignment



Assessment of Women in Policing

- Appropriateness was constructed based on three survey items: "Police work is an appropriate occupation for women." "Women are as capable as men to handle patrol work." "A female can be as good as a police officer as a male." (alpha=.71)
- Efficacy was operationalized based on two survey items: "Women are as capable as men to handle patrol work." "Female officers are as effective on the street as patrol officers." (alpha=.62)
- Response categories for both items include: 1= strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, and 4 = strongly agree. A higher score on the variables indicates a more favorable attitude.

Assessment of Women in Policing (Cont.)

- Physical capacity was constructed based on one survey item: "Females have physical skills to do patrol work."
- Response categories for both items include: 1= strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, and 4 = strongly agree. A higher score on the variable indicates a higher degree of agreement.

Preferred Role

- Equal assignment was constructed based on a survey item: "Policewomen should perform exactly the same duties as policemen."
- "Specialized assignment was operationalized based on one survey item: "Policewomen should perform specialized duties, such as handling female offenders and victims, juveniles, and missing children."
- Response categories for both items include: 1= strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, and 4 = strongly agree. A higher score on the variables indicates a higher level of agreement.

Summary of Quantitative Analysis

- Compared to their colleagues in Taipei, female officers in Dubai were more likely to have positive appraisal of women in policing in terms of perceived suitability, physical capability, and effectiveness as police officers.
- While some Emirati officers support gender integration (equal assignments as policemen), some prefer specialized assignments.

Summary of Quantitative Analysis (Cont.)

- Female officers in Dubai were more likely to support women being assigned to specialized duties, such as handling cases involving female victims and offenders.
- Compared to their colleagues in Taipei, female officers in Dubai demonstrated higher levels of confidence in and greater satisfaction with their work in comparison with their counterparts in Taipei.

Summary of Quantitative Analysis (Cont.):

- Seventy nine percent of the female officers in Dubai considered law enforcement as their long-term career; Only 54% of the policewomen in Taipei perceived law enforcement as long-term career.

Summary of Quantitative Analysis (Cont.):

- The opportunity to help others was ranked as the most important factor for Emirati women to join the police force.
- Job security was ranked as the most important factor for women in Taiwan to enter law enforcement.

Findings

- “Excitement connected with police work” and “job security” were the second and third most important factor for Emirati women to choose police work for a profession.

Findings (Cont.)

- “Helping others” and “excitement connected with police work” were the second and third most important factor for females in Taiwan to choose police work for a profession.

Findings: In-depth Interviews (Dubai):

- Most of the female officers in Dubai who joined the police force have an open-minded husband or father. Some of their family members were also in the police force.
- Female officers stated that they would like to experience different aspects of police work and were ready for any challenges.

Findings: In-depth Interviews (Dubai)

- More than half (60%) of the female officers in Dubai support gender integration; they believe men and women should be treated equally in the police force and should have the same opportunities to work in different aspects of the police work.
- Female officers in Dubai demonstrated a high level of confidence in and passion for police work, and they were ambitious in seeking promotions and self-enhancement.

Discussion and Conclusions

- Gender Role in policing:
Neo-traditional Vs. Non-traditional
- Modernization may contribute to more positive attitudes toward females working in non-traditional professions, such as policing.

*Thank you for your attention.
I welcome any questions you may
have.*

