

A History of Police and Masculinities, 1700–2010

Edited by David G. Barrie and Susan Broomhall



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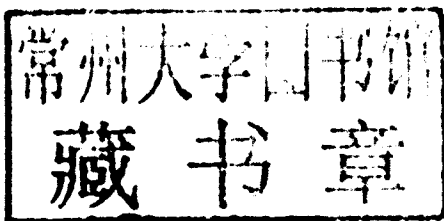
Navigator. "WHAT'S THAT YOU SAY?"

Policeman. "WHY, I'LL TAKE YOU TO THE STATION HOUSE, IF YOU DON'T MOVE ON."

Navigator. "YOU TAKE ME TO THE STATION-HOUSE? TEN ON YOU MIGHT I!",

A HISTORY OF POLICE AND MASCULINITIES, 1700–2010

*Edited by David G. Barrie
and Susan Broomhall*



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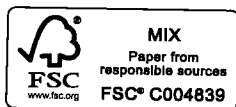
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INTRODUCTION

Susan Broomhall and David G. Barrie

This collection explores how ideologies about masculinity have shaped police culture, practice, policy and institutional organization from the eighteenth century to the present day.¹ It aims to open up scholarly understanding of the ways in which policing reflected, sustained, embodied and enforced ideas of masculinity in historic and modern contexts, as well as how conceptions of masculinity were, and continue to be, interpreted through representations of the police in various forms of print and popular culture. The contributors explore police systems in different international and institutional contexts, using varied approaches, sources and interpretive frameworks drawn from historical and criminological traditions. As a whole, the collection identifies significant changes to the circumstances in which notions of masculinity were forged as well as enacted over this period, and also highlights how masculine characteristics have been sustained in new police models, ideas and practices that have emerged to meet changing situations and contexts.

Policing provides an excellent case study of how conceptions of masculinity have been constructed and applied over the last 300 years. Police institutions not only incorporate changing models of male authority, but also are closely intertwined with the distribution and operation of power in society. One form of power is the assumption of authority and control over oneself and others,² and one way in which this has been formalized in societies is through modes of policing. As the chapters in this collection suggest, ideals, representations and enactments of masculinity in policing not only occur through the formation of power, but also are shaped in part *through* an understanding of the relationship of varied social identities and behaviours to power and authority. Moreover, the analysis of police policy – that is, the determination of how policing was to be conducted and carried out, who was to be surveyed and the limits of police supervision and control – provides insight into other historicized models of male and female behaviour,

such as those of individuals who were considered subordinate, weak, dependent, criminal and threatening.

Historicizing police masculinities

In exploring the above issues, the chapters in this collection contribute to an under-researched area of historical inquiry. Although criminologists have conducted much research in recent years on the importance of gender and masculinity in shaping police culture, their main focus has understandably centred on modern policing.³ The gendered representation of the police in the modern media – both in journalism and in fictional entertainment – has also been studied,⁴ as have the implications of gender ideologies on the carriage of justice and notions of those policed.⁵ Moreover, the importance of masculinity, or male values, in shaping modern policing has been stressed in a number of studies,⁶ with scholars recognizing that policing and police culture are strongly linked to gender ideologies.⁷ A conclusion that has persisted from early scholarly work posits that the masculine culture of the police, its ‘machismo’, relates to the nature of police tasks; that is, it stems from ‘the combination of danger and authority’⁸ as ‘police work consists of coping with problems in which force may have to be used.’⁹ As Frances Heidensohn has pointed out, this conclusion rests on a number of assumptions about the relationship between force, physique, men, authority and danger. It assumes that ‘*coercion requires force which implies physique and hence policing by men.*’¹⁰

A further consistent feature, we would add, of the current analyses of gender and policing is a dearth of broad-scale historical work that could help trace the ways in which gender ideologies shift, change, adapt and map to new circumstances, new policing tasks and new policing personnel, as the institution itself changes conceptually over time.¹¹ To date, limited attention has been given to the historical contexts from which gendered notions of policing cultures have evolved.¹² What work has been done highlights the gendered nature of police work and the policeman as a public servant,¹³ the important role ideas about gendered identities played in the construction of police authority,¹⁴ and how officers and detectives epitomized national characteristics of manhood.¹⁵ Attention has also focused on the ways in which violence¹⁶ and images of manliness helped to contest and assert police legitimacy,¹⁷ and how an ‘authoritarian personality’ has impacted upon the construction of the police as a labour force and as a profession.¹⁸ Furthermore, a series of studies has examined the experience of police personnel, placing the policeman and policewoman at the heart of such investigations.¹⁹ In particular, the role of the first female police officers in England (appointed during the First World War in response to labour shortages) has been the focus of a number of historical studies.²⁰

However, scholars have given significantly more attention to the influence of gender on crime, people and criminal justice systems than on policing. A particular focus of inquiry has been the experience of women before the law, as they were

morally policed in Victorian society,²¹ in the social structures of convict colonies,²² and especially in their treatment as perpetrators and victims of violent crimes.²³ The performance of normative masculinities in legal proceedings, meanwhile, has been studied in such domains as criminal and family law,²⁴ the criminal trial,²⁵ connections between culture, crime and criminal justice systems,²⁶ sentencing²⁷ and violence within households.²⁸ But much more attention needs to be given to the influence gender had on policing in historical contexts – especially the ways in which the ideas about masculinity have shaped how the police monitored and regulated criminal and social behaviours.

The historical studies that have been carried out on policing are immensely valuable in their own right, but they tend to focus on a particular period and rarely put masculinity at the centre of historical inquiry. Although these works have helped increase knowledge of the practice of gender ideologies in policing in different historical settings, what remains to be done is to relate these to each other and to use them as the building blocks for a new phase of analysis that explores and explains how conceptions of masculinity within the police have evolved over time and in different international contexts. This collection seeks to address this by focusing on the concepts, representations and practices of masculinity in policing, as these have been performed within both the institution and the communities policed. In doing so, we are able to identify those aspects of masculinity that have remained relatively steady since the eighteenth century, and those where its contours have altered over time.

Theorizing police masculinities

In order to analyse masculinities within policing, it is first important to establish what is meant by the term. We understand masculinity, first, as a concept that can be historicized, thus shifting and changing from the eighteenth century to the present day. Second, we view it as both a lived and an imagined principle, exploring here the tensions between representations and realities. Third, we understand it as meaning different things to different social groups at any given historical period.

One particular presentation and practice of masculinity that has been widely reported as being visible within modern police culture is ‘hegemonic masculinity’. According to Nigel Fielding, this is the ‘dominant form of masculinity as constructed in relation to (and therefore dependent on) femininities and subordinated, marginalized masculinities’.²⁹ Many studies have examined the way in which hegemonic masculinity exerts influence on (typically negative) behaviours within the institution. In particular, how this culture has been experienced by women both as personnel and as part of the community with whom the police interact has been the focus of important recent investigations.³⁰

As a result of this groundwork, scholars are now beginning to offer a more nuanced interpretation of hegemonic masculinity within the police. In exploring policewomen in senior management and leadership positions, Silvestri, for example, argues that different cultures which carry different ideas about gender,

masculinity and policing operate within police institutions. These have a different impact on women and offer women varied opportunities to influence them.³¹ Other scholars have also critiqued the notion of hegemonic masculinity in relation to crime and policing. They argue that it implies too stable a notion. It lacks, they maintain, the sense of action (and anxiety) with which the practices and behaviours of masculinity must be 'achieved' by the men who engage with policing from different social perspectives.³² The experiences of both women and men, these scholars argue, are affected by diverse masculine cultures in policing, not just a dominant one.

Likewise, the chapters gathered in this collection highlight multiple understandings and expressions of masculinity operating through policing. They tease out the particular forms and models of masculinity that operate or are represented in different contexts, groups and status, and which are enacted in different forms of police behaviour. The authors emphasize distinctions such as ethnicity, class, religion, age, health and sexuality as important elements in the determination of codes of masculine conduct and identities. Indeed, it is clear that, in some contexts, gender ideologies were not necessarily the most powerful influence on developments in policing.³³ However, as Toril Moi has argued, gender is 'always a socially *variable* entity, one which carries different amounts of symbolic capital in different contexts'.³⁴ The collection thus examines the complex relationships between social forces at different periods. These range from the visible importance of class in shaping expectations of policing and policed masculinities in early nineteenth-century Britain, to the influence of race for US policing particularly.³⁵ Indeed, in comparing some of the chapters' findings, it seems that race was a more explicit force in shaping masculinities in the latter environment than unexamined assumptions about indigenous and non-white inhabitants in Victorian Australia – whose reference points remained firmly the British metropolis.³⁶ Similarly, as Mori's study of police culture in nineteenth-century Italy reveals (Chapter 4), Catholic theology brought profound influence to bear on the model of a caritative, local policeman, whilst implicit assumptions about heterosexuality and marital status determined the male police officer's capacity for self-governance and supervision of households beyond his own.

The collection, therefore, offers a nuanced vision of the complex hierarchies and differences in the ideals, representations and practices of masculinity across classes, professional duties within the police force, and in comparison with those who were policed. The authors have drawn out precise meanings of masculinity in their case studies, clarifying the producers and the practitioners of certain forms of masculinity, and the implications of these models for police practice. By tracing the history of police over three centuries, the collection reveals the powerful continuity of a key masculine model that is physical, active and based in solidarity and fraternity of the rank-and-file officer. This persists, the collection reveals, alongside the emergence of other models of masculinity, such as the rise of intellectual masculinity of the detective or the competitive leader in the modern management era, which have emerged as policing has developed new positions

and hierarchies. These models have been both reflected in, and produced through, the institution, personnel and policy of the police, in complex and often mutually reinforcing ways.

Conceptualizing masculinity in policing models

Between the eighteenth century and the present day, the organization, nature, function and purpose of policing experienced landmark developments. In the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, these included the construction of powerful, modern bureaucratic police organizations under hierarchical command structures, the employment of full-time, uniformed policemen, and the greater regulation of those to be surveyed. These initiatives were later followed by the introduction of detectives and female police officers – albeit after many years of resistance and opposition in certain circles, including within the police institution itself.³⁷ As is explored below, some of these developments heralded a smooth transition in assumptions about manhood, yet others necessitated re-conceptualization of male behaviour (both for practitioners and those policed) and prompted new forms of police masculinity to emerge.

In older, traditional English police histories, London's Metropolitan Police – established by Sir Robert Peel in 1829 – is perceived to be the pioneer of modern policing.³⁸ According to this interpretation, the policemen who took to the streets in that year not only were a marked improvement on the old, decrepit night watchmen who hitherto had failed to maintain law and order, they also set the standard against which future policemen were measured. Indeed, according to this view, the principles and practices by which the Metropolitan Police were governed were to become the prototype for liberal countries throughout the world and an example of how the need for law enforcement could be reconciled with the need for liberty. As Ascoli, in his study of the Metropolitan Police, noted: 'it is an indisputable fact that for 150 years the . . . [Metropolitan Police] . . . has become the model for every other democratic society and the envy of less fortunate people'.³⁹

However, the extent to which the 1829 Metropolitan Police Act was a watershed in policing has been challenged in recent years. Studies not only have pointed to considerable innovation in law enforcement prior to 1829,⁴⁰ but also have revealed that the 'new' police were largely based on the underlying principles of eighteenth-century neo-classical governance⁴¹ and suffered from the same problems and weaknesses as the 'old' 'police'.⁴² Yet despite this, the concept of the 'old' and 'new' police model has remained a powerful one in English police historiography – especially when it comes to determining the parameters of historical inquiry. Although there have been some notable exceptions,⁴³ the tendency among historians has been to look at policing practices in these models in isolation from one another. Similarly, the belief that the Metropolitan Police was the world's most imitated model continues to be popular in academic circles. Although historians have also stressed the role of indigenous influences in shaping colonial, Scottish, European and American policing structures,⁴⁴ it is still widely claimed

that the Metropolitan model was the most favoured of all urban, civilian policing structures in nineteenth-century Europe⁴⁵ and the standard against which rural forces in England were measured.⁴⁶

However, European and colonial police systems studied in this collection developed different trajectories, the former often characterized by multiple organizational models in accordance with their changing political systems, and colonial experiences generally by more stable institutional models. Furthermore, developments did not occur in isolation. It is clear that models of policing in France, Italy and England developed in relation to each other: the French example being revered and condemned in equal measure among the English in the late eighteenth century, as McCormack notes (Chapter 2); French policing literature forming a basis for Italian instructional texts, as Mori observes (Chapter 4); and colonial environments being profoundly influenced by European examples, as Wilson demonstrates (Chapter 7).⁴⁷

Importantly, as the chapters in this collection highlight, much of the gender ideology of older forms of law enforcement and policing of civil society was carried through almost seamlessly to new police systems and organizations in France, England, Scotland, Italy and colonial environments. All the models examined, at every period, demonstrate a deep and abiding connection between masculine identity and community control through policing. Policing the urban environment was one dimension of civic activities in which participation was an attractive expression of masculine political power⁴⁸ – and one established on an ideal of civil society that Carole Pateman has suggested was constituted as a masculine order.⁴⁹ These were long-held values and relationships whose continued promotion helped to establish policing by consent. McCormack's chapter, for example, focuses attention on how police reformers in England developed a police institution whose power was informed by civic ideals of governance but also embedded characteristics of martial masculinity. Indeed, no matter which model is under scrutiny in this collection, presentations and practices of masculine characteristics (and indeed, often a particular set of characteristics: paternal, householderly, emotionally detached and physically capable) have served as a foundation for the legitimacy of governance over others.

We suggest, therefore, that, in historical studies of policing that take gender as a key focus of analysis, conceptualizations of 'old' and 'new' police models cannot be sustained. All historic models of policing have linked their justification and practice of power and control over communities to concepts of masculinity. Moreover, we contend that policing's intimate relationship with masculinity has significant implications for the historian's understanding of international police typologies. Rather than holding up the Metropolitan model as being the template for modern policing practices as many studies have done, we stress the importance of different models in shaping international institutional policing structures and practices – models that were shaped by conceptions of masculinity and which have been subject to change in different historical and geographical settings, as the chapters presented here reveal.⁵⁰ The collection, therefore, contends that the

growing trend in police historiography towards comparing international police typologies needs to take account not just of institutional structures, practices and indigenous cultures,⁵¹ but also of the underlining gendered assumptions that are embedded within them and the contexts that produced them.

Representations of masculinities and/in policing

A critical part of the analysis in this collection examines how masculinities were represented, expressed and indeed fashioned in a range of sources, ranging from police handbooks, memoirs and internal correspondence to contemporary forms of media. The authors show that the representation of models of police masculinity in these varied forms has been ubiquitous and often a critical support to its maintenance.

First, the police institution's ideals of appropriate male conduct for officers, and its expectations of those to be policed, have been embedded in institutionally produced documentation such as policy and regulations, police manuals and handbooks for officers. Police manuals, in particular, sought to promote the institution's cultural values by defining and constructing boundaries concerning police behaviour. These texts blossomed from the early nineteenth century and became a key source for institutional self-representation, one that many of the authors of this collection explore for constructions of masculinities. The increasing frequency with which such texts were published was the product of the efforts of both governments and senior police officials to develop policing as a full-time, highly disciplined profession.

However, many of these sources also served a broader function. The concept of 'cultural hegemony', as developed by Italian writer and political theorist Antonio Gramsci, is often associated with the view that the police are an institutional branch of the coercive state, but it is equally significant for analysing police sources as cultural products that promote and uphold dominant ideologies and mould public opinion.⁵² The sources produced by police institutions aimed to legitimize police presence in communities and were thus targeted to a wider public. Improvements in literacy, the expansion in print culture and the rise of new media forms across our period allowed the police's growing preoccupation with public image to be demonstrated in manuals and contemporary reports that became prolific from the mid-nineteenth century, as Mori observes. These sources provide important evidence for how senior officials represented the police institution as well as how they wanted the public to see them, with implications for understanding the connections between the legitimacy of the police and notions of masculinity. Indeed, this pre-occupation with public image is potentially of particular significance in understanding how communities that were initially hostile to the introduction of the police came to be reconciled – or, at least, less opposed – to the advent of a policed society.⁵³

Second, models of police masculinity have been imbibed and disseminated by memoirs, letters, speeches and writings of practising and retired personnel. Internal