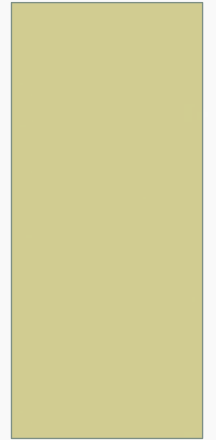


# WHY DO WOMEN STOP WORKING IN OPERATIONAL SERVICES?

LARS REIERSEN



# BACKGROUND

- Inspector, operational services, 1999 – 2002
- Leader, Politiets Fellesforbund Vestfold, 2002 - 2004
- Chief, operational services, Vestfold, 2004 - 2010
- Chief, investigation section, Vestfold, 2010 - 2013
- Sheriff/lensmann, Indre Vestfold, 2013 – 2016
- Chief of police station, Vestfold, 2013 – 2014
- Leader, police leaders, Politiets Fellesforbund, 2016-

# WHAT DID I DO WRONG?

- National numbers 2010: Around 20-22% women in operational services
- From 2000 – 2010, Police academy: Between 35-40% female students
- 97 – 99% of the students start their career in operational services
- My section: Under 10% women when I started in 2004
- Around 30% women in 2006!
- 2008: 15% women.....

# PROBLEM?

- Is the fact that the majority in operational services are men a problem?
- YES!
- Why is it at problem?



# I WANT ANSWERS!

- Master's degree, 2008 -2010
- Why do women stop working in operational services?
- Aim of thesis was to answer my question: Was it me, was it the women or was it the work?
- Survey in three very different police districts in 2010.
- Pre survey interviewing female police officers on different levels
- Would I be surprised?

# WHAT DID WE ASK ABOUT?

- Six different groups of questions:
- Lack of opportunities
- Job content
- Perceived risk
- Work shifts (day,-evening, and nightshifts)
- Job satisfaction (Well-being factors at work)
- Motivation factors (Lack of)

# WHO DID WE ASK?

- Two main groups:
  - 1. Men and women in operational service
  - 2. Men and women who previously worked in operational service, but now works in other units
- 1: Is this problematic?
- 2: Was this a contributing cause?

# MOTIVATION AND JOB SATISFACTION AT WORK

- A lot of questions concerning if they experience their daily work situation includes necessary motivation factors and job satisfaction
- If not, that could be problematic/the contributing cause to why they leave operational service.
- But both men and women clearly state that they are motivated and are satisfied in their occupation!
- Women more than men!
- Wants more feedback...
- And they think that operational service has a low status in the police



# LACK OF OPPORTUNITIES

- Not just to become a leader
- Development, courses, instructor, supervisor for students, etc
- The answer we got was clear from both groups:
- NO, this was not a contributing cause! There was opportunities.
- NO, there are opportunities in operational services.
- Men and women agree...

# JOB CONTENT

- Meaningful work? Independence? Boring, repetitive assignments? Dealing with drunk people ("lempe fyll")? etc
- Is there something regarding the work in operational services that is problematic/a contributing cause?
- Not really, but "We saw bigger opportunities elsewhere..." (but we didn't miss opportunities in operational services...)
- No, but there is one thing that is problematic:
- The job is being dominated by assignments that are not "police work", such as transport / court / escort prisoners
- Unanimous!

# PERCEIVED RISK

- Working in operational services includes risks.
- Not what "people" talk about, but how we/the officers experience it.
- The danger of being exposed to threat situations, violent arrests, "am I strong enough", etc
- No, this is not problematic!
- This was not a contributing cause! Almost no difference between men and women. (Riskproject)
- But we do not completely agree when it comes to risky work combined with care for children...

# WORK SHIFTS

- Questions about the shifts, weekends, holidays, working 3-shifts, and questions about shifts and family life.
- Still working in operational services:
- No problem with day- and evening shifts.
- Some problems with nightshifts
- Some problems with the combination of work shifts and child care. (But not a huge problem.)
- Men more than women!

# WORK SHIFTS

- Previous employees within operational services answered:
- Day-, and evening shifts: No problem for any gender
- Working weekends and 3-shifts don't seem to be a contributing cause – for men.
- Women: This could definitely be a contributing cause.
- The gap between men and women is quite big

# WORK SHIFTS

- The two last questions was about working nightshifts, and the combination of works shifts and children care.
- Men: No, we don't think that is why we quit.
- Women: This is why we quit!
- Highest score among women.
- The score difference between the two genders are huge.
- The deviation is big. 22,5% of the women said that this is not a contributing cause! The rest...

# WOMEN IN OPERATIONAL SERVICES

- The work contains a wide spectre of tasks, from violent arrests to visiting kindergarten
- An operational unit should be a mix of competence, age, interests and gender.
- A mix of gender will give better problem solving for a large number of tasks.
- A mix of gender has great impact on working environment.
- A mix of gender will be more similar the society we are set to serve.

# THE PROBLEM

When they later apply for leader positions, they will have less experience and competence in operational services than their male competitor.

They will probably miss leader experience from operational services

The majority of leader positions within this service will be held by men.

Women are more motivated than men in the operational service, the job satisfaction is higher, but quit earlier...?



# SOLVE THE PROBLEM!

- Bigger units, more room
- More flexibility around shifts – a year with evening shifts?
- Must operational services include shifts around the clock?
- Career – planning
- Early detection of female leader talents
- Inspire and coaching young leader talents